



IMPACT REPORT 2018



“If my life was a ladder, when I joined choir I was on the bottom rung. Choir is a really happy space - I’ve made a lot of life-long friends. Coming to choir was the start of me climbing up that ladder and becoming the confident person I am today.”

Dan, Liverpool Choir Member

Introduction

The Choir with No Name runs choirs for homeless and marginalised people in London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Brighton. Our mission is to enable as many homeless and marginalised people as possible to beat loneliness and build their confidence and skills through singing.

We support our members to make friends, learn new life skills, improve their mental health, confidence and wellbeing, and get back on their feet. Whether they have been homeless, have a mental health problem or are otherwise struggling, we provide a safe, positive and supportive environment in which to sing away their worries, have fun and flourish.

We challenge the convention that an activity like singing comes at the end of someone's recovery journey. For our members, it is often the beginning. Engaging in meaningful, fun, communal activity in itself can be the catalyst for someone making steps towards lasting, positive change, and the consistently excellent results we see each year prove the valuable impact our choirs have.

THIS IMPACT REPORT COVERS THE PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL 2017 AND MARCH 2018

2017/18 in numbers...

861

Number of people who sang with us at rehearsals and workshops

314

Number of people we welcomed to rehearsals at our 4 choirs in 3 cities

37

Number of workshops and community projects we delivered

547

Number of people we reached through our workshops and community projects

53

Number of foot stomping gigs performed by our choirs

25

Number of volunteering opportunities offered to members through our Ambassador and Member Rep programme

6

Number of individuals and organisations who received our advice and consultation on how to start a choir

17,380

Total audience numbers for our live performances



A Year In The Life...

Sing a simple song...

In 2017/18 our choirs continued to come together for weekly rehearsals, followed by a hot nutritious meal, for 48 weeks of the year, offering some of the most marginalised people a year-round opportunity to see their friends and have fun. We operate an open door policy, where anyone can come along to a rehearsal without the worry of having to commit for a specific period of time, register in advance or audition. Our choir member ambassadors ensure that new members are made to feel especially welcome at rehearsal, chatting to them as they arrive and making sure they have friends to talk to at dinner. Last but not least, we sing well known, uplifting pop songs, as we believe that accessibility is key to reaching some of the most vulnerable people.



Starmaker...

Performing live is always a highlight for members. Singing shoulder to shoulder among friends, performing a solo and receiving rapturous applause can have a profound effect on self-confidence and helps to restore a sense of pride and self-worth that members may have lost. We have been lucky enough to perform at a wide variety of aspirational venues with some wonderful people in 2017/18, including Tate Liverpool, the Community Spirit Festival at Birmingham Symphony Hall, and a BBC Proms workshop at the Royal Albert Hall. As always, a huge highlight for everyone was our Big Christmas Singalong in December 2017, where we brought all of our choirs together at the Brighton Dome – that's over 170 people on stage!

"Jingling ALL the way with @choirwithnoname. What a night! THANK YOU!"
Big Christmas Singalong audience member (via Twitter)



Our rehearsals are led by our brilliant professional choir directors, who support members to build their confidence and musical abilities in an enjoyable and empowering way, while also showcasing the choirs' talents through top quality musical performances at a huge variety of venues. In 2017 we were delighted to welcome long-term music volunteer Mersey Wylie as choir director in Liverpool, following the departure of Meike Holzmann, our founding choir director in the city.

Each choir is run by a choir manager who looks after the admin and logistics of their choir, as well as offering managing their teams of volunteers to deliver informal, but vital, pastoral care and signposting to members. We have over 60 volunteers, who also produce delicious, healthy hot meals for upwards of 45 people at each rehearsal. Our volunteers are the backbone of our choirs, and we are always humbled by their commitment, energy and compassion.

"This choir has made me have faith in fellow man. The first night I came to rehearsal I met some wonderful people who will be friends for life and that means a lot to me. I've found my new family."

Paul, London choir member



Reach Out...

