

Chris Clarke – CV

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*Community engagement and cohesion · Insight and political research ·
Writing and strategic communication · Data and policy analysis*

Publications

- **The Dark Knight and the Puppet Master** (Penguin, 2020). First published as **Warring Fictions** this book looked at partisanship, conspiracism and decline narratives in politics. It asked how progressives could be more pluralist.
 - Launched to an audience of 150 in Westminster
 - I wrote/ podcasted about it for a range of platforms; reviewed positively in the Times, Guardian, Independent and TLS
- **Thinking In Straight Lines** (Progressive Britain, 2022). A long essay on educational polarisation, using the work of linguist George Lakoff.
- **Putting Down the Vase** (2025, also published here). A long essay on mainstream politics and populism, discussed in detail on The Rest Is Politics.

Work

January 2025 – present

Strategy and Insight Consultant

Opinion research, social research, policy and strategy, regional policy, including:

- ‘Prioritising Place’, a data dive and strategy report for AB Charitable Trust, analysing variations in cohesion need and migration attitudes across the UK
- Migration framing guidance for This Day, political trust lit review project for Labour Together
- ‘Mind the Growth Gap’ and ‘The third rail’ (Good Growth Foundation)

August 2024 – December 2024

Bayo Alaba, MP for Southend east and Rochford (Senior Comms Officer)

- Comms plan, managing social media, liaising with local media
- Speech-writing, comment pieces, blogs and newsletters

May 2022 – July 2024

The Labour Party, Leader of the Opposition’s Office (LOTO) (Insight Lead)

Analysing, writing and presenting in a fast-moving context. The work was rooted in understanding how public opinion intersects with policy.

- Commissioning and analysing quantitative polls and message-testing
- Designing, delivering and commissioning qualitative work, including doing hundreds of depth interviews and focus groups, across a range of policy fields
- Developing recommendations for messaging, framing and language
- Reporting on insight, presenting findings to senior political decision-makers

May 2023 – May 2025

The Thames Estuary Growth Board (levelling up consultant)

Primary research in communities along the estuary, from Sheerness to Barking, to understand the needs of a changing region.

- ‘Five Point Plan for Fair Growth’ and ‘Fair Growth in South East Faversham’

November 2019 – April 2022

Hope Not Hate (Policy)

I led on Hopeful Towns, a project addressing the ‘place’ factors which impact cohesion. The aim was to cultivate a more preventative/ proactive approach.

- ‘Building Back Resilient’ – an analysis of the impact of COVID on trust, including coordinating an open letter to government from Council Leaders
- ‘Understanding Community Resilience in Our Towns’ – a large report I devised and wrote, indexing cohesion factors across 862 towns in England and Wales
- Other: ‘Fear and Hope Wales’, ‘Level Best’, reports in Gravesend/Port Talbot
- An online Towns Leadership Network – website, blog, newsletter etc
- Resources on running events, using empty spaces and working with local news
- Running the ‘What Works’ webinar series
- Broadcast appearances including Sky, BBC West Midlands and Radio Kent
- The ‘Bid-Builder’ microsite, to help grass roots organisations bid for money

January 2016 – October 2019 and March 2022 – May 2023

The Campaign Company (Director/ Cohesion Engagement Specialist)

Work with third sector, NHS and local government, on resident engagement, public health, comms, behaviour change and community relations.

- Cohesion theory-of-change using the Origins geo-demographic tool; presented to the LGA, MHCLG/ Home Office, and helped 13 councils to deploy via the Integrated Communities fund
- Analysis of the Leicester Riots, using data analysis to advocate a more preventative model – and efforts to apply this type of analysis in Walsall
- Wrote and publicised New Conversations, the LGA guide to engaging communities and building trust, followed by New Conversations 2.0 (including a full asset library), and a follow-up guide for the post-COVID context
- Used Values Modes to understand public attitudes and social change in fields including: weight management services, the trade union movement, the Cruddas Review, COVID vaccine hesitancy among marginalised communities, far right activism, widening participation at universities, status dogs, etc

February 2023 – December 2023

Centre for Information Resilience (editorial and analysis)

Editorial support on a range of projects looking at information resilience.

December 2020 – September 2021

Webber Phillips (consultant)

Ongoing development work on the Origins tool. Devised by Trevor Phillips and Richard Webber, this aimed to enable future-proofing against cohesion issues.

March 2018 – March 2022

HorizonScan BCP (consultant)

Comms and thought leadership work in the business continuity space.

January 2017 – March 2018

Global dialogue (Strategic Comms consultant)

Working across the refugee sector, with iMix, British Future etc and others.

- A segmentation model to understand attitudes to migration and the EU
- Delivering training days on strategic comms to sector professionals

May 2015 – September 2015

Harrow Council (public affairs campaign development)

March 2015 – May 2015

South Thanet Labour campaign, 2015 Election (Press Officer)

A frontline comms role for Labour in Nigel Farage’s target seat: social media, op-eds, speeches, working with local and national press, visits etc.

January 2013 – December 2015

The Cares Family (strategic insight/ community liaison)

Strategic insight for a charity franchise building intergenerational ties. My involvement ran from the charity's inception to its roll-out across authorities.

- A large impact evaluation of the charity's first three years
- Managing the NLC and SLC Winter Warmth projects in 2014 and 2015
- Climate resilience and social isolation project with over-65s, for DEFRA

August 2013 – May 2014

Mary Honeyball, Labour MEP for London (Press Officer)

A media role for a Labour MEP, building press relations and online footprint across two priority areas: prostitution policy and women on boards.

September 2012 – November 2012

OFA VA, Barack Obama's grass roots campaign team (Community Organizer)

Working on the ground in Virginia. I recruited volunteers, delivered training, ran events, and helped with logistics on POTUS visits.

April 2011 – May 2011 and August 2011 – August 2012

i to i Research (Research Executive)

Fieldwork at an insight consultancy, focusing on security policy.

- Insight for Darra Singh's Riots Panel; monitoring online extremism for ACPO; support for interactive Counter Terrorism guide at Olympic sites

June 2010 – August 2010

'David Miliband for Leader' campaign (Intern)

Coordinating letters of support to newspapers, liaising with MPs and council leaders, etc.

June 2009 – March 2010

Neil Stewart Associates/ Policy Review magazine (Researcher)

A scoping project, to increase joined-up thought across policy and public affairs.

Education

- **MA in Creative Writing (Goldsmiths College)** – Merit
- **BA in English Literature (Sussex University)** – First
- **A Levels x 3** – Media (A), English (A), History (B) + **AS level** Philosophy (B)

References and testimonies available on request