



COVID-19 TOOLKIT

Written 02/11/20

Without Walls have used their knowledge and expertise to bring together resources from trusted organisations to help guide you through the main considerations for restarting rehearsals and creation of work as well as presenting your work at festivals and events during the pandemic.

This Covid-19 Toolkit provides useful documents such as a risk assessment template, action plans, checklists and other useful guides and resources to help you. In addition to the guidance provided in this Toolkit, we strongly encourage you to also keep up to date with current Government Covid-19 guidelines.

The checklists and guidance contained here are based on the current official guidance. Although these will hopefully help give you some direction, you should amend and add controls that are relevant to your specific activities having completed your own risk assessment.

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Understanding the Virus

In order for us to better plan our controls it's useful to understand the basics of virus transmission. If we all have a basic grasp of how it spreads we can better identify the risks and find solutions for the challenges that face us.

The risk of transmission of the virus is via two routes: either through tiny aerosol droplets exhaled from an infected person or via surfaces that have deposits of active viral particles.

AEROSOL TRANSMISSION

- ☼ Direct aerosol transmission can occur between people in close proximity and the degree of the viral load transmitted can vary depending on the duration of contact.
- ☼ This is the principle behind social distancing - The majority of aerosol droplets will fall to the ground within 2 metres, however things like coughing, sneezing, physical exertion, vocal projection or shouting will increase the likelihood of projecting droplets a lot further.
- ☼ The smallest of the droplets are too light to fall to the ground and can hang in the air for a long period of time and can lead to infection in an enclosed space. Good ventilation of fresh air is key in causing these particles to disperse.
- ☼ Direct contact with someone who is infected can also lead to transmission, such as shaking hands and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes, or by hugging or kissing.

SURFACE TRANSMISSION

- ☼ Transmission via surfaces may occur if a person touches a contaminated surface and then touches their face (mouth, nose or eyes). This is the principle behind personal hygiene precautions. Active virus particles can remain on some surfaces for a considerable time and care should be taken to keep surfaces as clean as possible.
- ☼ Frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer will deactivate viral particles.

Current general guidance and restrictions in your local area



[For latest NHS information and advice about coronavirus](#)



[Click here for the NHS Hands Face Space film](#)



[General Covid-19 guidance](#)



[Local restrictions: areas with an outbreak of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - A list of areas with additional local restrictions. Includes information for local authorities, residents and workers about what to do and how to manage the outbreak.](#)



[Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do - Updated 22 September](#)

Planning for rehearsals/creation phase of your project

Keep up to date with the current guidelines and be prepared for restrictions to change. Restrictions are frequently changing so keep reading and stay in touch with changes both nationally and locally. Localised restrictions may differ between different company members within your team as well as between your rehearsal/company base and where you'll be performing.

Discuss with your team about returning to work. Listen and understand their concerns - within your team you may have those of a higher risk category or those with others at home who are shielding. Share your Covid-19 risk assessment with your team or consider how else you may communicate your safety measures with them. For example by sending out an email in advance of work or having on site safety briefings to outline key measures ensuring everyone understands and complies. Create a culture of open feedback amongst your team.

Liaise with your rehearsal venue to review their own Covid-19 risk assessment and clarify lines of responsibility. For example their cleaning regime, whether there are other groups sharing the rehearsal space or other communal spaces/break rooms, use of toilets, ventilation, any limitations on capacity etc.

Consider how you share and store production information. During the pandemic there is an increased likelihood of one of your team having to drop out of the project in order to self isolate. Make sure you've planned for this so that key information is available to the rest of the team. Consider file sharing on cloud platforms, filming and documenting of rehearsals, sharing of key information and roles amongst the team.



