



Associate Choral Leader (Diocese of Manchester: Children's Choirs) *September 2025 – July 2026*

This training programme offers an emerging choral conductor or vocal leader the opportunity to support existing young singer initiatives and develop new opportunities for young people within the Diocese of Manchester, while also receiving regular, intensive training and mentorship from the music team at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London.

The Associate Choral Leader (Diocese of Manchester Children's Choirs) training programme is designed for choral conductors or vocal amateurs in the early stages of their professional career who are looking to develop their skills to a high level. The training programme includes supporting the growth of both new and existing children's choirs based at St Stephen's, Audenshaw and Oldham Parish Church, as well as strengthening relationships with local primary and secondary schools.

This is part of a wider project called 'Sing my Soul', which aims to develop new music and faith initiatives in a number of churches in the Diocese of Manchester.

Existing projects developed in 2024-2025

During the 2024–25 academic year, the Associate Choral Leader for Children's Choirs established strong relationships with a range of schools and churches and successfully launched stand-alone children's choirs that are now showing promising growth.

Children's Choir at Oldham Parish Church (12pm – 1pm on Sundays)

Deliver weekly choir sessions, working with both the clergy and Sunday School team at the Church. Growth opportunities around further recruitment and future performances, potentially involving the adult choir.

Choir at Holy Cross Primary School, Oldham (lunchtime on Mondays)

Weekly lunchtime sessions working towards a performance in the end of term service at Oldham Parish Church. Growth opportunities across other year groups and/or replicating the idea in other schools in the area. *Note: this day is potentially flexible and open to change.*

Junior Choir at Bolton parish Church (6pm – 7pm on Thursdays)

This project is in the early stages of development – an evening Junior Choir rehearsal before the adult choir rehearses. Workshops in schools are currently underway to help with recruitment – working with the Director of Music to build on this together.

St Martin-in-the-Fields Associate Choral Leader Training Programme

As part of the training programme, the Associate Choral Leader will take part in a structured programme of professional development, delivered approximately six times per academic term. These sessions bring together Choral Leaders from across the UK, creating a supportive and inspiring learning environment.

Recent workshops have included:

- Conducting technique with Patrick Russill
- Working with children's voices with Laurel Neighbour
- Vocal health with Charlotte Mobbs
- Orchestral conducting with Alice Farnham

The training programme is led by Olivia Tait, Assistant Director of Music at St Martin-in-the-Fields, and follows a hybrid model. Each term includes around three online sessions and three in-person workshops, typically held on Tuesday afternoons.

Aims

The aim of this training programme is to develop and strengthen your skills in leading children's and youth choirs, while also building meaningful relationships with local schools and churches that may benefit from community support and the opportunities that choral singing can offer. A key focus is to build on the foundations laid in 2024–25, nurturing and expanding these initiatives further. This includes working closely with churches to help grow and support their local communities through music.

Schedule

The training programme is designed to reflect an average commitment of two days per week, including time for preparation and the administration required to support the choirs you are developing. Due to the nature of the work, the schedule will be varied and may include some Sunday morning commitments e.g. occasional performances at Oldham and Bolton Parish Churches.

- **Training and Development:** Six sessions per term (three online, three in person) held on Tuesday afternoons from 2.00–5.00pm at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London.
- **School Engagement:** Approximately one day per week (flexibly scheduled) for rehearsals and workshops in local schools.
- **Sunday Commitments:** Lunchtime children's choir at Oldham Parish Church.
- **Project Work:** Additional project-based opportunities may arise and will be agreed in writing prior to the start of each term.

This is not an exhaustive list. The Associate Choral Leader is encouraged to shape and expand the schedule in ways that support wider community engagement and the continued growth of music provision across the Diocese.

Through and since the pandemic, St Martin's and the Diocese of Manchester have established a hybrid model of in-person and online worship. All of the services and events may also be either live-streamed or recorded for future broadcast on our social media channels.

Schedule

The Associate Choral Leader for Children's Choirs will broadly follow school term dates, with some flexibility at the beginning and end of each term. This ten-month programme runs from September 2025 to July 2026 and includes breaks at half-term.

- **Autumn Term:** Sunday 14 September – Sunday 7 December 2025 (inclusive)
- **Spring Term:** Sunday 11 January – Sunday 22 March 2026 (inclusive)
- **Summer Term:** Sunday 19 April – Sunday 12 July 2026 (inclusive)

The Associate Choral Leader is encouraged to work collaboratively with schools and churches to create performance opportunities for the choirs they are working with. These may fall outside the above term dates - for example, during Holy Week or for carol services in December.

Conditions

We envisage this being a two day a week programme during school term time. The Associate Choral Leader will receive £9,000 paid in six equal instalments throughout the year.

The costs of travel down to London for the in-person workshops will be covered by St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Throughout this period, you will be an Associate Choral Leader and considered to be a freelancer and not an employee. Nothing in this document is intended to create a relationship of employer and employee between you and St Martin-in-the-Fields or the Diocese of Manchester.

The Choral Leadership will run from September 2025 to July 2026. It will be renewed in exceptional circumstances subject to re-interview. You will work under the supervision of the Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music of St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Eligibility

The scheme is aimed at choral conductors who are in the first stage of a professional career and wish to develop their skills to a high level, particularly in working with children's choirs. In particular, we are looking for:

- Relevant vocal leading experience, and some choral conducting experience
- Experience of working with children and enthusiasm for children's choral singing
- Enthusiasm for working as a member of a team, together with a willingness to develop their own musical talent
- Understanding and commitment to relevant safeguarding requirements
- Experience in administration and organisation, working alongside the St Martin's Music Administrator and local clergy to develop relationships with schools
- A basic level of keyboard skills is required (e.g. to be able to lead a rehearsal from the keyboard).
- Able to work in sympathy with the aims and the ethos of the Church of England and Diocese of Manchester

Safeguarding

The Associate Choral Leader will work within the Church of England's safeguarding framework. They will need to adhere to the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese of Manchester, including undertaking all training required by the diocese and co-operating with the clergy and safeguarding officers. An enhanced DBS will be required.

Our ambition is to work together to promote a more inclusive environment, which attracts all candidates and signals our commitment to celebrate and promote diversity. We particularly encourage applications from those who are currently underrepresented within choral music.

To apply

Please return the application form, along with a **current CV**, by email to Alicia Hinchliffe, Music Programme Manager at Alicia.hinchliffe@smitf.org by **Wednesday 9th July** at the latest.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to direct a short choral rehearsal, and undertake an interview. Auditions will take place on **Tuesday 15th July, 3-5pm (London)** or **Monday 21st July, 5-7.30pm (Manchester)**.