

Citizens of the World Choir

Press Guidelines

Mission Statement

Citizens of the World Choir is a professional musical organisation celebrating the artistry, heritage and humanity of people seeking sanctuary and their allies. We advocate for understanding, dignity and kindness through music. We were established in 2017 in London in response to the refugee crisis.

Working with Us

Practical Requirements

- **Space:** We're a vibrant, large choir requiring clear sightlines between piano and conductor
- **Timing:** Please allow 4 - 5x longer for activities - thoughtful, inclusive practice across languages and cultures takes time, and we've found it creates much richer conversations
- **Staff:** Your dedicated point of contact will be our Pastoral & Community Manager, who will be clearly introduced on the day. We work together as a team to ensure everyone feels supported throughout interviews, so no unsupported interviews will take place

Support Needs

- **Cultural & Religious Respect:** We'd appreciate your awareness when members may be observing religious festivals such as Ramadan. Some members may value privacy for prayer, and please be especially gentle with those who are fasting.
- **Costumes:** Our joyful choir colours are green, cream, yellow, purple & sparkles! Members wear clothing that beautifully represents their culture and heritage. If your shoot requires a specific aesthetic, we'd be grateful if you could provide those items or budget to help source them
- Some of our choir members have access needs. Please talk with us before doing press interviews.

Communication Guidelines

Creating Comfortable Conversations

- **Language:** Please speak slowly and clearly in plain English, as it's often a second or third language - and know that the depth of response makes the patience worthwhile
- **Timing:** Allow

time for responses and introductions - every voice deserves to be properly heard

- **Questions:** We love gentle, open-ended questions that allow our members full autonomy over their responses

Questions that Work Beautifully ✓

- "What's your name?" (Please be aware that many use chosen or Anglicised names)
- "What music brings you joy?"
- "Have you sung in a choir before?"
- "Tell us about music in your life?"
- "Where are you from and how did you find your way to the UK?" (most members are happy to share headline stories)

Please Avoid ✗

- Detailed questions about journeys or trauma without prior discussion with our team ● Assumptions about experiences, triggers, or cultural backgrounds

Storytelling & Media

Our Core Values

- **Consent:** Always fully informed and can be withdrawn at any time - we deeply respect this ● **Agency:** Members have complete control over what, when, and how they share their stories ● **Expertise:** We celebrate lived experience as invaluable expertise, not just vulnerability ● **Rich Diversity:** Please avoid single narratives - there's space for joy, dreams, everyday moments, not just trauma or "superhero" stories

Collaborative Best Practice

- Be wonderfully upfront about why you'd like to hear or record someone's story ● Share your thoughtful questions with our team in advance - we love collaborating on this ● Follow up afterwards to check how people are feeling - this care extends beyond the interview
- Consider how members might be involved as co-producers or consultants
- Help us guard against pressure to fit "good immigrant" narratives

Credits & References

- Please refer to us as "Citizens of the World Choir"

- We're a "professional musical organisation" (not a community choir)
- We'd be grateful if you could consult with us on press releases and photo credits before publication - this helps us safeguard our wonderful members

Our Favourite Conversation Starter

When in doubt, ask about favourite meals - everybody absolutely loves talking about food and it never fails to spark joy!

Thank you for taking the time to understand how to work with us thoughtfully. We're genuinely excited about the stories we'll share together.

For further reading: The Platforma Manifesto, Freedom From Torture's Messaging Guide, and the Refugee Week shared values document.