[Click here for staff checklist to help you plan for safe working](#)



[HSE guide to help you plan and talk to your team about Covid-19](#)



[Seven Inclusive Principles for Arts & Cultural Organisations working safely through Covid-19](#)

10 Steps To Working Safely In Rehearsals

1. Keeping your distance

- Keep 2 metres, wherever possible, or 1 metre when not possible, with other precautions in place.
- Voice, singing and high exertion movement such as dance may require 3 metre distancing due to increased risk of transmission.
- Plan a maximum person capacity specific to the area of the space available and the activity you are doing. Some venues may already give some guidance on this to you in their own risk assessments.
- Consider how people move around the venue when they arrive, leave and use the facilities – it may be possible to implement a one way system in corridors to avoid congestion.
- If close contact is absolutely essential, minimise the duration and consider using fixed teams or partnering where possible.
- Identify areas or activities where people have to directly pass things to each other and find ways to remove direct contact such as by using drop-off points.
- Wherever possible use back-to-back or side-to-side work rather than face-to-face.

2. Hygiene

- Maintain high standards of hand cleanliness at all times.
- Everybody must wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds or use the hand sanitiser provided on arrival and upon a regular basis thereafter.
- Provide your staff with hand sanitizer and encouraged them to carry their own outside of work.
- Avoid touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes)
- Encourage staff and participants to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely

3. Cleanliness

- Work areas to be frequently cleaned, using usual cleaning products, with focus given touch points in communal areas (eg. door handles, light switches, sink taps, toilet handles etc). This is a shared responsibility with your venue so talk so clarify with them their cleaning regime so that you can decide whether you think this adequate for your activity/use of the venue.
- Avoid sharing equipment and limit the number of items you bring in.
- If you do need to share objects or work spaces make cleaning products such as wipes available to wipe down objects that are touched regularly such as any tables, tools, shared props technical equipment or handheld devices.
- Stages and dance floors may need to be cleaned regularly, particularly following activities involving physical exertion and floor work (performers touching the floor with their hands)
- Workspaces should be cleared and waste removed from the work area at the end of each day.

4. Ventilation

- Good air ventilation greatly reduces the risk of 'aerosol transmission'. Work outdoors as much as possible. If working indoors or undercover consider ways to increase the supply of fresh air, for example, keeping external doors and windows open, lifting or removing side walls from outdoor structures such as marquees or using fans to circulate fresh air.
- In autumn and winter months be sure to communicate with your participants and staff if they need to wear extra layers to keep warm as a result of keeping windows open.

5. Self screening

- Ask all staff and participants to self-certify as healthy (ie. not displaying any of the coronavirus symptoms and have not been in contact with others known to have had the virus within the last 14 days).
- If anyone suspects they may have Covid-19 or may have come into direct contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 they should:
 - 1) Remain at home and let you know if you have been on-site at the venue
 - 2) Use the NHS 111 online Covid-19 service and follow the guidance provided to them. Do not go to a GP, hospital, or pharmacy.
 - 3) If they have symptoms, get a test as soon as possible. Stay at home and not have visitors until they get their test results. They should only leave home to have a test.
 - 4) If they test positive for Covid-19, follow NHS instructions about self-isolating, and contact you again to notify you.
 - 5) If they do not feel better after the recommended self-isolation period, continue to isolate. It is important to follow the latest NHS advice on testing, self-isolation and treatment.
 - 6) If they know, or have been told, that they have come into contact with someone who has symptoms or confirmed Covid-19, they must self-isolate for 14 days. Even if they feel well, it is important they self-isolate for the full 14 days so they do not infect others. If they develop symptoms during this time, follow the instructions above, contact NHS 111 and get a test as soon as possible. If they do not develop symptoms during this time, they do not need a test and may return to the activity.

6. Fixed Teams and the 'Rule of six'

- Consider the feasibility of splitting your staff into fixed teams, limiting the number of performers/production staff in any fixed team to the smallest number possible. This will help prevent staff from coming into close contact with others outside their team.
- With smaller numbers of staff it may be more appropriate to consider the entire group as a fixed team.
- Even within the fixed team still do your best to keep a safe distance from one another as much as is practical and maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene.
- If your project involves larger numbers of people consider conducting rehearsals in smaller fixed teams wherever possible and gradually increasing the number of people in the team over time in order to observe and manage the risk of transmission.
- If working with non-professional groups, although you may have more than 6 people participating, there must be no interaction or mixing between groups of more than 6 at any time.

