



COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT: MUSIC IN LIVE SERVICES

This document is to help people to organize live music within services safely in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope it gives you a practical framework to think about what you need to do when restarting services and activities. There are many approaches to completing a risk assessment and this does not claim to be 'the' solution. Rather, it is one way to help evaluate and manage risk. The accompanying cover note sets out some further principles to guide your thinking.

Churches and cathedrals have been permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer since 13 June. Government guidance currently requires that a risk assessment is carried out for every building and site open to the public. From 4 July, church buildings will be allowed to reopen, providing physical distancing rules remain in place. The scientific consensus on singing in church remains controversial, but current government guidance advises against it. *Small choirs are allowed to sing, but congregational singing is still not allowed.*

Protecting those most at risk

Current evidence for COVID-19 shows that age, ethnicity, biological sex, disability, pregnancy and underlying health conditions place certain individuals at great risk from the disease. Taking into account the demographic of your congregation and your musicians is therefore important.

You must make sure that the risk assessment for your music group addresses the risks of COVID-19. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your church or venue.

Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to.

Steps to a safer service:

- ✓ We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- ✓ We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance.
- ✓ We have taken reasonable steps to maintain distancing measures.

- ✓ Where people cannot be distanced, we have done everything practical to manage transmission risk.

The original risk assessment was drawn up in consultation with Mike Kneen, the Church Wardens, Helen Walker (choir), Geoff Bricknell and other members of the RSCM in August 2020.

Amendments made since August 2020:

1. In September, Church Wardens and Hilary agreed that up to six children could safely distance in the vestry, with two adults for the purposes of training and that four, rather than two, adults could be in the vestry to robe/collect music.
2. 'Rule of Six' groupings discussed from September 16th. Groupings displayed in vestry and choir members reminded regularly of the purpose of the 'Rule of Six'.

Amendments made on Dec 1st 2020:

On Monday 30.11.20 Hilary met with Helen Walker and Chris Jarman (via Zoom) to discuss the new guidance with a view to amending the risk assessment. The new guidance is broadly the same as it was before the 'rule of six', although wording discouraging 'socialising' and 'mingling' is slightly stronger. Numbers of singers permitted in a choir is discussed, but, as was the case in previous guidance, has deliberately been left open and flexible since churches are so different in size. At our meeting we discussed the size of our current choir, and decided that at maximum (18-20) we still had plenty of room to distance appropriately from one another. At the Cathedral the distance between singers in the choir is set at 1.5m (partly due to the height of the ceiling). RSCM guidance says 'at least 1m', but other sources suggest a 2m distance as ideal, so we have positioned seating etc at a 2m distance.

In addition to consulting the new guidance (from the Church of England, government, RSCM, ISM) other concerns that have been raised in the last few weeks have also been addressed (in particular giving due consideration to the safety of highly vulnerable clergy and others at the altar). The following amendments were made, having been agreed with the Church Wardens:

1. The 'rule of 6' is only applicable in tier 1. Since we are in tier 2 it is no longer relevant. This fact, and the implications, should be discussed with the choir.
2. 'Socialising' and 'mingling' is not allowed and members of the choir need to be reminded of this at every rehearsal/service. Claire talks quietly to the youngest members of the choir before the service to keep them calm and ready, a proportionate action bearing in

mind the needs of the children who are taking part in these strange circumstances.

3. The choir has thought carefully about how to reduce numbers in the vestry, including keeping all of the children's robes near the kitchen. The situation could be improved further if as many adults as possible take their robes and their books home with them after rehearsals and services.

4. The choir should be asked to arrive through the main church doors on Sunday morning, to avoid a bottle-neck when people arrive through the choir vestry door while others are collecting their music. This is not an issue on Wednesday since arrivals and departures are staggered, and are 'one-way'.

5. The two children seated nearest to the altar are 2m away at present but we will increase this distance to 2.5m+ to protect particularly vulnerable people in the altar area.

6. The procession of the choir at the start of the service, in single file with face masks and no singing, we consider to be safe. However, the situation at the end of the service is not the same, so we suggest that the choir leave via the Norman Nave in single file, as we do for certain other services, to avoid the choir walking near to those at the altar. The choir would then remain in single file, allowing the servers etc to complete the prayer and proceed to the clergy vestry.

