

Chris Clarke – CV

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

Writing

My writing has been discussed on The Rest Is Politics, covered by the New Statesman, the Guardian, the Independent, the Times, the Critic and the Observer, and reviewed by Dominic Sandbrook, James O'Brien, and David Aaronovitch.

- *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 and was launched to an audience of over 150 in Westminster
- *Thinking In Straight Lines* (Progressive Britain, 2022). A long essay on educational polarisation, using the work of linguist George Lakoff.
- A number of articles and essay series, including 'Putting Down the Vase', 'Notes on Trust', 'What went wrong', 'The two deprivations'.

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
- Migration framing guidance for This Day
- Cohesion mapping, strategy and place identity work, for local councils and combined authorities
- Local government research into responses to 'Operation Raise the Colours'
- Build Back Relief reports from the UK and France (Progressive Policy Institute)
- 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