

IMPACT REPORT 2022

the
CHOIR WITH
NO NAME



"A client of mine who's coming here...his confidence has gone through the roof, from singing with my colleague in a little room and being really nervous about it, to singing [at choir] with a group of people. It's a big deal."

Lizzie, Support Worker - Cardiff

"I have been part of the Choir with No Name since 2018 and I love it! It is all about the warm friendship and sense of belonging, it's something reviving and greater than yourself, and the expansion of your soul when singing!"

Mario, choir member - Brighton

About Us...

The Choir with No Name (CWNN) has been running choirs and building joyful communities with homeless and marginalised people since 2008. We use the arts to address the most common reasons someone might find it difficult to move on from homelessness, such as social isolation, low confidence and lack of skills for work and life. We run choirs in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Cardiff (in partnership with The Wallich) and Brighton (in partnership with BHT Sussex), with plans to launch new choirs across the UK over the coming years.

OUR VISION:

That all people going through tough times find a place to sing their hearts out, among friends.

OUR MISSION:

To empower as many homeless and marginalised people as possible to showcase their talents, build personal resilience and positive, joyful singing communities.



Our Values



FAMILY

Many of our choir members describe their choir as their family. We aim to look after each other, and we retain our family feel through all of our work, including with external stakeholders and supporters.

FUN

Belting out classic tunes and dancing together, sharing delicious food and jokes and finding somewhere to leave our troubles at the door is what we're all about. We want to empower our choir members to achieve serious change in their lives, but without taking ourselves too seriously!

INCLUSION

We are a warm and welcoming organisation and we want to be equally welcoming for everyone, regardless of background, characteristics or idiosyncrasies. We want everyone involved in the Choir with No Name to feel they belong in our community.

INTEGRITY

We will be fully transparent in all our work. We won't claim to have more impact than we do. We will work hard and strive for excellence and ensure that the wellbeing of our people is central to all our decisions.

**CWNN London at Cadogan Hall
Feb 2022**



2021/22 In Numbers

426

individuals have sung with us at our rehearsals and outreach activities

310

choir members joined us at at least one in person or online rehearsal

207

rehearsals delivered across our 5 choirs

72

new choir members were welcomed into the CWNN family this year

20

no. of barnstorming gigs we performed, after 18 months away from live performance.

78

No. of people who took part in our outreach and workshop programme

3,933

No. of people who joined us in the audience at one of our gigs

78

amazing volunteers gave their time and skills to help keep our rehearsals and gigs running smoothly





Keep on Movin'

2021-22 was a year of adaptation and change, both challenging and rewarding in equal measure. We focused on responding and adapting to ongoing (and ever changing) COVID restrictions, navigating our way out of lockdown back to what we do best: in person rehearsals, hot meals together and barnstorming live performances. Our choir managers, choir directors and volunteers worked extremely hard to ensure our rehearsals were COVID safe and inclusive, supporting the most vulnerable members to feel safe as we gradually returned to in-person singing activities.

Despite the challenge of COVID, we were excited to be able to launch our long-delayed Cardiff choir in partnership with The Wallich in November 2021 and laid the foundations for our mixed community co-produced choir pilot in Coventry (doors officially opened in April 2022). Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the year was a return to live performances after a very long 18 months, and the return of a hot meal after rehearsal - the highlights of choir for so many of us!

After two extremely challenging years, we were so happy to finally be in a position return to full rehearsal delivery by the end of 2021-22, and are hugely proud of the tenacity, flexibility, patience and compassion shown by our members, staff, musicians and volunteers to enable us to reach this point together.

Sing, Sing, Sing

We continued to deliver weekly rehearsals throughout the year – initially online and outdoors and moving back indoors from Autumn 2021 – and we are very proud to have hosted 207 rehearsals, welcoming 310 people through the door to sing with us.

Once restrictions allowed a move back indoors, our initial priority was getting rehearsals back up and running as normal, giving choir managers the time and space to reintroduce members to in-person rehearsals in new locations, ensuring the more vulnerable members felt safe and supported enough to return, and recruiting new members to get participant numbers back to pre-COVID levels. We have seen a gradual return to pre-covid attendance numbers and are currently at approx. 68% of 2019 levels. COVID has not gone away, however, and with several members having health issues that might make returning to in-person singing activities daunting, we have continued to offer access to rehearsals via Zoom.