7. Chris and Helen should report any issues to Hilary, who does not have a good view of proceedings and is busy playing the organ both before and after the service. Other members of the congregation, staff, church and choir may bring up concerns about the choir arrangements with Hilary, Chris, Helen, or with the Church Wardens, at any time.

8. Hilary will check again with specific vulnerable members of the choir to ensure that they are aware of the risks, feel no pressure to attend, and also feel free to create more distance for themselves from others if they wish.

Further amendments made on 1.01.21, following correspondence with Chris J and Helen W.

Choir rehearsals and participation in services is still allowed in tier 3 with no changes needed, but it was decided that we would make some changes to reflect the additional risks posed by an increase in infection rate/new variant.

1. Choir members invited to cease participation again until risk reduces/they have had a vaccine.
2. The 2m distance will be increased to 3m where possible, especially for older, more vulnerable members of the choir.
3. The choir will not process in or out to limit exposure to/from the congregation and to simplify movements. This will help the most vulnerable adults to keep a safe distance at all times.
4. Helen and Claire will no longer help with the children (except from a distance to check that they arrive to/from the toilet during a rehearsal/service. Heppy and Elinor will help them with music, but Hilary will create resources to make help needed minimal.
5. Sarah C or Wendy C will help in the vestry sessions during the sermon.

Further amendments made on 29.03.21, following a discussion with the church wardens and with Revd Neil Patterson on 28.03.21 and communication with Rufus Noy on 29.03.21, based on RSCM and C of E guidance.

1 It is now possible to use a small choir for services with associated rehearsals from Palm Sunday. As ever, think carefully about your own church environment, ventilation and practical matters when considering what constitutes a small choir.

2 Congregational singing is now permitted outdoors from Palm Sunday but only on church grounds or the outside space of your place of worship, though once again consider social distancing matters carefully.

3 Wind Instruments may now be used in worship from Palm Sunday.

1. Choir members invited back to sing only when they feel confident to do so (eg after their second vaccine).

2. The 2m+ distance between singers, with plenty of space for individual members to create more space for themselves if they would feel more comfortable.
3. The choir will not process in or out to limit exposure to/from the congregation and to simplify movements. This will help the most vulnerable adults to keep a safe distance at all times.
4. Helen and Claire will not help with the children until they are confident of full vaccine cover (except from a distance to check that they arrive to/from the toilet during a rehearsal/service.) Heppy and Elinor will help them with music, but Hilary will create resources to make help needed minimal. *At present the advice regarding children is still unclear – Hilary to proceed with caution until guidelines are clear.*
5. Sarah C or Wendy C will help in the vestry sessions during the sermon.
6. Safety procedures around the entry/exit, the vestry, music and robing will continue as in the risk assessment.
7. Some outside congregational singing will be planned for special occasions.

Access to church buildings for purposes of performance in live services					
Who is at risk?	What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Priority (High/Med/Low)	Action by whom?
<i>Adults and children in the choir, clergy, members of the congregation and general public, and bell-ringers – hereafter known as ‘all’.</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Choose one point of entry into the church to manage the flow of your musicians and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different entrance and exit to the congregation or other attendees.	<i>Choir to enter and exit from usual door on Wednesdays, but on Sundays the choir should enter and exit via the main doors. Face-coverings to be worn (except by under 11s) except for singing. Only four adults should be in the vestry at any one time, volunteer choir members to stand by entrance doors to check that entry is done in a controlled way.</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Church wardens D of M, and responsibility of all choir members</i>
<i>As above, but members of the choir, particularly in the choir vestry.</i>	Transmission of virus in enclosed space	Buildings have been aired before use. Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	<i>Choir vestry to be aired before use by wedging both doors open before choir arrive, and after departure.</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>D of M or responsible choir member.</i>

<i>Choir in choir vestry, and choir stalls, members of public, congregation and choir in church/toilets etc.</i>	Insufficient cleaning of shared spaces	Review the CofE guide on cleaning church buildings, which can be found here . Agree a cleaning procedure before the event or ensure the venue will take responsibility for adequate cleaning. Complete the cleaning checklist (below) if appropriate.	<i>Hand sanitiser used when choir enter vestry before handling their own books robes etc. Any music to be given out should be given by someone who has washed their hands thoroughly according to guidance. Vestry door handles should be cleaned before and after practices and services.</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>D of M or responsible choir member in vestry, church wardens in other areas of church.</i>
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<i>Choir members</i>	Additional risk of infection	Cordon off or remove from public access the area occupied by the musicians, as appropriate.	<i>Add ropes to choir stalls to prevent members of the public from using them between services. If vestry is used by others for occasional meetings then it is the responsibility of the person in charge of the meeting to clean appropriately. Bell-ringers to clean shared door handles.</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Church wardens, D of M and Tower Captain</i>
<i>All</i>	Separated space is not observed for musicians	Survey the area to be occupied by your musicians to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, and allowing for the safe flow of visitors. Remember 1m	<i>There should be no flow of other people through the choir area. Choir to take communion after others in a position near to them without requiring movement near others</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M, church wardens</i>