We continue to run our outreach programme of singing workshops and community projects for some of the hardest to reach people, such as those with addiction and mental health problems, refugees and vulnerable women. We have worked with 547 people over the last year, hosting 34 workshops at a variety of services including SHP Westminster, Bearwood Refugee Action in Birmingham and Sahir House in Liverpool.

We also delivered some longer term community projects to offer participants a more involved experience. In Birmingham we worked in collaboration with ANAWIM women's centre on a programme of singing workshops, which included opportunities for participants to sing with female members of CWNN. In London we ran a month-long series of workshops for residents of Southwark in partnership with The Young Vic.



We involve our choir member ambassadors in workshops, to welcome participants and share experiences of choir, making taking part a little less daunting.

We have offered consultancy and advice to six organisations wanting to set up a choir for vulnerable groups, three of which are now up and running, including the One Love Choir in Wrexham, and a choir for homeless people in Bury St Edmunds.

"The first workshop I went to as an ambassador, I was a bit withdrawn. But [they] turned out to be my favourite part of being an ambassador. I loved telling everyone about choir & teaching them songs. I felt so proud."
 Brooklyn, Birmingham choir member

I Read The News Today...

We received some great press and media coverage in 2017/18, reaching a potential public audience of over 30 million, thanks largely to our amazing member ambassadors who shared their stories eloquently and fearlessly.

Highlights include a fantastic video feature for BBC North West Tonight filmed at a Liverpool choir rehearsal, some powerful short films for BBC's Comic Relief and Sport Relief featuring our Birmingham choir, and a feature in National Express' in-coach magazine The View, with over 5 million readers per issue across the UK.

We were also extremely grateful to housing industry magazine, Inside Housing, for launching an appeal to raise money to support our Big Christmas Singalong 2017. This coverage is such an important way for us to show the public the achievements of our members and raise awareness of our work.

Appeal raises £7,000 for homelessness choir

Civitas Social Housing donates £6,500 to Christmas appeal

Michelle Bennett, chair of Civitas Social Housing, said: "Civitas is very pleased to be able to support the Inside Housing Christmas appeal, and through this the excellent work of the Choir With No Name, helping to build the confidence and skills of those who take part."

Frances Blake, editor of Inside Housing, said: "We are delighted to see Civitas giving such a generous gift which means to encourage donations to the choir and to encourage people to sing every year for our members."

"We are extremely grateful to Civitas for helping to bring all four of our choirs together at the Brighton Dinner, and we can guarantee that we'll do it to the others with festive cheer and give our members a truly unforgettable experience."



Through the compelling power of music and compassion, a Birmingham choir is giving new faces to people who have very few.

Many of these people have lived on the streets, experiencing hunger and cold

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Ch-ch-ch-changes...

2016/17 had been a challenging year for the Choir with No Name, in which we realised that we needed to significantly change our operating model in order to make our choirs, and our whole organisation, exist for as long as they are needed. For our trustees and central team, our main focus for 2017/18 (as well as supporting our inspirational choir teams with their work) was finding a solution to this problem. After some careful research into different ways of operating, and ways to reduce our cost-per-choir without compromising the experience or impact for our choir members, we decided on three important changes:

- a) To merge our two London choirs into one "Superchoir", run from a central London location accessible to all former North and South London members
- b) To seek a carefully aligned homeless sector partner with whom to deliver each of our existing choirs
- c) To further reduce our reliance on trusts and foundations, increasing the proportion of our funds that we raise from corporate partners and individuals.

By the close of the year we had found an excellent central London location in Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, a beautiful, welcoming space large enough to easily accommodate our soon-to-be merged London choir. The superchoir launched there in April 2018 and we are delighted to say that we lost very few choir members or volunteers in the transition.

We are also delighted to have established an exciting and fitting partnership to deliver the London superchoir with Look Ahead Care and Support. Look Ahead supports thousands of people across London and the South East with a diverse range of needs, helping them to make individual choices, achieve goals and take control of their own lives through tailor-made support, care and accommodation services. The partnership-based new model cuts our direct costs by 50% and widens the opportunities available to our choir members, who have more direct access to our partner's support services.