- If you're delivering activities for regular groups, as far as possible try fixing these groups across the sessions so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.

7. Test and Trace

- Have a daily registration system for people working on site, recording a contact number and email for each individual.
- Assist the NHS test and trace service by keeping a temporary record of your attendees for 21 days.

8. PPE

- When managing the risk of Covid-19, the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings must not be seen as a replacement for the other ways of managing the risk such as social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering.
- That said a face covering is deemed to be more effective worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible.

9. Protecting people at higher risk

- There are those individuals who are more vulnerable to the virus and who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with pre-existing conditions and the elderly).
- If your activity is focused on a more vulnerable group, the severity of the risk is higher.
- It's very important that you're able to maintain social distancing guidelines for people of higher risk. If they cannot maintain social distancing you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.
- Ensure any changes to systems or layout of your venue take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled or elderly staff.

10. Training and Communication

- Ensure all staff and participants are aware of and understand your Covid-19 related safety procedures and are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented.
- Plan how staff and participants will be communicated with in advance of the activity commencing.
- Invite regular feedback from your team and participants to review best practice. It is important to ensure that everyone is able to report any shortfalls (and successes/learnings) to ensure the risk assessment process is effective and actively reviewed.



[Click here for the Without Walls checklist for Covid-19 safe working](#)

Further resources for Covid-safe working in rehearsals



[DCMS Guidance for people working in performing arts](#)



[Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)



[Brass Bands England – Guidance for getting bands and musicians back](#)



['Music Unlocked' - a guide written by the UK Association for Music Education - contains specific info relating to the risk of singing and playing](#)



[The return to Performance Consensus - written by Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Scottish Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet - Covid safety guidance for rehearsal processes and production work in general](#)



[One Dance UK - Return to Dance Webinars](#)

10 steps to working safely on site when presenting your work

1) Reviewing your usual method statement and risk assessments

You may need to adapt your usual build/set up methods on site to allow for safe distancing, working in fixed teams or other Covid-19 mitigation controls.

Check whether any adaptations to your working methods impact on your usual risk assessment - for example rigging structures or manual handling heavy items if working in smaller teams.

2) Liaising with the host festival/event organiser

- Engage in early conversation with the host event organisers to discuss the implications of your Covid-19 risk assessment and any necessary adaptations required on site.
- Check that their Covid-19 risk assessment dovetails with your own
- Discuss specifics around your site layout, audience management and backstage requirements.

3) Travel and Accommodation

- Encourage staff to avoid using public transport as much as possible, aiming instead to walk, cycle, or drive.
- Minimise the number of people outside of their fixed team/support bubble travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed partners, increasing ventilation when possible and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
- Clean any shared vehicles between shifts or on handover, eg with hire vans.
- If workers are required to stay away from their home, keep a log of where they stay and make sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.

4) Planning your workspaces

- Try to create specific workspaces for individuals allowing them to maintain social distancing, wherever possible. For example in production offices and site cabins.
- If a workspace needs to be shared, it should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.
- If it's difficult to keep workspace socially distanced, then consider whether that activity/space is essential.
- Minimise the time spent in the space, using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people maintain distancing and avoiding people working face-to-face.
- Stagger break times to reduce pressure on the staff break rooms or places to eat.

5) Site layout and audience management

- Consider how you could reduce the risk of crowding or audience congestion - this may involve a reduced/simplified route if you have a processional show, having controlled entry points and/or reduced capacity.

- Consider the duration of your event/show – the longer the period that audiences are together the risk of infection increases.
- Could you allow for multiple viewings of performances as it's likely you'll be working to reduced capacity audiences.
- Also consider the space timescale of production set up and break down as it may take longer if working in smaller fixed teams and you may require more space than usual to allow for distancing.

6) Keeping a safe distance

- Keep 2 metres, wherever possible, or 1 metre when not possible, with other precautions in place.
- Plan your site and production areas to allow staff to work further apart from each other.
- If close contact is absolutely essential, minimise the duration and consider using fixed teams or partnering where possible.
- Wherever possible use back-to-back or side-to-side work rather than face-to-face.