		plus in all directions from each person.				
<i>Members of the choir, and others in church, particularly those at the altar.</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Consider bottlenecks such as staircases or narrow corridors. Will you need to implement a one-way system?	<i>Choir members should be in the vestry no more than four at a time to collect belongings and then should wait, at an appropriate distance, at the start of services, or proceed to positions in church for rehearsals. Outside door is potential bottleneck – volunteer member of choir on door to control. Getting in to choir stalls - this should be done at nearest point to seat without touching surfaces. If choir processes this will be done with face masks and with no singing. Choir to process in single file, with face masks at the beginning of the service as they walk down through the congregation, and at the end of the service through the Norman Nave, to avoid close proximity with those at the altar. Choir should wait in single file to allow servers and clergy to complete the final prayer and move to the vestry. Choir</i>	<i>Mediu m</i>	<i>D of M, choir membe rs</i>	

			<i>to arrive via main door, not vestry door, on Sundays.</i>			
<i>Members of the choir</i>		Remind your performers beforehand about important safe practices. E.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing.	<i>Especially important for Junior Members of the choir. Risk to older members of the choir to be explained regularly.</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>D of M and others involved in safeguarding of children</i>	
<i>All</i>		If the church has been used in the last 72 hours, ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes.	<i>Choir vestry, door handles, choir stalls, and table in vestry. Organ should also be wiped if used by a player within 72 hours of another playing it.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M and Markbell-ringers</i>	
<i>All</i>		Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	<i>Covered by general guidance, though children in choir need to be guided carefully.</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Church warden s and D of M to guide children</i>	

<i>All</i>		Alert attendees on arrival to any particular hazards, and the need to take care while moving around the venue (particularly if wearing robes).	<i>Check that elderly members of the choir, with mobility issues, can move safely given the new restrictions.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M</i>	
<i>All</i>		Remove any items that do not need to be present, particularly those in thoroughfares.		<i>Low</i>	<i>Church wardens.</i>	

Ensuring participants' safety

Who is at risk?	What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Priority (High/Med/Low)	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<i>All</i>	Attendee within the group is a virus carrier	Ensure current guidance on self-isolation is emphasised in pre-event communications.	<i>Register (taken by Helen W) to be used at choir rehearsal and service for track and trace to be enabled if needed.</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Virus carrier, parent and D of M/Helen church wardens</i>	
<i>All</i>	Virus spread by hands	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for your musicians to use.	<i>Hand sanitiser inside and outside vestry as well as general points in church. Toilet door wedged open.</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>Church wardens, bell-ringers, D of M</i>	

<i>Choir</i>	Illness	Consider asking two people to learn a solo in case one is taken sick.	<i>Music will be planned to allow for sudden changes.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M</i>	
<i>Choir</i>	Unexpected absence	Make it clear who attendees should contact if they are unable to come.	<i>D of M, as usual.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M</i>	
<i>Choir/Organist</i>	Illness	Ensure that there are at least two people on the event team able to fulfil each role (e.g. organist) and at least one additional person approved to supervise u18s.	<i>D of M has deputies if needed, and four members of the choir are approved to supervise u18s – plan for two additional people to be present if children involved</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M and members of choir with safeguarding approval</i>	
<i>All</i>	Venue unavailable (<i>this circumstance might arise after a COVID occurrence</i>)	Consider whether it would be appropriate to have a standby (risk assessed) venue. How would a change of venue be communicated?	<i>Unlikely that another venue would be used for services of rehearsals. Forbury Chapel a possibility. To be communicated by email/phone</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Church wardens, D of M</i>	