During the year we also established a new partnership with Brighton Housing Trust, in preparation for launching a choir with them in Brighton later in 2018.

We reduced the proportion of our income raised from trusts and foundation from 48% to 46%, increasing the proportion of corporate and individual income to 19% and 28% from 13% and 24% respectively.

In January 2018 we welcomed a new Chair to the board in Tom Church, an experienced judge in the fields of mental health, disability and immigration. Tom was recruited following the departure of Rachel Youngman, who stepped down after seven years in post. We are hugely grateful to Rachel for her long and loyal service, in which she saw us grow from one choir to four and helped us establish solid governance and grow a respected reputation.



In The Future...

In August 2018 we are launching the Choir with No Name Brighton, in partnership with Brighton Housing Trust – managed by Alex Procter, who will be employed by BHT, and led by the hugely talented director Freya Wynne-Jones. We have great hopes for the choir, and are extremely pleased to have found the right people in Freya and Alex to run the choir and offer some of the most marginalised residents in the city our unique offering of a good old fashioned sing with friends and a delicious hot dinner.

We are currently exploring our options for potential partners in Liverpool and Birmingham, as well as launching partnership choirs in new cities across the UK, with the ultimate aim of reaching more people affected by homelessness every year. We are feeling very optimistic about the future and look forward to what the next year will bring!

We will also explore further different models of choir and seek funding to roll out a more devolved model where we develop the resources for other organisations who work with vulnerable adults to start up their own choirs, reaching more and more people who can experience the transformative effect of joyful communal singing.

Our Impact

Every year we ask our members to share with us what the choir means to them and the impact it makes on their lives, and we are really proud of the results. In 2017, 102 members took part in our annual survey, and as a result of being a part of CWNN:

91%

of members said they made friends

90%

of members reported increased confidence

82%

of members were motivated to try new things

75%

of members felt their mental health and wellbeing improved

60%

of members learned more than one new skill (apart from singing)

65%

of members took up new activities or services outside of choir

43%

of members took up or maintained employment, volunteering or secure housing

50%

of the people who received our advice have gone on to start choirs for vulnerable people.

Our choirs welcome anyone who feels they need a place to belong and our members' experiences are complex and varied:

- **79% had experienced homelessness**
- **50% were street homeless or vulnerably housed when they joined choir**
- **26% stated having experienced addiction**
- **43% said that they had a disability**

"I was a drug addict since I was twelve but I've been clean for about 6 years now. Choir has saved my life, definitely. At choir I can be with other human beings who accept me for who I am - they don't judge you, it's just brilliant. I'd never sung before when I turned up to choir but I feel great when I sing. It's the best thing in the world."

