



BIG SING RESOURCE: **HOW TO SET UP A YOUTH CHOIR**

Singing in a choir is a great way for young people to develop new skills and build self-esteem and confidence.

Step 1: Get help

You don't need to tackle it all by yourself - ask a group of parents, colleagues (if you're a teacher) or a local arts organisation to help out.

Step 2: Set the aims and purpose of the choir

A clear purpose will help your choir flourish.

Explore what local events you could perform at or competitions you could enter.

Step 3: Where and When

Decide on a time and place to rehearse suitable for the age group.

Can you use the school, a local church or community hall?

Step 4: Recruiting members

Get the word out there! Use word of mouth, local media, the internet and social media, create posters and flyers.

Step 5: Who will lead your choir?

The choir leader will train and lead the group so that the choir can give its best performance. Speak to local arts organisations, music departments in schools, colleges or a local university - they may have teachers or music students looking for experience. Advertise in local press or arts websites such as:

Creative Scotland's opportunities website: <http://opportunities.creativescotland.com>

Arts Council England: <http://www.artsjobs.org.uk/>

Arts Council of Northern Ireland: <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news/job-opportunities>

Arts Council of Wales: <http://www.artswales.org.uk/arts-in-wales/arts-directory-search>

You could also try: www.musicteachers.co.uk

Or do it yourself!

Employers should carry out a criminal record disclosure check when recruiting people to work with children. For further information of what this means and when it is necessary visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service> (England and Wales)

<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/> (Scotland)

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni-criminal-record-checks> (Northern Ireland)

Step 6: Administration of your choir

Get together a group of people with administrative skills, they can help with the organisation of rehearsals and performances.

Step 7: Finances

Don't forget the costs involved in setting up and running a choir – hiring a venue, working with a professional choir leader and marketing materials such as posters and flyers.

Can the local parent association provide support? Could you find sponsorship from a local company? Look in to funding from trusts and foundations (www.voluntaryarts.org).

Step 8: Rehearsals

You've got your venue, a regular time, a choir leader and recruited members - now it's time for the rehearsals!

Effective planning will help you get the most from your rehearsals. These are our top tips:



Outline what songs and sections you need to cover; this will help the group focus on what needs to be achieved.



Always use a warm up and consider different ways of learning – you could include physical movement and listening exercises.



Always start and finish with songs that the choir know; this will help keep up enthusiasm and confidence.



Build in some contingency time, so if there's an area that needs additional rehearsal it isn't rushed.



Record the rehearsals and keep a note of arrangements, material worked on and areas for improvement to help plan future sessions. You can also use the recordings to help choir members practise between rehearsals or if they have missed a session.

There are plenty of places to find sheet music such as libraries, online and music shops. You need to be aware that music is subject to copyright law, which applies to all choirs. For information on copyright visit The UK Copyright Service: <http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk/copyright/>.

Step 9: Most importantly

Have fun!