

NATURAL VOICE LEADERS TRAINING 2025

**Six-day Training, Wortley Hall, Sheffield, S35 7DB
Saturday 24th May to Friday 30th May 2025**

**2-part Modular Training, Gasworks Studio, Bristol
Part 1: Wednesday 24th to Saturday 27th September 2025
AND Part 2: Thursday 23rd to Sunday 26th October 2025**

With Frankie Armstrong and Sarah Harman, and visiting tutor Darien Pritchard

Frankie Armstrong and Sarah Harman lead this training. They are joined by visiting tutor Darien Pritchard. Frankie has run the Natural Voice Leaders Training since 1988, initially with Darien Pritchard, and, in recent years, with Sarah Harman. (See biographies of Frankie, Sarah and Darien below)

The course offers a unique opportunity to attend an intensive training programme, focusing on the melodic natural voice and using it with groups. It is designed for people who already run voice workshops or singing groups, those who wish to, or those who want to incorporate voice into their existing work. Sarah and Frankie model the importance of finding dynamic relaxation, using imagination and humour, and remembering that laughter is one of the best things for the body and voice.

The training contains a number of threads:

Your own voice

- working on and making the most of your own voice

Preparation for using the voice

- daily body/voice preparation sessions, focusing on aspects of body release and energising that relate directly to vocal expression
- individual and group activities that aid voice development
- the appropriate steppingstones to help others make the most of their voices

Leading voice groups

- the process of working with groups
- structuring and pacing workshops
- teaching practice - leading vocal exercises, teaching songs (with supportive feedback)
- dealing with difficult situations/individuals
- creating and setting up improvisations

Applying this approach

- contexts in which this approach can be applied
- starting and sustaining choirs and other groups

Bodywork is an integral part of the training course. In addition to the daily physical preparation, visiting movement specialist Darien Pritchard helps participants understand the anatomy around breathing. He also uses his expertise as a Feldenkrais teacher to help participants maximise vocal release and physical support for the voice.

Participants receive a course handbook, containing comprehensive notes on the exercises, and practical information on freelance working as a voice leader. They also receive a CD or download with exercises for the body, the breath and the voice, and ways of exploring vocal technique.

Please look at the *About* page of the Natural Voice Practitioner Network website (<https://naturalvoice.net/about>) for a clear outline of the style and approach of this course.

The course is taught in two formats. In 2025, people can either attend

- an intensive, **six-day training**

OR

- **two 4-day modules in Bristol.**

Even if you have attended a workshop with Frankie or Sarah before, we would like to have a chat with you prior to booking to ensure that this is the right course for you and to make a personal connection. Please phone Frankie (+44) 7979597193

Notes for both the residential and the 2-part trainings:

IMPORTANT: Cancellation arrangements apply – see booking information.

PLEASE SEND APPLICATIONS TO: frankiearmstrong45@gmail.com

[Some past participants have managed to successfully apply for grants from Arts Training bodies, appropriate charitable bodies, through workplace further training and retraining schemes.]

Six-day Training

DATES: Saturday 24th May to Friday 30th May 2025

TIMES: The course starts with supper at 2.30pm (tbc) on the first day. We finish after lunch, at 2pm on the final day.

VENUE: Wortley Hall, Sheffield, S35 7DB www.wortleyhall.org.uk/

COST: The course fee is £995, including all teaching, refreshments and lunch each day. N.B. Accommodation is not provided but is available locally (see below). To reserve your place please send your booking form and a **non-refundable** deposit of £300. Final payment is due 4 weeks before the course starts.

ACCOMMODATION: The course is non-residential. You will need to arrange your own accommodation. This is available on-site at Wortley Hall. To discuss or book

this contact www.wortleyhall.org.uk or ring 0114 288 2100. Camping is also available at Wortley Hall or locally and there are a number of B and Bs in the area.

ACCESS: For access enquiries, contact Frankie Armstrong on 029 20480429

LOCATION: Detailed information about Wortley Hall can be found at:
www.wortleyhall.org.uk.

2-Part Modular training, Bristol

DATES: Part 1: Wednesday 24th to Saturday 27th September 2025
AND Part 2: Thursday 23rd to Sunday 26th October 2025

Each module starts at 2pm on the first day and finishes at 2pm, after lunch on the final day.

This course is non-residential.