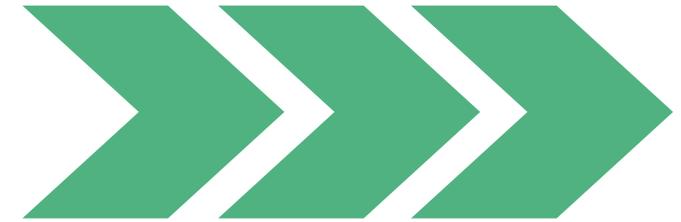
All our choirs had to find new rehearsal venues post lockdown, and we are pleased to now have fantastic new choir venues secured and in spring 2022 finally returned to serving hot meals after rehearsal for the first time in 2 years.



"I really appreciate the way the choir supports us; texts, calls and good energy when we show up for rehearsal. That's why I keep coming!"

London choir member

We have seen a reduction in volunteer numbers post lockdown (a sector-wide issue), which has made in-person rehearsal delivery tough at times, but we are happy to be welcoming more new faces into our volunteer teams week to week. We had 73 amazing volunteers supporting our choir members in 2021-22. We honestly couldn't run our choirs without volunteers, and we are hugely privileged to have such amazing volunteer teams at each choir.



We delivered a limited number of outreach activities in 2021-22, as our initial priority was getting our core delivery offer of weekly in-person rehearsals followed by a hot meal back on track. Support services where we would usually deliver our programmes were also making a measured returning to in-person activities post COVID, so our outreach programme has been slower to return to full capacity than originally planned. However, despite that, we hosted 2 x 4-week outreach projects in London, as well as 6 one-off singing workshops in Coventry, Watford, London and Cardiff for local services, as a way to recruit new members and offer a soft (re)introduction to singing activities. We proudly welcomed 78 participants into our outreach programme.



Spotlight

Our members were chomping at the bit to get out there singing in front of people again, and we were thrilled to be able to make our return to live performances in October 2022 with two gigs marking world homeless day. Never ones to shy away from a gig or two, we went on to host our epic Christmas Singalongs in four of our five choir cities in Dec 2021 (a CWNN first!) Our choirs were involved in some fantastic performances in the spring, including our Birmingham choir taking part in 'Wondrous Stories', a spectacular open-air show to kick-off the Birmingham 2022 Festival, which was live streamed worldwide.

We ended the year with our first ever gala fundraising concert 'The Night with No Name' at Cadogan Hall in London. Hosted by Mel Giedroyc and featuring our London choir alongside Joe Stilgoe, Jonathan Bailey and Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir, it was a joyful evening of singing and comedy, raising over £33,000 to support our work.



**CWNN Birmingham performing at Wondrous Stories,
launching Birmingham 2022 Festival, March 22**





We All Stand Together

The golden thread that runs through our 21-24 organisational strategy is co-production. We aim to become a more culturally democratic organisation, with a sustainable, replicable way of working that will take a more equitable approach to choir members' influence on the development and delivery of their choirs. In 21-22 we made the first steps on this journey through the development of a new mixed community choir model – a co-produced choir community that welcomes people both with and without lived experience of homelessness. The model removes the member ('service user') and volunteer ('service provider') dynamic, and instead everyone is a member with the opportunity to join a volunteer committee who run the administration, marketing, finance and logistics of the choir. We also initiated the co-creation of new co-production and EDI strategies, that we will continue to develop with members and other stakeholders into 22-23. It's an exciting new approach for the organisation, and we are excited to see the multiple benefits of coproduction for members and the impact it will have on their personal journeys towards a positive, empowered future.

We've Only Just Begun

COVID meant that we had to delay the launch of our new partnership choir in Cardiff, so we were very happy to finally open its doors in November '21. The choir already has 15 regular members and two gigs under their belt, with more in the diary. We're excited to learn from our partners, Wales' leading homeless service providers The Wallich, who are experts in Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) and in engaging the rough sleeping community in arts participation projects.



It's been a real learning curve getting our new co-produced community choir model off the ground, as we worked through some teething problems with the training and governing structure of establishing the choir as an independent entity, laying the ground work for a franchise or federated model. In response, we redesigned the model to provide an extensive 12-month training and development package for new choirs called 'Choir Starters'. We are excited to kick off this pilot programme in Coventry following a successful partnership as part of a City of Culture theatre project with Cardboard Citizens in late 2021, which featured a CWNN pop up choir involving the local homeless community which has since evolved into the new CWNN community choir. The choir officially opened its doors in April 2022.

Hello Goodbye

Our Founder CEO, Marie Benton, stepped down after 14 years at the helm. Our new CEO, **Kate Wareham** is an experienced arts charity leader, has a strong fundraising background, and did her Music Psychology MA thesis on how homeless young people use music to get through tough times. With her many years of professional and academic experience, she is perfectly placed to not only understand the impact of singing on the lives and futures of our choir members, but also has the tools to deliver a robust strategic and financial future for the charity, leading the Choir with No Name towards becoming a culturally democratic, diverse and co-produced organisation.



