



2024-25

Annual Report

*Companion
~Voices~*

Singing for the end of life



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In our second Annual Report,
we are delighted to describe the achievements of
Companion Voices in the UK.

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Our Purpose

1

To sing at the bedside of people who are dying calls for special skills, both for singing in harmony and to maintain our presence in often emotional settings. As Companions we learn together, building our own relationships and abilities so that we are ready when call to sing.

2

Our service is given freely, although donations are welcome. The groups are self-sustaining through subscriptions from Companions and much goodwill from everyone.



Overview

In June 2025, we have 11 established local groups with 124 Companions meeting monthly to sing together, learning songs from the core repertoire and building their confidence to sing at the bedside of people who are dying.

In the year 24-25, we have made approximately 49 bedside visits, sometimes visiting the same person several times, and sending recordings to people when a visit was not possible.

Our groups have also been active in their local communities, singing at different events to demonstrate our work in singing at the bedside. All of these provide opportunities to demonstrate our singing and often lead to new requests for bedside visits.

Congratulations to everyone who has worked so hard to develop our service and to take our singing to the bedside of people who are dying and their families.



People and Local Groups

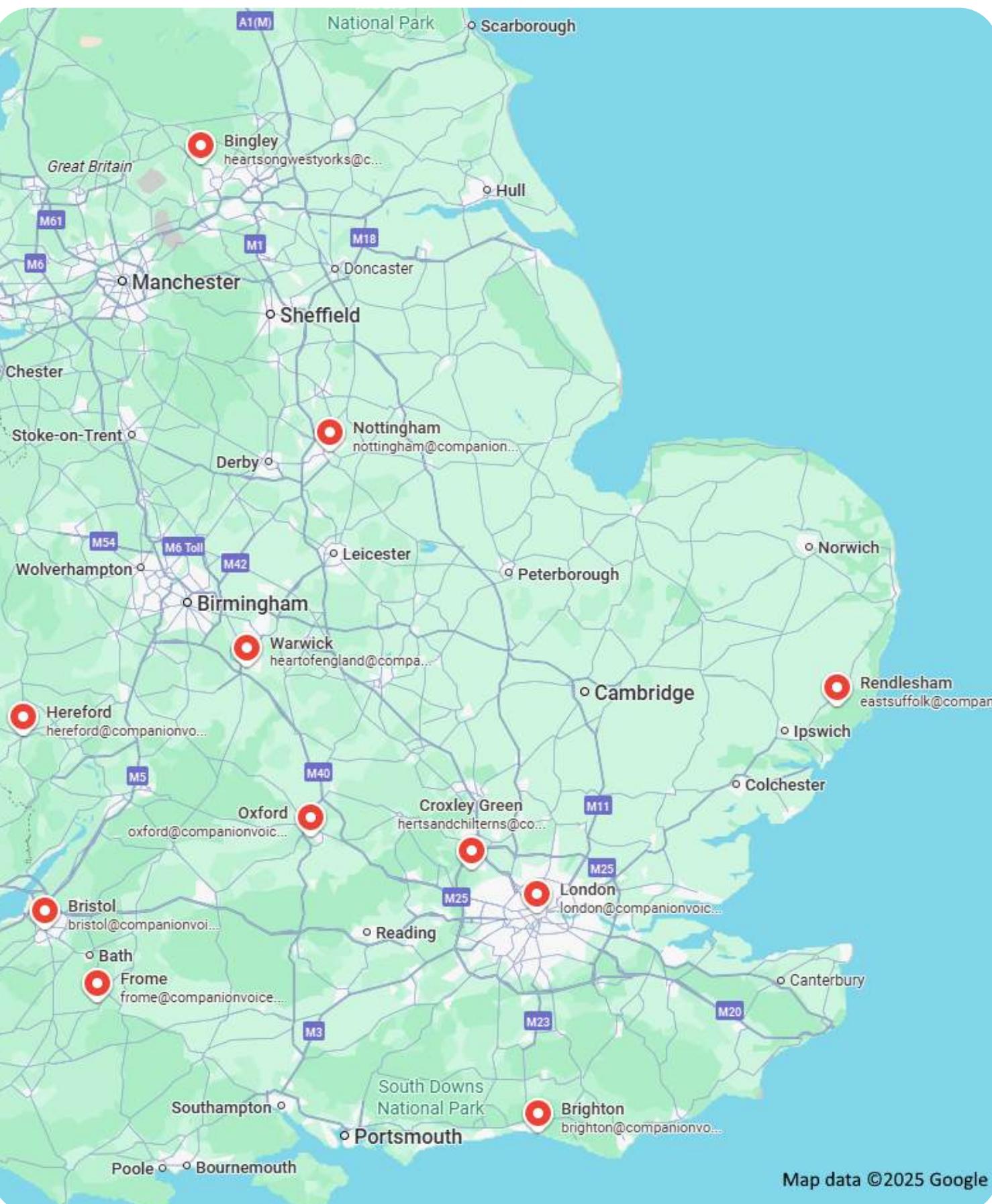
There are eleven Companion Voices groups across the country, and new groups planned for Norwich, Cambridge and Finland.

