COVID-19 Hazard Analysis

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This analysis has arisen as a result of the global pandemic of Coronavirus Covid-19 and the unique challenges it presents to Choir activities, compared to the risks of contracting other respiratory infections (coughs, colds, flu, etc.) which have in the past been absorbed, with simple precautions, as a normal risk of ordinary life.

This document is probably not exhaustive but is intended to assist individual Choir Members in coming to a decision on joining live rehearsals. Together with others which are developed subsequently, it must remain live and be revisited/revised any time there is a change in available information or best practice advice:

Severity

The effects of Covid-19 infection can vary from asymptomatic to fatal. Fatalities are more prevalent in older populations.

Gestation

The period between contracting the virus and the appearance of symptoms can be up to 14 days, compared with colds, flu, etc., where initial symptoms will typically appear within 3 days.

Presentation

It has been known from early in the pandemic that, in addition to the long gestation period, this disease can present with symptoms ranging from none (asymptomatic) to severe. In consequence, it is possible that any person not showing symptoms could nonetheless be carrying the disease. Furthermore, as vaccination is reported to reduce severity of symptoms rather than guarantee immunity, it is not unreasonable to assume that there might be an increased possibility of people who are infected but asymptomatic.

Transmission mechanisms

Covid-19 can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. These particles range from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols. (WHO)

Infection is through inhalation of moisture particles containing the virus or contact with eyes, mouth or nose. Touching the face with unwashed hands following contact with a contaminated surface is the most common cause of transmission other than inhalation.

Longevity

Whilst complete information is still not fully established, it appears that Covid-19 can survive on untreated surfaces and in aerosol particles much longer than many other infections.

Mutation

Covid-19 has already exhibited its ability to mutate and may become vaccine-resistant, more virulent, or both.

RESULTING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN RELATION TO CHOIR ACTIVITY:

Sources of Coronavirus

1. Infected Persons (larger respiratory droplets)

Infected persons may be showing signs of symptoms or, alternatively, be pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic, in which case they will probably not be aware that they are contagious. Proximity to infected persons increases the risk of person-to-person transmission.

2. Aerosols

Aerosol particles are very light and remain suspended in the air even after a space has been vacated.

3. Infected Surfaces

Surfaces may become infected by droplets which fall on them or by contact with hands which are already infected.