Our new Head of Programmes, **Steve Huddleston**, joins us from Connection at St Martins and brings with him many years' experience managing recovery services and delivering meaningful activities within the homeless sector. His proven expertise in safeguarding, EDI and co-production put him in a strong position to lead the development and evolution of our current and future choir projects, embedding co-production, diversity and equity into all aspects of our work.



Ruthie's Story

"When I first started singing with CWNN I was really nervous just standing there in the group singing. Then, by the Christmas concert, I was grabbing the mic and singing solo! My confidence has really improved. I think it's because you just feel like you're in a really safe space and that people genuinely care about you. It just feels very loving and authentic.

There's been so many unforgettable moments and so many emotional moments. It's amazing seeing other people transform as well. I've made friends and connections and, the big thing is, trust. It's been a real big deal to me that people actually care. They genuinely care and notice when you're missing. It sounds a bit extreme, but people care if you're alive and that you're alive and well. It's been consistent. It doesn't stop.

To anyone who wants to come along to CWNN, I would say just step out of your comfort zone, even though you're feeling the fear. Just go ahead and do it anyway, because you won't regret it. You'll be met with open arms and lots of love."

Our Impact

Every year we run an anonymous survey to ask our members to share what the choir means to them and the impact it makes on their lives, both inside and outside of choir. We want to see members build the resilience needed to move away from homelessness long term. 81 members took part in our annual survey in Jan 2022. They reported that, as a result of being a part of CWNN...

84%

saw an improvement in their mental health

89%

made new friends at choir

98%

felt a sense of belonging at choir

93%

felt more optimistic about life

95%

increased their confidence

99%

have fun at choir

54%

attended choir at least once a month

81%

increased their life skills incl. tolerance & team work

75%

acheived at least one postive life change, incl. securing housing or finding a job

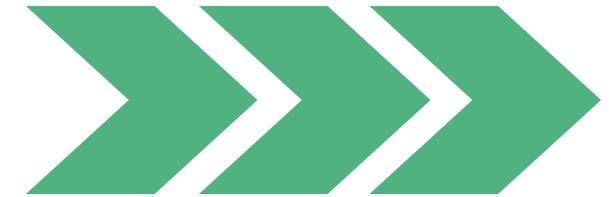
91%

improved their singing skills

"I feel valued & part of something special. It's THE BEST thing I've ever been involved in. I don't know what I'd do without choir!" Birmingham choir member

We're extremely proud of the positive impact our work has had on the lives of our members during what continues to be a challenging time for many of our members. Our choirs prove themselves, year after year, to be so much more than a group of people singing - we are a family, a vital community, a positive beacon of hope, and place to be yourself and, most importantly, a lifeline for the most isolated members.

Look to the future now...

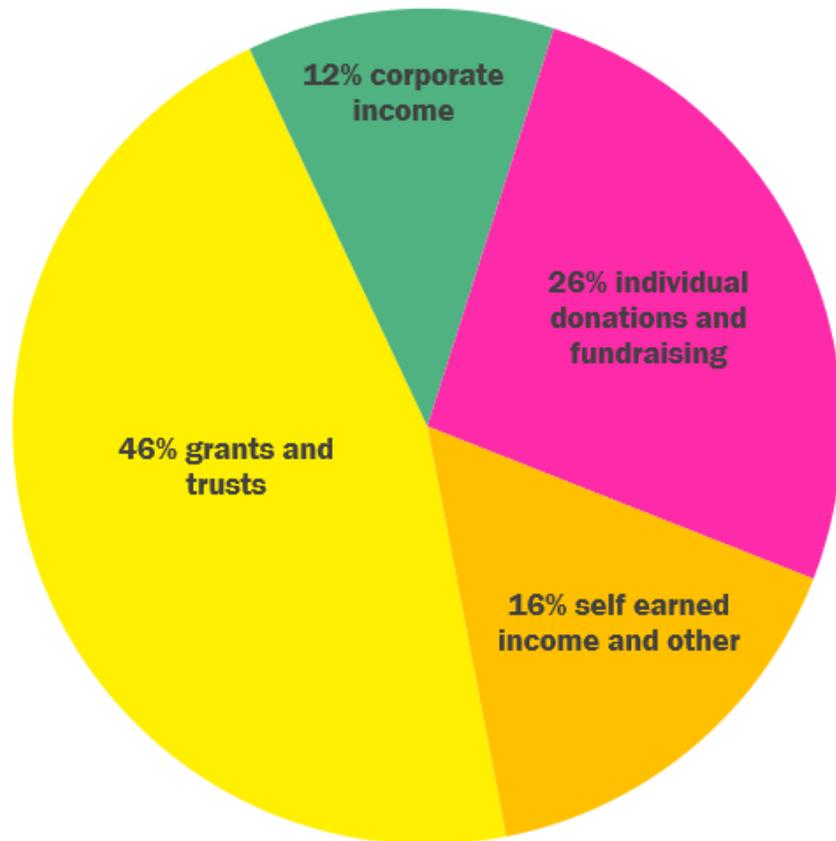


Our priority actions for 2022-23 are to:

