

Rutland Choral Society Rehearsal Risk Assessment

Covid-19

January 2021

It is not possible to carry out a normal risk assessment for the transmission of Covid-19 because a Risk Assessment is usually based on known factors of the likelihood of an adverse event happening (in this case, choir members contacting the virus as a result of attending rehearsals) and knowledge of the effectiveness of the measures that can be implemented to reduce the risk of this happening (control measures). However, when it comes to the transmission of Covid-19 there are too many unknowns to be sure of the effectiveness of any such controls. This document, therefore, gives basic information regarding Covid-19 transmission and what is currently known about this in relation to singing. It also sets out how the virus could be transmitted to choir members at rehearsals. The Risk Assessment gives measures that will be taken to reduce the risk of this happening.

Individual choir members must decide for themselves what level of personal risk they are willing to carry and, therefore, whether they wish to attend rehearsals. The Committee must decide whether the necessary actions and the costs involved warrant the continuation of rehearsals during the pandemic, bearing in mind the numbers of members prepared to attend.

General Information

Transmission of Covid-19 is via virus particles in:

- Droplets – Due to their weight and size, droplets sink quickly to the ground and travel a maximum of 1 metre.
- Aerosols – Aerosols are a mixture of very small particles (in this case containing virus) suspended in air. If a person sheds virus when coughing/sneezing the virus can remain in the air for several minutes and be breathed in by another person.
- Contact transmission – Virus in droplets/aerosols and on surfaces. Others touch these surfaces and transfer the virus from hand to face (before washing hands).

Transmission of Covid-19 in relation to singing:

- Droplets – Ongoing research suggests there is no significant additional air movement in front of a singer's mouth during singing, even loud singing. Thus a distance of 2 metres can be viewed as a protective distance against droplet infection. At the time of writing this assessment, results of the research have yet to be published.
- Aerosols – To date there are no scientific studies regarding aerosols while singing, or any looking at the extent to which deep inhalation during singing increases the risk of infection. Ongoing research suggests that it must be assumed that singing can produce aerosols in the same way that speaking or resting breathing can and that protective measures need to be put in place.
- Contact Transmission – Risk of infection is, presumably the same for singers as anyone else.

Risks specifically associated with Choral Singing:

- Each singer creates aerosols
- Aerosols containing viruses will accumulate in a higher concentration in an enclosed space where a large number of people gather.
- The longer the choir rehearses (without ventilating the room), the higher the virus particle concentration in the air.

Rehearsal Risk Assessment

Organisation responsible	Rutland Choral Society (RCS)
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Description of hazard:

Covid -19 is still circulating in the general population. Choir rehearsals are usually held every Monday evening (and the Friday evening and Saturday morning before a performance) from 19.15 – 20.30. A member of the Choir could contract the virus from another source. The Choir member could then transmit the virus during rehearsal to other RCS members via droplet or aerosol transmission from coughing or sneezing or via contact transmission from a contaminated surface in the rehearsal venue. It is also possible that the virus could be transmitted via contact transmission by anyone infected who might have used the venue prior to RCS rehearsals.

In the event of a member testing positive, it is likely that the whole of the rehearsal attendees will need to isolate for 14 days.

Who is affected:

RCS members, Musical Director and Accompanist.

Outcome:

It is not possible to calculate the risk factors using the normal risk assessment scoring system of likelihood against severity. The likelihood of transmission of the virus cannot be accurately predicted. The severity of illness, if someone contracts the virus, could range from “no symptoms” to “major illness/death”

Time	Risk	Measure	Mitigating Action	Rationale	Person Responsible
In advance	Infection rate in our area	Continually check government Guidelines and local data. Check local restrictions.	Notify members of any possible cancellation of rehearsal	To ensure safety of rehearsal going ahead	Committee member (name)
	Size of venue	Ensure venue can safely accommodate expected numbers	Members to confirm their likely attendance in advance.	To prevent overcrowding	Membership Secretary
Before rehearsal	Contact tracing	All Contact details of members, Musical Director & Accompanist to be brought up to date.	Members to notify Membership Secretary of any change of details.	To ensure the accuracy of contact tracing.	Membership Secretary and all members
	Cash & cheque handling	All subs to be paid via internet banking	Members to notify Treasurer when paid.	Reduce risk of contamination through cash and cheque handling	All members and Treasurer

