

# **SING INSIDE: STRATEGY**

**2022-2025**



# WHO WE ARE

In 2015 Sing Inside was founded as a student society, expanding from an initial project run by the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. For several years, consecutive student committees expanded our grassroots work into new prisons, also engaging with members of the local community to build our volunteer base. In 2018, a branch of Sing Inside was set up in Oxford, alongside new relationships with prisons in Staffordshire.

Sing Inside was registered as a CIO with the Charity Commission for England and Wales in March 2019, to ensure accountability to our wide range of stakeholders and robust scrutiny of our work and impact. Since then, the organisation has continued to develop, expanding into the University of York and visiting a number of new prisons in London and the South East. Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, Sing Inside was providing regular face-to-face work in 16 prisons.

During the Covid-19 pandemic Sing Inside's face-to-face activity halted, but new connections were made with a number of prisons through delivery of over 1,000 remote learning packs to 27 prisons across England, Wales and Scotland. In May 2020, the murder of George Floyd led to renewed conversations about the structures of racism at play across charities and the criminal justice system. Sing Inside's board of trustees and executive team engaged consultancy firm Strawberry Words to support initial action planning on how to become an actively anti-racist organisation.

This strategy aims to stabilise Sing Inside's operational model and secure a sustainable future for the charity through increased income and establishing a paid executive team. We want to build on learning from the Covid-19 pandemic, adapting our services after people in prison have experienced a long period of intense isolation. We want to focus our workshops on community wellbeing and connections, providing enjoyable and meaningful opportunities to sing with others. We want to connect with a wider range of volunteers by developing a stronger focus on local communities, as well as student populations. Finally, we want to start embedding our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist organisation across all workstreams over the next three years, while acknowledging that this work is never finished.



**Sing Inside  
developed from a  
grassroots student  
volunteering project  
founded in 2015.**



# MISSION

**Singing together in  
prisons to inspire  
hope, increase  
confidence and  
build communities**

**Sing Inside provides group singing workshops in prisons across England and Wales.**

**We enable all participants to enjoy singing with others free from judgement or assessment, inspiring hope and confidence, and facilitating connection to others.**

**We train confident, inspiring community music leaders who deliver engaging, accessible singing sessions.**

**We prioritise enjoyment in our approach to learning to increase confidence, promote teamwork and encourage participants to recognise their individual contribution to a shared goal.**





To see opportunities  
for group singing in  
every prison in  
England and Wales,  
enabling people to  
thrive and connect  
with others..

# VISION

**We want to see opportunities for group singing in every prison in England and Wales, accessible to all, as part of a diverse range of educational and creative opportunities which inspire hope.**

**We want to see those with influence over prison regimes recognise that opportunities to have fun and share enjoyment with others are vital to encourage positive community engagement and social behaviour.**

**We want to see social barriers between people in prison and the general public eradicated through improved understanding of life inside prison, and to build a shared understanding of everyone's capacity to contribute positively.**





## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

We will lead community singing sessions in which all participants are included, trusted, supported and respected, and we will centre collaboration and co-production in our work to form genuinely equitable partnerships. We will build environments in which narratives of judgement or assessment are replaced by the importance of having fun with others to inspire hope and build communities.

We will live this value beyond the team-building environments of our workshops, and strive for collaborative partnerships with prisons, local communities, volunteers and other organisations. We want our partnerships to build on the unique perspectives and skills of different organisations and deliver projects which inspire people and change their lives.

We are flexible and we listen. We know that there are changing needs within the changing landscape of the criminal justice system. We will always respond to the individuals we work with and the systems we work within in order to deliver tailored and rewarding programmes for all.

## FLEXIBLE

## INCLUSIVE AND ANTI-RACIST

We want to see a radically changed prison system and society: an anti-racist, equitable and inclusive environment in which violence, stigma and stereotype against minoritized groups is removed. We will strive to use any power and influence we have through our work to challenge violence, stigma and stereotype. We want our workshops to set an example of the incredible power that genuinely inclusive and anti-racist ways of working can have, and we commit to continuing to learn, listen and critique our work as we progress on this journey.

We will deliver high-quality educational sessions and think creatively about improving access to our work through continued remote engagement. We will pursue the importance of fun and enjoyment with others as a prerequisite for positive community engagement and social behaviours. We will stand up for the right of people in prison to access singing as a mechanism for this, and aim to change public perceptions around the importance of providing opportunities for fun to people in prison.

## AMBITIOUS

# VALUES



# STRATEGIC PLAN

Between 2022 and 2025, our services will be:

**Community-driven,  
enjoyable and engaged with  
prison communities**

**Provide singing workshops as an  
opportunity for enjoyment and connection  
to others**

**Create workshop environments which are  
non-judgemental in an environment which  
is especially punitive, allowing individuals to  
self-assess their development**

**Introduce an Ambassador Scheme to  
provide meaningful opportunities for people  
in prison to engage continuously with Sing  
Inside**

**Seek partnerships and understanding from  
wellbeing and mental health  
practitioners/organisations to prioritise  
community wellbeing in our work after a  
period of intense isolation**

**Diversify our musical offering in line with  
our anti-racism work and partner with new  
musical practitioners with expertise in other  
musical genres and cultures, to provide  
more diverse singing experiences**

**Locally-focused, tailored and  
collaborative**

**Place local communities at the heart of our  
volunteer recruitment and engagement,  
reducing the need to retrain committees  
annually while maintaining engagement  
with students and universities.**

**Form mutually beneficial partnerships with  
community organisations and projects to  
develop localised ways of working which  
are accessible, anti-racist and enjoyable for  
all**

**Capture and analyse additional feedback  
and demographic data from our  
stakeholders; use this data to set clear  
targets for diversifying our volunteer base  
and tailor volunteering opportunities to  
local interest**

**Improve our engagement with people in  
prison, clearly communicating a timetable of  
sessions and driving engagement by  
tailoring our workshops to the specific  
interests of different prison communities**

**Researching and supporting existing anti-  
racism work within the prisons we work in,  
and designing singing projects to support  
this work**

**Sustainable, inclusive and  
anti-racist**

**Secure the necessary resource to  
achieve our goals through increasing  
income from donations and grants by  
50%**

**Establish a small team of salaried  
executive staff to become a more  
effective, efficient organisation and  
reduce the risk of key volunteers  
leaving the charity**

**Improve organisational understanding  
of anti-racism by resourcing annual  
training for our trustees, staff and  
volunteers; further  
training/consultancy as appropriate;  
and working with organisations led by  
and focused on racially minoritised  
people**

**Embed remote learning resources in a  
hybrid workshop model, providing  
extended provision between face-to-  
face workshops and resources for  
extended learning**

**Assess our carbon footprint and set  
reduction targets across Sing Inside's  
outputs**





It couldn't possibly have been better. I was treated as a human being. Not once did I feel like a prisoner. I had a little private cry at lunchtime.

{Workshop participant}

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