

**Rising Voices Wessex
Musical Director
Job Description**



**Responsible to the Trustees
Advising the Steering Group**

**Position in the organisation:
Board of Trustees
Musical Director
Steering Group**

Rising Voices Wessex are community choirs for people affected by cancer is a registered Charity. The focus of Rising Voices Wessex is to support people affected by cancer through group singing, social contact and performance. Its focus is especially directed to those in the recovery phase following cancer treatment but also embraces those living with cancer, their carers or those recently bereaved. This includes health care professionals working with cancer. There are recognised links between music and health, both physical and spiritual. Involvement with music making has benefits for people in such circumstances. Rising Voices Wessex has support and encouragement from a number of organisations including Bournemouth and Poole Hospitals.

Job Title: - Musical Director

Reports To: - Rising Voices Trustees and Steering Group

The Music Director will be self- employed (see Terms of Engagement for further details).

Summary of Main Duties:

- a) to effect the musical training of Rising Voices Wessex choirs in such works as shall be chosen and agreed with the Steering Group/Music Group of the Charity and hold regular rehearsals for this purpose;
- b) to conduct and direct the choirs and other performers at concerts, shows, competitions or other events as shall be fixed;
- c) to select music for the choirs and to work with the Steering Group/Music Group in selecting music for the choirs;
- d) to ensure that the highest possible musical standards are achieved both at rehearsals and concerts, consistent with the charities musical and financial resources;
- e) there is no audition for prospective choir members, however the Musical Director is expected to make recommendations to the Steering Group/Music Group for the engagement of soloists and other performers needed for concerts, and to audition them if necessary.

In General:

The Musical Director will have the ability to play and conduct and be expected, in conjunction with representatives of the choir(s), to plan and prepare a varied musical repertoire that is appropriate to the mixed musical abilities of the choir members. The Musical Director will be expected to lead the choir(s) in weekly rehearsals, creating a stimulating and supportive ambience for members to learn music and enjoy singing. Currently the expectation is that most rehearsals will be conducted solely by the Musical Director, with assistance from an accompanist when appropriate funding permits.

The Musical Director will be part of the overall project to take forward the further development of local community choirs that link singing with recovery of health and wellbeing for people affected by cancer - in accordance with principles outlined within the NHS five year plan (2014).

Evidence shows that by participating in music making there is an improvement to individual's health and wellbeing. It also offers individuals a means that can help them communicate their feelings and emotions at times of difficulty. It also helps in combatting loneliness.

Rising Voices Wessex community choirs offer weekly choir sessions for individuals affected by cancer, irrespective of their ability to sing. The choirs' venues are currently the New Church, Tuckton and St John's Church, Parkstone, Poole. Rehearsals are on a Monday and Tuesday evenings respectively.

Since the 2020 Covid 19 crisis the choirs have been led on Monday and Tuesday evenings online using Zoom - of necessity employing different skills in comparison with traditional rehearsals. These rehearsals have been 60 minutes in duration. Normal rehearsals will resume when it is safe to do so, In the light of experience gained during the pandemic 'lockdown' online Zoom rehearsals/music learning sessions may continue to be used on occasions.

The aim of Rising Voice Wessex Choir(s) is that participants are encouraged to gain/regain singing skills, in turn restoring confidence that will enhance their recovery, health and wellbeing.

The choir(s) aspires to musical standards suitable for public performance in a range of venues and settings. Although public performance is not expected or demanded of individual choir members, it is encouraged since it offers twin benefits of enhancing health, wellbeing and confidence through a sense of achievement for those taking part combined with being a key opportunity to demonstrate publicly the benefits and enjoyment of singing in such a choir.

Choir membership is open to the groups of people described above affected by cancer in Dorset, Hampshire or Wiltshire - no audition is required to be a choir member.

Choir members are not expected or required to be able to read music – and members will receive appropriate tuition in learning parts along with access to lyrics and backing tracks.

The post holder will have:

- motivational skills and ability to work with individuals who may have difficult personal circumstances,
- a background in formal music training or equivalent qualifying musical experience,
- understanding of written music theory,
- appropriate experience of leading and directing choirs,
- a strong desire to build a community through group singing,
- a genuine love of, and sense of ease with, people of all musical backgrounds,
- appropriate insurance as a freelance musician.

The post holder will:

- work closely with the Trustees operationally and strategically to achieve the objectives of Rising Voices Wessex as outlined in its Constitution. This does include attending meetings in an advisory capacity and Trustee meetings if requested,
- be familiar with the Strategy and Policies of the Charity available at www.risingvoices.org.uk
- provide relevant feedback to the Trustees on the progress and development of the choirs,
- submit an annual report on the choirs' progress suitable for incorporation into the Annual General Meeting and Annual Report of Rising Voices Wessex that is submitted to the Charity Commission,
- be available to lead the regular Monday and Tuesday rehearsal sessions in person or online or, if unavailable, identify a suitable deputy to take the specific rehearsals,
- provide basic equipment for backing tracks and performances,
- prepare appropriately for rehearsal sessions including the provision and management of additional necessary resources and equipment to support the rehearsal e.g. playback equipment, backing tracks, etc.
- ensure that all participants have access to the lyrics and resources they require for rehearsals and performances via the members page on the website,
- offer reasonable flexibility about working hours relating to weekend and /or evening performances,

- be involved in the negotiations and development for events and performances and prepare appropriately,
- have a driving licence and be able to provide own transport,
- support an Accompanist/Deputy Director/work experience student, as required.

Development of Rising Voices Wessex:

- To support local people affected by cancer to engage within the community choirs.
- To act as a creative leader for the group to ensure good understanding of ability and range.
- In conjunction with the Trustees promote Rising Voices Wessex to appropriate audiences, professional groups and sponsors.
- To support the development of other Rising Voices choirs within Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

Performances:

Performances are an intrinsic part of Rising Voices Wessex, Big or small performances give members something to work towards, build confidence as individuals and a choir and also help to promote the charity to the public.

The Musical Director will be expected to:

- work with the group in the development of performances for families, friends and a broader audience;
- seek alternative options for the choirs to be able to perform at various events both locally and nationally as appropriate;
- work to ensure that both Bournemouth and Poole choirs can perform as one.

Terms:

Fees: Will be based on each 2 hour rehearsal, (or one hour during the Covid 19 crisis) this includes preparation time, travel, expenses and meetings as required. Fees for taking performances will be arranged separately and will be additional to the regular weekly rehearsal payments. See Terms of Engagement for further details.

Equal Opportunities:

Rising Voices is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity with respect to all involved in the organisation and every member of the choir's shares in the responsibility for ensuring that the policy is followed by:

- Developing and awareness and understanding about the equal opportunities issues.
- Practising in a manner consistent with equality of opportunity.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of equality of opportunity within the Rising Voices Wessex.

Learning and Development:

- Rising Voices Wessex is committed to encouraging continuing personal development and encourages the appointee to seek out learning opportunities and participate in development activities as part of and pertinent to their role. These are considered within the framework of the annual review.
- This job description reflects that the individual will work flexibly as a member of the Rising Voices Wessex team (volunteers, Steering Group, Trustees).
- Amendments to duties and responsibilities which are in line with the post can be expected from time to time as the organisation changes. Any significant changes will be discussed and agreed with the appointee as they arise and amendments made to the job description if required.