7) Hygiene and Cleanliness

- Maintain hand cleanliness and remind staff not to touch their face with their hands.
- Regularly disinfect touch points between users
- Reducing the amount of shared objects, devices and tools.

8) Ventilation

- Work outdoors as much as possible. If working indoors or undercover consider ways to increase the supply of fresh air, for example, keeping external doors and windows open, lifting or removing side walls from outdoor structures such as marquees or using fans to circulate fresh air.

9) Fixed teams and partnering

- Consider grouping your staff into small fixed teams in order to reduce the risk of coming into close contact with others outside the team.
- Even within the fixed team we still need to do our best to keep a safe distance as much as is practical and maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene.
- Consider creating zones within your site to separate groups, for example those who work front of house (such as sound operators) from other production team members and performers.

10) PPE

- Use of a face covering in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible or moments where it is impractical for your team to distance, for example rigging or stage crew working in proximity during the build process.

Further resources for Covid-safe working when presenting work on site



[Outdoor Arts UK - Covid-19 Resources and sector guidance](#)



[Events Industry Forum – Keeping workers and audiences safe during Covid-19 in the outdoor event industry in England](#)



[National Association of Street Artists UK- Covid19 Checklist and Risk](#)



[Eventbrite - COVID-19 Safety Playbook for Events - A resource to help determine the risks for events and how to address them](#)



[Delivering COVID-secure events: Key principles and learnings](#)

Key considerations and tips for writing your risk assessment

- ❄️ Firstly don't panic. Read and understand the guidelines that are relevant to you and use the template below to outline the challenges facing you. The most effective solutions are often the simplest.
- ❄️ Keep your Covid-19 risk assessment as an independent document to any other risk assessments you produce. This will help you to single out and clarify the covid specific risks and how you plan to mitigate them. It also provides clarity when you share the document with your staff, venues, participants and event organisers.
- ❄️ See the process of risk assessing as a tool, not as merely a paperwork exercise. It's a really useful process to plan and list the measures needed to keep everyone safe.
- ❄️ Be realistic – don't include anything in your risk assessment you can't deliver on. In practice it may not be possible to implement all the controls you'd ideally like so be honest with yourself and continue to review your risk assessment and best practice.
- ❄️ As well as the physical mechanisms you can put in place to manage the risk consider whether there's a need to change or adapt the actual content of your activity or how you deliver it. For example how you might choreograph a large ensemble of performers. Or how you might divide any tools or props between a group in order to avoid sharing of objects? Or how to deliver a workshop or demonstrate an activity whilst your team maintain a safe distance.
- ❄️ Consider your scheduling and timetabling - You may need to alter schedules or usual timetables to allow for smaller teams, distanced working and extended cleaning regimes.
- ❄️ Just as with all risks, you are never going reduce the risk to zero, but it is your responsibility to reduce the risk to an acceptable level within legislation and government guidelines.
- ❄️ It is well known that the severity of contracting Covid-19 varies from person-to-person. It can manifest as a very mild illness in some people, particularly the young, but, at worst, it can and does cause death therefore when assessing the risk we must treat and score the severity as very high.

Communication and information sharing

- ⚙️ Ensure all your staff and participants are aware of and understand your Covid-19 related safety procedures and are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented.
- ⚙️ Think about how staff and participants will be communicated with in advance of the activity commencing. This could be via email - detailing key information of what to expect and sharing of risk assessments, or a more abbreviated guidance document to help them. Include your Covid-19 safety control measures in any onsite briefings with your team.
- ⚙️ Invite regular feedback from your team and participants to review best practice. It is important to ensure that everyone is able to report any shortfalls (and successes/learnings) to ensure the risk assessment process is effective and actively reviewed.



Public Health
England

[Public Health England COVID-19 Summary of published guidance and support for vulnerable groups](#)



[Click here for the NHS Covid-19 Test and Trace App support](#)



GOV.UK

[Click here for Covid Secure Declaration Poster](#)