

Choir Governance Resources

Many choirs begin as passionate groups of singers united by a shared love of music. While that core mission often stays the same, ensuring long-term sustainability requires clear and responsible governance.

Choirs are typically funded through a mix of member fees, ticket sales, grants, sponsorship, and fundraising. As expectations around transparency and accountability grow, especially in the not-for-profit sector, choirs must ensure their management practices align with best standards.

The Charities Governance Code

Ireland's **Charities Governance Code**, introduced by the Charities Regulator, is a practical framework to support good governance in charities of all sizes.

It sets out **six core principles**, with additional standards for more complex charities, ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective leadership. For more information, visit: www.charitiesregulator.ie

Sing Ireland encourages all member choirs to adopt the Code where possible.

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Why Adopt the Code?

Adopting the Governance Code:

- Builds trust with funders and stakeholders
- Increases transparency and accountability
- Helps reduce risk and improve planning
- Can reduce costs and increase efficiency
- Strengthens the reputation and impact of your choir

Comply or Explain

The Code is voluntary and principles-based, not rule-driven. Choirs can adopt it on a 'comply or explain' basis. This means:

- You assess your choir against the Code using the provided checklist
- If you meet the requirements, you can declare compliance
- If you don't meet all actions, you can still adopt the Code by publicly explaining why certain actions aren't followed



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The Six Governance Principles

The Code is built around six core principles, each with guidelines tailored to your organisation's type.

1. Advancing Charitable Purpose

- Ensure all activities support the organisation's charitable objectives
- Regularly review mission alignment

2. Behaving with Integrity

- Act honestly, fairly, and independently
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Uphold the reputation of the organisation

3. Leading People

- Provide clear leadership for staff and volunteers
- Set appropriate standards of behaviour
- Value and support people involved in the organisation's work

4. Exercising Control

- Implement proper financial and risk management
- Comply with legal and regulatory obligations
- Safeguard resources (funding, people, reputation)

5. Behaving with Integrity

- Act in the best interest of the choir
- Maintain ethical standards and confidentiality
- Manage conflicts of interest transparently

6. Being Accountable and Transparent

- Demonstrate accountability to beneficiaries, funders, and the public
- Provide accurate annual reports and financial statements
- Communicate openly about governance and performance



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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Here are some resources to support choirs and singing groups to develop a space that is inclusive and supportive for everyone.

Sing Ireland's mission is to enhance people's lives through singing. By taking guidance from the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights, and Diversity Policy 2019 document and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Equality Scheme, Sing Ireland takes a proactive and focused approach to guaranteeing a basic human right, ensuring that everyone who lives in Ireland has the opportunity to engage with and participate in the arts, specifically group and choral singing.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy has informed all our programmes in recent years and it is at the heart of SI's plans for future projects and commitments. As we endeavour to create an equitable group singing society in Ireland incorporating our Inclusion and Diversity Policy in all our developments, we encourage singing groups to have their own policy and align with the national goal of creating more inclusive spaces across our diverse singing communities.

Below you can access our policy including an EDI guide for the group singing sector and an Action Plan Toolkit for Choirs and the group singing sector.

You can download our Policy and the toolkit here:

[Sing Ireland EDI Policy and Action Plan \(Updated July 2023\)](#)

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Singing Sustainably

Sing Ireland recognises the urgent need for all organisations and individuals to address the climate crisis and acknowledges the unavoidable impact it has on our environment and communities. We are committed to supporting the Group Singing Sector in exploring and accessing ways to make their choirs more sustainable and to consider the climate in all that they do.

You can download Sing Ireland's Sustainability Policy below, along with a useful flyer for choirs and singing groups with ideas on how to being to make their choirs more sustainable.

*Please note all policies should be adapted to individual group's goals and capacity.

Climate Action Policy

[You can download our Climate Action Policy here.](#)

[You can download our Sing Sustainably Ideas for Choirs and Singing Groups here.](#)



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Sing Ireland Sustainability Questionnaire and Self-Audit

Please assess your choir's sustainability practices in the following areas:

Waste Management

- ☐ Does your choir use reusable or biodegradable materials for events (e.g. programmes, water bottles)?
- ☐ How does your choir handle waste during rehearsals and performances (e.g. recycling, composting)?
- ☐ Does your choir have a waste reduction plan in place for future events?

Travel Practices

- ☐ How does your choir manage transportation to and from rehearsals and performances?
(e.g. carpooling, public transport, shared transport options)
- ☐ Does your choir consider carbon emissions when planning travel for tours or performances?

Event Sustainability

- ☐ Are your choir's events planned with sustainability in mind (e.g. energy-efficient lighting, eco-friendly venue selection)?
- ☐ Does your choir aim to reduce the environmental impact of materials used for concerts, such as printed programmes?
- ☐ Are you using digital platforms or reducing paper waste for communication within the choir?

Community Engagement and Education

- ☐ Does your choir actively promote sustainability awareness within its members and the local community?
- ☐ Are you involved in initiatives that raise awareness of environmental issues through music?

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Next Steps

- Identify your choir's organisational type (most are Type A)
- Use the Governance Code checklists to assess your current practices
- Begin implementing actions or explain gaps where necessary
- Publicly state your adoption of the Code (e.g. on your website or in reports).

Contact us directly at Sing Ireland if you have further queries about your choir or singing group's governance. Email info@singireland.ie