

Working with Citizens of the World Choir

A Guide for Visiting Creatives and Associate Artists

Welcome! We're so glad you're here.

Who We Are

Citizens of the World Choir is the UK's leading refugee and allies choir—a professional musical organisation celebrating the artistry, heritage and humanity of people seeking sanctuary. Through music, we advocate for understanding, dignity and kindness.

Inclusive practice is simply good practice. It requires care, attention and resources—and it's worth all of that. We want to work with you in the best way for YOU. Please tell us what you need to do your best work. We may not be able to provide everything, but we always want to know what's important to you.

Working with Us

What You Need to Know

The choir: We're usually 40-50 members strong, so we need spacious setups with clear sightlines between piano and conductor.

Time: Everything takes longer when you're working across multiple languages, cultures and lived experiences—and that's a beautiful thing. Build in 4-5x more time than you might usually need for activities.

Language: English is often a second or third language for our members. Speak slowly, clearly, and give people time to process and respond.

Music: We always sing with piano or keyboard, and our members and musicians need to stay in the conductor's eyeline.

Access needs: Some of our members may have access needs, so please check with us beforehand. Please also let us know if there's any support or adjustments we can provide -

whether mobility, sensory, learning, or wellbeing-related - to help you feel comfortable and fully participate.

What We'll Provide

You'll have access to a warm green room with food and hot and soft drinks. Our support team includes a Conductor, Pianist, Music Team, Rehearsal Manager, Pastoral Care & Community Manager, and Producer—all here to help make your session run smoothly.

And we're always available if you need guidance or have questions.

What We'd Love from You

Be yourself. Wear whatever best represents you. (If you're curious, our colours are green, cream, yellow, purple—and sparkles.)

Tell us your needs. Let us know about green room requirements, religious considerations, accessibility needs, or anything else that helps you do your best work.

Share your credit preferences. How would you like to be credited in photos and videos?

Bring patience. Group introductions can take 30-40 minutes. We don't rush—everyone deserves to be seen and welcomed.

Communication Guidelines

Our Simple Rule

Don't ask inappropriate or personal questions. People share their stories when they're ready.

Questions That Work Well ✓

- "What's your name?" (be aware many members use Anglicised or chosen names)
- "What music do you love?"
- "Have you sung in a choir before?"
- "Tell us about music in your life?"
- "Where are you from and how did you end up in the UK?" (most people are happy with headline answers)
- "What would you want to get out of this session?"

Approach with Care

If you're planning to ask more detailed questions, prepare them in advance and share them with our team.

Remember: trauma triggers are unpredictable. They could be anything from family memories to a line of poetry. Always allow members autonomy over what they choose to share.

Make space for joyful stories, not just trauma or "superhero" narratives. People are whole, complex, multifaceted humans.

Emergency Conversation Starter

When in doubt, ask about favourite meals. We all LOVE talking about food!

Storytelling & Sharing

If your work involves members sharing personal stories, please consider: **Be honest with**

yourself: Why do you want someone's story? What purpose does it serve?

Ensure informed consent: Make sure people understand how and where their stories will be shared. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Support agency: Who decides what gets shared? Help people set their own boundaries and honor them.

Check in afterwards: Follow up to see how people are feeling, especially if they've shared difficult experiences.

Recognise expertise: Frame lived experience as valuable knowledge. Could members take on consultancy or co-producer roles rather than just sharing stories?

Remember humanity first: People don't need to prove "societal contribution" to matter. They're allowed to just be themselves.

Practical Notes

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

One More Thing

We're all human. This is a living document, shaped by our experience since 2017. Your feedback helps us learn and evolve our practice together.

We're thrilled to work with you and can't wait to see what we create together.

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