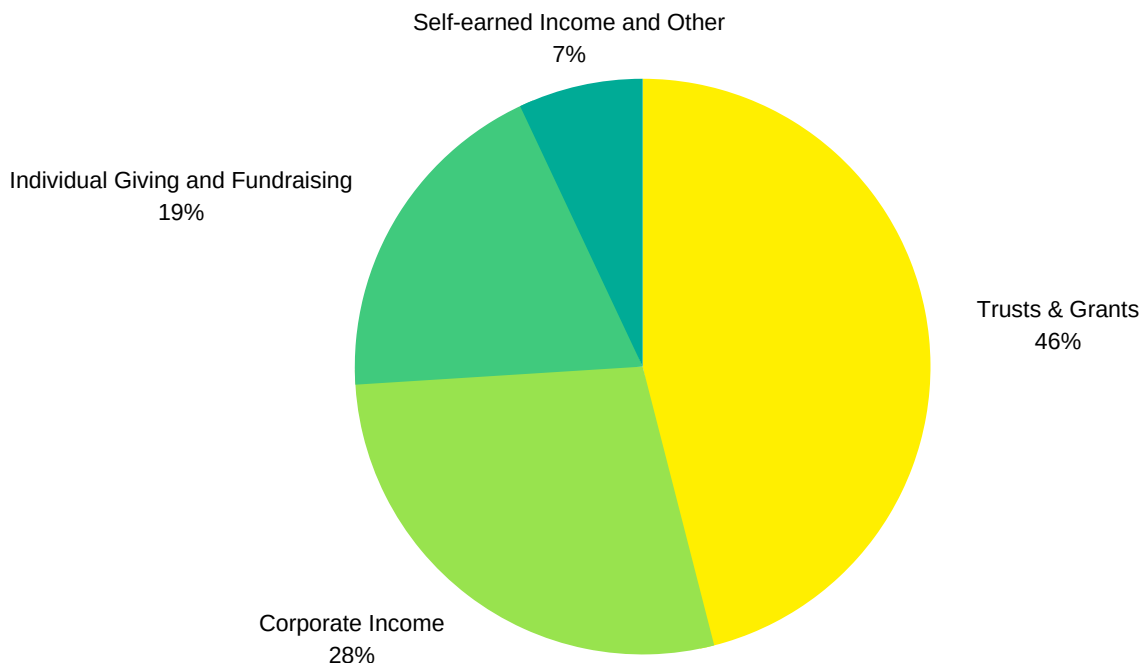
Steve, Liverpool choir member

Financial Summary

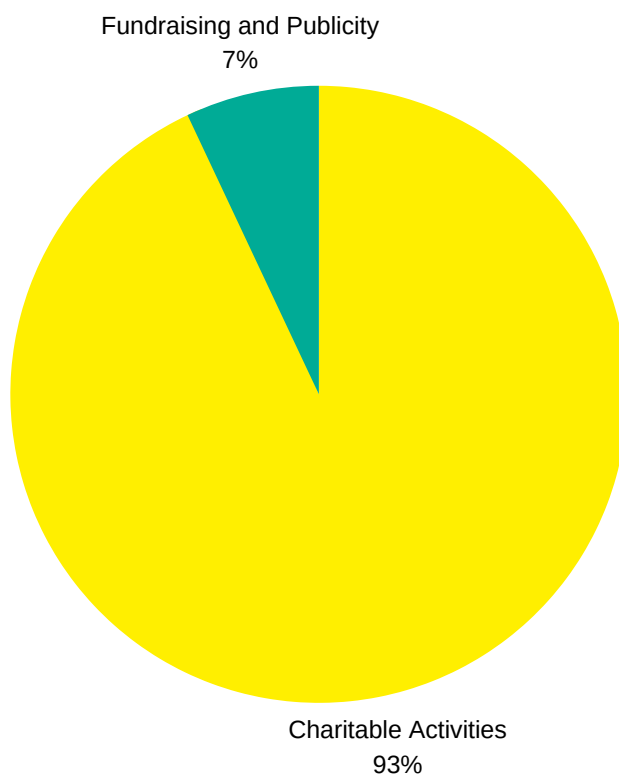
2017/18 Income: £276,535

2017/18 Expenditure: £262,301

Income Breakdown 2017/18



Expenditure Breakdown 2017/18



For every £1 we spent on fundraising and administration,
we raised £13 for the charity

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

Supporters

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



Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, Sheldon Trust, Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust, London Catalyst, Edgar E Lawley Foundation, Bernard Piggott Charitable Trust, Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, Austin Hope & Pilkington Trust, Solihull Methodist Church, Jackson Lees Foundation, Stephen James BMW, Marks & Spencer (One New Change), Ocean Media, Jones Lang LaSalle, St Mungos.



We are eternally grateful for the support and generosity of the public, so an enormous Choir with No Name style THANK YOU to all who made donations, joined our fan club, came to a gig, signed up to our newsletter, shared our content on Facebook and Twitter, told their friends about us and spread the word about our choirs and the work we do.



The Choir with No Name is registered Charity no. 1136173.
Company number 06764584

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