Existing groups are:

Bingley (West Yorks), Brighton, Bristol, East Suffolk,

Frome, Heart of England (Warwick), Hereford, Herts & Chilterns, London, Nottingham and Oxford.

Over 124 Companions including Group Leaders meet monthly, in local groups and online, to sing together, learning songs from our core repertoire and learning together about singing at the bedside of people who are dying.



Key Achievements

49 Bedside Visits

Two of us went to South London in mid 2024 to sing for a woman who was dying; we were the only ones available and felt very strongly called to go. Her husband had heard about us through the Advantages of Age Awards which we'd been nominated for in Nov 2023 and had presented/sung at: a friend of his had recommended us. Many of her friends and family were there, it was a very powerful experience - just a few songs but so well received and a sense that we'd been useful to them. (Herts and Chilterns)



November 2024: It was a very special sing as H loved the songs and was very moved. She had also just said goodbye to a very dear friend so our timing was right. We met early and had a good practice. We sang for about half an hour. We bonded well as a singing team. H was a Companion's mother. She shared how grateful she was. (Brighton)



Other Activities



Our groups offer talks about CV and demonstrations of our singing as an effective way to publicise the service and offer people a taste of our particular offering. Here are some of the places we have sung this year:

- Death Cafés and Dying Matters events
- Kindness Festival
- Hospice Memorial services – Light up a Life
- End of life events – Dancing around Death, Dead Good Festival
- Synagogue Shabbat service
- Public Workshops and Award ceremonies
- Promotional events at Quaker and Multi Faith Forums
- Mid-England Barrow
- London Road Cemetery and Arboretum
- Hereford Cathedral



The Companion Voices Repertoire

Companion Voices has an agreed repertoire of songs which are sung in harmony or as rounds. Many are in languages other than English and are suitable for people of all faiths or none. Some are lullabies and the aim is to create a soundscape that is both comforting and companionable. Songs outside the repertoire follow these guidelines and may be agreed with the network and included in our shared songs in future.

These are the songs most groups are singing:

Neesa Neesa, Yono Nikau, Oj Poved Kolo, Kindle a Flame, Simama, Yemaya of the Ocean, Courage, Let Peace Descend, Shalom/Deep Peace, I am a River, Akoyo Yemaya.



Looking Ahead

1

Expand the number of groups and Companions across the country and support the shared experience of Companion Voices through more joint activity across and between groups

2

Support the growth and development of Companion Voices CIC through new funding and additional paid staff

3

- Continue to provide mental health support to Companions
- Expand song repertoire
- Research additional song information
- Develop a research and evidence base

4

- Review EDI policy within CV and provide awareness training to leaders and Board
- Develop a research and evidence base
- through commissioned research