VENUE: The Gasworks Studio, 27 Narrowways Rd, St. Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9XB

COST: The total course fee is £780. This consists of:
A **non-refundable** deposit of £300 to reserve your place. Final payment is due 4 weeks before the course starts.

Biographies



FRANKIE ARMSTRONG (www.frankiearmstrong.com) has sung professionally in the folk scene and the women's' and the peace movements since the 1960s. She pioneered community voice workshops in 1975. She continued her previous trade as a trainer in social and youth work alongside the voice workshops for a decade, before focusing exclusively on the voice workshops and singing.

Frankie has made 12 solo albums, as well as featuring on numerous shared and themed recordings. She has written an autobiography (*As Far As the Eye Can Sing*), co-edited *Well Tuned Women* (on women and voice) with Jenny Pearson, and also contributed chapters to 11 other books. Her most recent book (with Janet Rogers) is *Acting and Singing with Archetypes*.

She is President and founder of the Natural Voice Network, which grew out of her voice teaching and training work. Frankie is also an honorary member of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) of North America, and has been awarded the Gold Badge in 2018 by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

In London, Frankie is a guest teacher at the Central School of Speech and Drama (both on the drama therapy course and the Voice MA), and, for 23 years, regularly taught at the National Theatre Studio. She has been a tutor at International Voice Conferences in the UK, Australia and North America. For over 30 years, she has taken ‘apprentices’ and run training groups (often with Darien Pritchard) to pass on her approach and style of voice work.

Over the years she has run workshops with almost every kind of group – for children of all ages and abilities, professional theatre companies, community and women’s groups, people with disabilities, drama students, therapists, psychiatric patients, folk song students and the elderly. Whatever the focus of her workshops, she believes in creating a supportive, generous atmosphere where people do not feel judged or under pressure to get things “right”. The intention is to help us all find a creative balance between relaxation and energy.

It was her passion for the traditional styles of singing in the British Isles and from around the world that informed the development of her voice and singing workshops. Having been involved with folk and political songs since the 1950s, she’s always been fascinated by the way that voice can enhance the individual’s sense of well-being and also develop a sense of community. It can link us to the thread of song that comes down to us from our ancestors. Hence, she has always been interested in exploring voice and song in its historical, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions. She also sees the voice as a tool to aid our self-expression, creativity and confidence. And, for more than three decades, she has focused particularly on the body-voice connection, having worked and trained with a variety of bodywork and movement teachers.



SARAH HARMAN Sarah originally trained and worked in the theatre and has been leading singing workshops and choirs since 1988. She has led groups with absolute beginners, disabled people, young people on probation, people with dementia, those with mental health issues, in schools, hospices, hospitals and community settings. She has led training and workshops in the U.K, Nicaragua, Australia, France and Spain. She is particularly passionate about working with disadvantaged communities and believes that singing together in harmony is a fantastic way of bringing people together in supportive community.

Sarah currently runs two community choirs in Mid Wales. She will bring her experience of establishing and leading long-term groups to the Voice Leader training. With a strong belief that leading workshops requires considerable skill, awareness and planning, Sarah has developed workshop materials and exercises to help singers gain the ability and learn techniques for leading effective, inclusive and inspirational workshops. She has been designing and running training for workshop leaders and voice teachers since the early ‘90s. She worked as Training Manager for

Community Music Wales for whom she continues to design and run regular training for new and experienced community music tutors. She has also worked for the Arts Council of Wales and leads training for Citizens Advice (on Training and Supervision Skills, Mental Health and Dealing with Aggression).

Sarah is a song-writer and regular performer in styles ranging from folk to Baroque classical music. She sings with the duo Blameless Hussies and with her quartet, The Quiet Ranters. The songs she writes and sings are witty and thoughtful, bringing together the personal and the political.

Sarah and Frankie

Sarah and Frankie have run a variety of trainings and workshops together over the past two decades. These include Access and Inclusion, group-work skills, voice development and improvisation, as well as teaching songs from a variety of cultures and those that focus on social justice. They also perform together.

DARIEN PRITCHARD (www.dynamicmassage.co.uk)

Darien has been a body worker and massage trainer for more than four decades, and has written two massage textbooks. He is also qualified in the Feldenkrais Method® of movement awareness, which has influenced his work on body preparation for giving voice.

Darien and Frankie have run workshops together since the mid-1980s (including the training courses since 1988). Darien provides the detailed bodywork component that:

- prepares the body for free vocal expression;
- and aids understanding of aspects of our anatomy and their relevance to giving voice.