



25 August 2020

Dear all Musica members

Musica Risk Assessment and Guidance

This note supersedes the document of 16 August 2020.

You may have heard the government's good news guidance about singing, issued Thursday 13th August, but if not, we can now officially sing as non-professionals in small groups of no more than six people from a number of households *outdoors* and only people from two households *indoors* – *but see below for important changes to that guidance.*

We three, as the Musica Committee, have met and discussed to ensure we are complying with the latest guidance and are pleased that we can now restart, albeit in a somewhat restricted way. Our overriding concern is that we stay within the guidelines and recognise that we have a duty of care to the choir, making sure we are all safe.

Rehearsal guidance

The latest guidance was updated on 13th August and further updated since then.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

The following is from the guidance:

“Both professionals and non-professionals (meaning those participating in performing arts other than for work purposes), or groups which include non-professionals, should refer to this guidance for their activities. Organisations have a duty of care to volunteers and non-professionals to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. This guidance around working safely during COVID-19 should ensure that volunteers and non-professionals are afforded the same level of protection to their health and safety as employees and the self-employed. This guidance also sets out how organisations will want to think about managing audiences.

“Additional mitigations, such as extended social distancing, were previously required for singing, wind and brass given concerns that these were potentially higher risk activities. DCMS commissioned further scientific studies to be carried out to develop the scientific evidence on these activities, which has allowed us to reconsider appropriate mitigations. Both professionals and non-professionals can now engage in singing, wind and brass in line with this guidance. People should continue to socially distance from those they do not live with wherever possible and venues, performers and audiences matched to ensure 2m distancing applies wherever possible.”

The following sentence in the 13th August guidance has now been deleted:

“Social interactions should be limited to a group of no more than two households (indoors and out) or up to six people from different households (if outdoors).”

Instead, the amended guidance now includes this sentence:

“Within this guidance there are no set limits on the numbers who can be involved in planned non-professional activity taking place outside and/or in a Covid-secure venue.”

The guidance also states:

“... studies have also indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing in and attending events is likely to create risk. We are continuing to develop more detailed understanding of how to mitigate this potential aggregate risk.”

Elsewhere the guidance also states:

“Non-professionals should not engage in activities that may lead to social distancing being compromised.”

In response Musica provides the following guidance and risk mitigation for members.

What is the risk?

1. Group members transmit Covid-19 from/to other group members in a rehearsal
2. Group members catch Covid-19 in travelling to/from rehearsal
3. An infection caught at a rehearsal leads to the serious illness of members with underlying health conditions or being in a higher risk/vulnerable group, or of a vulnerable person living in a member's household (see NHS guidance: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>)

Musica-specific risk-minimisation

- The choir will adhere to current guidance and law and follow all reasonable safety precautions including social distancing.
- The choir will until further notice and change of guidance rehearse in small groups of no more than 6 in an outdoor setting.
- Members attending each Musica-designated rehearsal must affirm to others attending that
 - they do not have any current Covid-19 symptoms,
 - they have not been in close contact with anyone with Covid-19 symptoms in the past 6 days, to the best of their knowledge
- Members will inform a member of the Committee immediately if they develop Covid-19 symptoms or find that they have been in close contact with anyone with Covid-19.
- A record of all those attending each Musica-designated rehearsal is to be submitted to Secretary after each rehearsal
- All attending do so willingly and accept sole responsibility for determining personal compliance with the risk minimisation procedures outlined in this and other communications from Musica issued from time to time
- In order to reduce the risk to an absolute minimum, you may not attend if:
 - you have any of the recognised symptoms including a temperature above 37.5C
 - you are currently isolating because you have Covid-19, someone else in your household has Covid-19 or you are under quarantine or local lockdown
 - you have been in contact with someone with symptoms of Covid-19 in the previous 6 days

- It will be your own responsibility to determine and to declare if you meet any of these criteria for your safety and that of others
- It is the sole responsibility of individual members to ensure their travel to/from rehearsal is safe and complies with government regulations and guidance
- People who are at risk through underlying health conditions or are in a higher risk/vulnerable group or live in a household with any of the above should register this fact with the Secretary and discuss their participation with the MD and inform colleagues in rehearsal groups. Please see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>
- None of the above risk minimisations are completely reliable or exclude all potential carriers of Covid-19, but put together they are intended to keep everyone's awareness raised and therefore be in compliance with aspects of government guidance

Reducing the risk by creating low risk environment:

- All singing, including performances, will be outside wherever possible
- A safe distance of at least two metres will be kept between each person unless they are of the same household
- All singing will be forward facing, side by side, or in a circle whose size must be sufficient to allow two metres between each adjacent singer to prevent any individual being either face to face or directly in front of another singer
- Social distancing will be maintained on arrival, on departure and at any break of singing
- Any individual providing a location for a small group must adhere to government guidance for meeting people from outside their household. Ventilation, social distancing, sanitisation and other Covid-secure requirements must be in accordance with government guidelines. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>
- If a location, whether indoors or outdoors, is provided by an outside organisation, Musica requires that the venue is Covid-secure following government guidance, and that a compliant risk assessment issued by the venue host is made available to attendees and adhered to by all those attending

Reduce risk through safety measures applied to individuals:

- Face coverings may be worn at individual discretion (for example to reduce the chance of emission or inhalation of aerosols and droplets)
- Members may wish to use personal hand sanitiser at any time
- Gloves may be worn but any PPE must be brought and disposed of by the individual
- Music, refreshments, pencils or any other personal items used may not be shared.

Musica Charity Choir reputation

- It is important that we, our clientele, organisers and audiences have confidence in our response to the pandemic through our adherence to our guidance and risk assessment.

We are proceeding on the basis that we might be able to perform this year. Whilst this is extremely unlikely with audiences indoors, there may be other formats that will give us momentum and purpose and get us back in gear.

We will have Zoom meetings altogether interspersed by small group rehearsals as outlined above.

The next Zoom meeting will be on Thursday 10th September at 7.30pm, with Christmas folders to hand! Further Zoom meetings will follow at roughly 3 weekly intervals, with rehearsals at times/venues to be agreed by group members in between. Members who wish may choose to 'attend' Zoom meetings as observers rather than active participants, without using their own video or audio (in other words they will be able to see and hear what is being said, but won't be visible or

be heard by other participants). David can provide guidance how to do this. If you are unable to attend this first Zoom meeting, please let Ken know as normal.

From the 17th September we can be in groups in line with our guidance statement, ie outdoors in groups of up to six singers. This restriction will remain under regular review. Ken as MD will recommend groupings but these will not be set in stone provided groups maintain an SATB mix wherever possible.

Of course, any local restrictions which are imposed will supersede this guidance.

Ken, Laura and David

Committee members
Musica Charity Choir MK
Stay safe and well