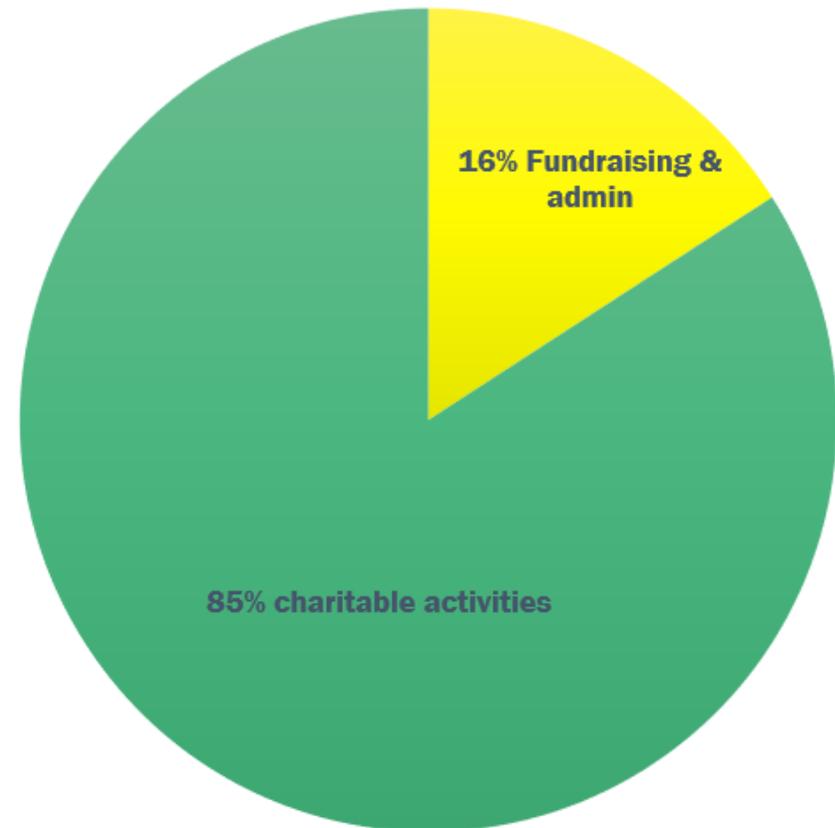
- Continue to run choir rehearsals with a hot meal, throughout the year that breath our values, reduce isolation and increase belonging and build joyful communities in the heart of each geographical location we are based in.
- Rebuild to pre-covid levels, increasing accessibility and actively recruit new members as well as those who were not connected during covid.
- Develop our choir model, building replicability and sustainability to create a strong foundation for future growth.
- Embed a co-produced approach across all of our choirs, learning as we go, and tailoring the approach to each choir community.
- Build on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work in previous years, and, in consultation with our choir members, continue to strive for a more inclusive organisation at every level of operation.
- Develop our impact measurement approach, partnering with academic institutions to make our impact measurement more robust.

Financial Summary 2021/22:

Income: £319,027



Expenditure: £346,543



For every £1 we spent on fundraising and administration, we raised £6 for the charity

Full accounts for The Choir with No Name are available on the Charity Commission website.

Supporters

We are proud to receive support from some amazing trusts, foundations and businesses throughout the year, without whom we could not continue our work:



Albert Hunt Trust | Didymus Charity | Ecclesiastical | Eveson Charitable Trust | Faber & Faber | ForHousing | Grimmitt Trust
Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation | Hemby Trust | Helix Property Advisors Ltd | John Lewis Partnership | Pilkington Charities Fund,
Reed Foundation | Richer Sounds Foundation | Spring Capital Partners | Schroder Foundation | Sussex Community Foundation



A huge thanks also to our partners - The Wallich in Cardiff and BHT Sussex in Brighton - for their support and hard work which has enabled us to continue to sing with and support our choir members long term.

We are so very grateful for the support and generosity of the public, over the past twelve months. We want to extend an enormous THANK YOU to all who made donations, fundraised, joined our fan club, came to our gigs, signed up to our newsletter, shared our content on social media, told their friends about us and spread the word about our choirs. We couldn't do this without you.



The Choir with No Name is registered charity
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