	Health risk to all	Member self-screen to assess degree of carrier risk	Members complete health declaration and sign an undertaking before return to live rehearsal. They will not be permitted to enter the rehearsal without this signed declaration. This undertaking to apply to ALL rehearsals	Reduce likelihood of potential carrier attending rehearsal	All members + 1 Committee member
			Temperature check before entry to rehearsal. Must be below 37.5°C. If above, member will be politely denied access	As above	Chair
	Track and Trace	Member contact details	Track and Trace QR code for venue used where possible. Otherwise details to be checked.	Information to be passed on to NHS Track and Trace scheme if required	Chair/Membership Secretary
	Safety & cleanliness of Venue	Venue surfaces de-contaminated	Confirm extent of appropriate cleaning routine before us by venue manager. All hard surfaces in the venue (e.g. chairs, table, piano, door handles) and toilets to be cleaned prior to rehearsal	Reduce risk of infection through contact with contaminated surfaces	Chair Name
		Hand sanitisation	Sanitiser spray/hand gel in entrance lobby for all members to use prior to entry.	As above	All members but Tricia Mulvaney to supervise
	Possible infection between individuals	Members to socially distance 2 metres at all times on arrival, during and leaving the venue.	Members to take responsibility at entrance of venue.	Reduce risk of infection through social distancing	All members
		Members to sit on pre-allocated chairs	Members to act responsibly	As above	All members
During Rehearsal	Transmission of droplets when singing	Ventilation	Fire doors/windows to be fully open during rehearsal if necessary – new venue is well ventilated	Reduced risk of infection through droplet or aerosol contamination.	Name

		Mouth/nose protection	All members to wear close-fitting face masks at all times during rehearsal.	As above	Individual members
		Spacing & Seating	There must be a minimum of 2 metres radius between and around individuals whilst singing	As above	All members
		Warm-Up	To be restricted to oral exercise with no 'bubbling' Face masks to be worn at all times	As above	All members
	Transmission of virus through handling of music scores	Cleanliness of equipment/music	No shared music. Members bring own music. RCS to supply own music stand and sanitise Piano/keyboard to be cleaned before and after use after use	Reduces risk of transmission through contact.	All members Chair MD and Accompanist
	Transmission of virus generally	Duration of rehearsal	Reduce duration of rehearsal to 1 hour and 15 minutes. No breaks	Reduce overall risk. Reduce the need for toilet break.	Musical Director
	Possible infection through lack of social distancing	Siting of singers	Singers to use 1 sanitised chair for all belongings – coat/bag/music and to remain in that chair for the duration of the rehearsal. All individuals to take away their own rubbish No shared drinks or food. No use of the kitchen Toilets to be used for emergency only and to be sanitised after use	Reduce overall risk Reduce overall risk	All Members All Members

After rehearsal	Possible infection between individuals	2 metre social distancing on leaving	Members to leave through the designated exit and act responsibly.	Reduce risk of infection through aerosols and droplets	All Members
	Possible contaminated material left behind	Ensure no rubbish has been left behind	Any rubbish to be placed in a black bin bag using rubber gloves	Reduce risk of infection through contact with contaminated surfaces	Chair
		Clean surfaces after use	RCS committee will take responsibility for cleaning and sanitising chairs and surfaces	As above	Debby I + 1 other trustee
Other Measures	Behaviour of individuals	Members to act responsibly in consideration of others	Follow the advice on “Dos and Don’ts”	Reduce risks to all members	All members
	Action required if an individual is not following guidelines	This behaviour could put people at risk	That member will be asked to leave	As above	Chair or deputy

Notes:

- The “Person Responsible” for each action will be nominated by the committee in advance of each rehearsal
- “Dos and Don’ts” can be found on the RCS website: www.rutlandchoralsociety.org.uk