

Setting up a Choir

Step 1

Get help

- You don't need to tackle it all yourself - find a group of like-minded individuals to help you out. A team approach will be more fun, effective and give you more time to enjoy taking part in the choir. Sing Ireland can help you with advice on governance, repertoire, insurance, risers and more.
- What type of group? Decide on the type of choir you want to create, it could be a:
 - Community Choir – that's open to anybody
 - Auditioned choir – members are required to audition
 - Workplace choir – members are from a company
 - Children's/youth choir – members are from a set age group
 - School/University choir – based in a primary school/secondary school/university
 - Church/Religious choir – attached to a religious institution (church/cathedral etc.)
 - Chamber choir- has approx. 30 members
 - Gospel choir – sings gospel music
 - Choral society- often 100+ members (can have less)
 - Mixed/Female/Male/non-binary – what voices are you looking for?
 - A cappella/Accompanied – will your choir sing unaccompanied, accompanied or may be both?

Step 2

Set the aims and purpose

- A clear purpose will help your choir flourish, so start off by defining this purpose by creating a constitution.
- In this you will lay out the following: Name, Aims & Objectives, Membership, Attendance at Rehearsals, Care of Music, Choir Uniform, Administration and more.
- Then start recruiting and find a performance goal to aim for. This could be as simple as a small performance to friends and family or a performance at a local hospice or care home.

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Step 3

Where and when

- Decide on a time and place to rehearse suitable for your group. It could be a:
 - Community hall
 - Church/Parish Centre
 - Hotel
 - School/University
 - Workplace

Step 4

Recruiting members

- Use word of mouth, local media, the internet and social media, create posters and flyers.
- Sing Ireland has a section on our website for choirs seeking members where you can advertise on our 'Opportunities' page.

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:
 - www.singireland.ie
 - www.journalofmusic.com
 - www.creativecareers.ie
 - www.artsmanagement.ie
 - www.IAYO.ie
 - www.ppmta.ie
 - Local arts office websites/newsletters
 - Share it on social media

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. This can be made up of from elected members of the choir or parents/teachers of the group.

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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. You could ask for a donation or fee to participate in the choir, find sponsorship from a local company or apply for funding from local arts offices.

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.
 - 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 SING IRELAND library, public 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 see our guidelines on copyright.

Step 9

Most importantly, have fun and enjoy!

Remember group singing has been scientifically proven to lower stress, relieve anxiety, and elevate endorphins. The release of these endorphins can leave you feeling completely rejuvenated.