<i>Choir</i>	Virus transmitted via printed music	Ensure that everyone has their own copy of the music/worship materials. Ideally, these should be brought from home. If music is handed out on the day, ensure the music is distributed and collected by one person wearing disposable gloves and that the music stays with one individual throughout the performance.	<i>Thorough hand-washing/sanitising, according to guidance as choir members arrive. Choir to use their own books (stored in pigeon-holes) on most occasions. Music put in pigeon-holes ready for use more than 72 hours before if possible.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M and all members of the choir</i>	
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<i>Choir/guest choir members</i>	Virus transmitted via printed music	If loan library music is being used, minimise the number of people handling it. Ask attendees to drop it into a large box at the end of the event and leave it for 72 hours before counting and returning.	<i>Very rarely an issue. Guest choir members to be given clear instructions regarding music.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Members of the choir</i>	
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<i>Choir</i>	Virus transmitted through sharing of items	Ask attendees to bring their own writing implements (for marking music etc.)	<i>Adults to bring their own, Junior Members to have named pencils in pigeon-holes.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Choir</i>	
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<i>Organists</i>	Virus transmitted via (keyboard) instruments	Minimise the number of people playing the piano or organ during the service. Ideally, have only one accompanist.	<i>Generally there is only one organist, and this should be a rule during this pandemic. Piano – only used on Weds evening or Sunday evening.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M</i>	
<i>Organists, including students of the organ, members of public - (piano)</i>	Virus transmitted through sharing of items	Disinfect the organ consoles and piano: this must be done with a soft cloth sprayed with disinfectant. Disinfectant must not be applied directly to instruments. Hygiene instructions should be clearly visible on the organ console.	<i>Organ is used by a few organists, and sometimes for lessons. If less than 72 between players, than all shared surfaces wiped as described. Piano rarely used by others. Hygiene instructions on the organ console.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>D of M and other users of instruments</i>	
<i>Organists, including students of the organ</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Consider whether a page-turner is necessary -could temporary photocopies be used instead?	<i>Use of page-turner to be limited, but space in the Priory is favourable provided masks are worn by player and turner.</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Organist</i>	
<i>Choir</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Consider using a larger space for robing if the vestry is small.	<i>Robing/collection of books – max of four people in vestry at a time, then collect in space in Norman Nave. Juniors robes moved to outside kitchen area, adults to take robes and music home if possible.</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>D of M and safeguarding adults</i>	

<i>Junior Choir members, D of M and helpers</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Arrange a larger space than would usually be required for 1:1 coaching/small group work.	<i>Junior Choir sessions during the service in vestry to be tightly controlled. There is enough room for 6 children and 2 adults. Outside space should be used when the weather is warm enough. Table to be wiped, personal pencils and books.</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>D of M and adult helpers</i>	
<i>All</i>	Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Set out chairs in advance, spaced according to guidelines. If using fixed pews or choir-stalls, indicate with signs those to be used, spaced according to guidelines.	<i>Spots on floor to be used if rehearsing in Norman Nave, set spaces in St Paul's Chapel and choir stalls with extra chairs in position – all 2+ metres apart.</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Members of choir, D of M and church wardens</i>	

Cleaning checklist

Who is at risk?	What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Priority (High/Med/Low)	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Risk of infecting others	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels/tissues) from the site.	<i>Small bin for tissues/other waste to be used during rehearsals to be emptied by D of M.</i>	<i>Low</i>	D of M	

Unawareness of control measures amongst attendees

Who is at risk?	What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Priority (High/Med/Low)	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
<i>All</i>	Attendees unaware of risk and procedures	Make an announcement at the start of the event to highlight the key control measures in place. All choir members (and parents) to be sent risk assessment document before rehearsals/services start	<i>This is done by the officiant at services. D of M to do this at the start of rehearsals. All choir members (and parents) have been sent copies of risk assessment by email or paper copies. Copy on choir noticeboard, and copies sent to other key church people.</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>D of M – risk assessment checked by Mike Kneen and church wardens</i>	

After a known exposure

Who is at risk?	What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Priority (High/Med/Low)	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
<i>All</i>	<i>Infection</i>	Quarantine building for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	<i>Procedures to be discussed with church wardens and heads of departments if a known exposure occurs. D of M to contact all choir members</i>	<i>Med</i>	<i>D of M and other key members of church.</i>	

Church:
Leominster
Priory Church

Assessor's name:
Hilary Norris

Date completed:
1.12.20

Review date:
When guidelines change

