



COULD YOU START A CHOIR WITH NO NAME IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

We think *everyone* needs a place where they can sing their heart out.

And we know that singing in a choir helps people do much more develop their musical skills. It helps us beat loneliness, build confidence, make friends, learn new skills and discover new things we're capable of.

We know this because at the [Choir with No Name](#) we have been running choirs with people whose lives have been affected by homelessness for over a decade, currently working in Birmingham, Brighton, Liverpool and London, and very soon (as soon as lockdown is over!) in Cardiff.

The Community Choir with No Name is a new idea for us - and in some ways is a radical idea for the homelessness sector. It is a choir that welcomes everyone (whether you've experienced homelessness or not) and encourages community integration and co-production. How will it look?

1. **The choir is open access, inclusive and welcoming.** It will actively encourage diverse membership from across the local community, making sure everyone feels welcome when they walk through the door; teaching music by ear, selecting a rehearsal venue that is fully accessible, and assisting choir members who need a bit more support to join in. We will actively recruit through partnerships with homelessness services and a proportion of choir members will therefore be people who are currently using those services.
2. **We sing, and then eat together.** Rehearsals consist of a cup of tea on arrival, then some singing, and then a meal shared together, prepared by volunteers from among the choir.
3. **We'll do regular gigs.** Performances give us something to work towards, to feel proud of, and an opportunity to bond outside of the usual rehearsal space.
4. **We sing uplifting pop music.** We're not an arts project that is set up to inspect or dissect the challenges in life; we prefer to leave our troubles at the door and belt out Bohemian Rhapsody at the tops of our voices.
5. **The choir is run by a volunteer committee, made up of willing choir members.** This includes the logistics of rehearsals and gigs, managing the finances, recruiting and supporting other members, and preparing dinner. For less confident choir members who are keen to volunteer, they can be supported to learn a new role under the wing of someone more experienced. The volunteer committee's roles would be decided by the choir, but is likely to include a treasurer, an events manager, a recruitment person, etc.
6. **Costs and funding:** Depending on several variables, (e.g. whether free rehearsal space can be found), the choir is likely to cost somewhere between £12k and £20k each year. The choir director and accompanist will be paid market rates. Some (but not all) of the necessary funds could be raised through a "pay what you can" model for subs, where those who can afford it pay a monthly subscription (and may even choose to subsidise another place). Other ways of generating funds include ticket sales and performance fees, and local community fundraising.

How do we get started?

We're looking for partners - individuals or organisations - who feel passionately that singing is really good for you, and that this model will bring the community together, celebrating diversity and building bonds between all those who participate, whether or not they would class themselves as "homeless". We're also looking for partners who can go on this learning journey with us; allowing us to adapt the model as we go

along while we iron out its teething problems. You might be a choir director, a homelessness service provider, or even just a keen singer - the important thing is your passion and drive to make it work!

We're offering £5,000 seed funding to get the choir going. This will pay the choir director and accompanists' fees for around 6 months while the choir organises how it will raise future funds.

The first thing our partner would need to do would be to put out feelers within their organisation and/or community to gather together a “**launch committee**”; a group of people (with and without experience of homelessness) who love a good old sing and are keen to see the choir get off the ground.

We'll then work with the committee to recruit your choir director. The choir director will be a paid role; that person will be responsible for all the musical aspects of the choir, as well as making sure choir always remains open, accessible and welcoming. They will liaise regularly with the volunteer committee to talk through all aspects of rehearsals and gigs. We'll help the committee get the recruitment out in the right places, and will come along to the audition. It will be the choir director's job to recruit and support an accompanist. If you yourself are a choir director we would want to see you in action to then take forward the conversation.

We can then provide all the support you need to get the choir going and keep it going; choir director training and repertoire, guidance and training on fundraising and finance for your volunteer team, regular rehearsal visits and a weekly phone call (to begin with) to support early rehearsals, templates for all documents you might need, etc etc.