

Cobweb Orchestra

Template for return to indoor group rehearsals

Introduction

It is likely that indoor rehearsals will be allowed to occur without significant COVID restrictions after step 4 of the government “roadmap to recovery”, that is scheduled to occur on 21 June 2021. However, current legislation allows us to return after step 3, scheduled for 17 May. This will require planning and monitoring, but we believe that many Cobweb players will be willing to make the effort required in order to play as soon as possible. Be assured that the proposals presented here are entirely lawful and, provided the rules are followed, players will not be put at significant risk by attending a Cobweb event.

The legislation and national guidance

The following is based on the most recently published guidelines which refer to the rules expected to be in place after 17 May 2021. We are regularly monitoring these for updates.

Making Music have provided details of what can be done at each stage of the roadmap:

<https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/resource/can-group-get-back-in-person>

The relevant section is as follows:

Step three (17 May earliest)

The Government guidance on [Reopening businesses and venues](#) says:

"At this step, both outdoor and indoor gatherings or events, organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation, can be organised, subject to specific conditions: that they comply with COVID-Secure guidance including taking reasonable steps to limit the risk of transmission, complete a related risk assessment; and ensure that those attending do not mix beyond what is permitted by the social contact limits (unless another exemption exists, such as for organised sport or exercise, supervised activities for children or a significant life event)."

So, indoor and outdoor rehearsals will be possible in step three with no formal limits on numbers but with some conditions:

- Completing a relevant risk assessment (see COVID secure rehearsals below).
- Having measures in place to mitigate risk (see COVID secure rehearsals below).
- Managing numbers safely within social contact limits: “those attending do not mix beyond what is permitted by the social contact limits...”
 - This means that the total number of people attending a rehearsal can be more than the social contact limit – but that they must always remain in sub-groups within social contact limits.

- So, indoors the social contact limit at this step will be 6. If your venue would safely allow for 42 people (as an example) to attend, all 42 could attend but they would have to stay in a maximum of 7 sub-groups of 6 people. With no mixing / switching between the sub-groups.
- Making Music advise that you go further than this and treat everyone as a sub-group of 1 – and don't allow for any mixing. This will mean your rules can be very simple and clear and make the rehearsal much easier to manage.

Further clarification of this, with reference to government guidelines is shown in Appendix 1.

The Cobweb Orchestra approach.

The guidelines state that the number of people who can enjoy “social contact” will remain at six, both indoors and out. However, the potential to breach this restriction in a music rehearsal environment is high, and so we share the view of Making Music that, at this stage, we avoid social mixing altogether while indoors. So each individual is treated as a “group of one”. This is more cautious than required by law, but a necessary mitigation.

It is envisaged that open playing events will be organised by Andy and Lorna, with help from Trustees and other members as required. Plans for local group rehearsals will be the responsibility of a nominated Trustee (you can find who that is for your group on the website), recruiting a local team. These teams will work to a detailed event template to ensure the safety and legality of every event. This will mean strict regulation of our activities at this stage. It will be burdensome, but must be implemented not only for legal compliance but also to protect us, our communities and the reputation of the Cobweb Orchestra. Hopefully the joy of playing together again will make the effort worthwhile. We also hope that when we reach step 4 of the “roadmap to recovery” we will be able to abandon this strict approach and normality will be more or less restored.

Attending an event is entirely a matter of individual choice. All who are willing to follow the rules are welcome, but there may be many who prefer to wait until all restrictions are lifted. As a result of that, or other obstacles, it may not be possible for all local groups to resume rehearsals in May, or even in June, and there is no obligation or pressure to do so.

The next section is primarily for team members, outlining the key elements of the template, but will be useful to read if you plan to come to a rehearsal. The full event template can be viewed at

[web link to insert when available](#)

The event template: essential requirements for group rehearsals

The template advises that the arrangements are made by a team comprising a venue liaison officer, a COVID monitor and a participant manager, working with the musical leader. One person may fill more than one role. There is a checklist for event organisers to use to confirm that all the legal requirements for indoor music group rehearsals have been met. It also lists the duties expected of each team member. Flexibility in how the team is arranged and works is entirely acceptable, but, for the time being, the checklist itself should be used. Sections 1-4 of the checklist should be completed

and submitted to the Trustee for approval. For local group rehearsals, this can be fast tracked by your nominated Trustee and only needs to be done once prior to weekly rehearsals . Once approved by Trustees, the event will proceed under the supervision of the event team.

Risk assessments

The template is based on two risk assessments, both of which are mandatory:

Cobweb Orchestra risk assessment

This is a comprehensive assessment of the risks attached to playing music in groups indoors, and measures that may be taken to mitigate or minimise those risks. The domains in the document are applicable to all venues and events, but the impact of each item may vary between venues and between groups. It may not be possible, or necessary, to implement every mitigating measure suggested, but ultimately the assessment will be used to determine if the risk of a certain event is low enough to allow the event to go ahead.

Venue risk assessment:

Venue providers we use must give us written evidence that the venue is “COVID-secure”. As a minimum this should confirm, through a risk assessment process, that:

- Measures are in place to ensure social distancing
- There is a regular cleaning and sanitising schedule in place
- Test and trace policy is in place, including a QR code identifier

Some venues may devolve the test and trace procedure to the Cobweb Orchestra. If so, the template provides a means for the event team to fulfil the role and it is not a barrier to an event taking place.

Venue visit

The venue liaison officer should visit the venue in advance, ideal with other members of the team. This is to measure the size of the rehearsal space (which will determine the maximum number of attendees) and to assess entry and exit points, pinch points, parking etc.

Player responsibility

The number of players will be limited and this is calculated by entering venue details into the template checklist. It is essential that players book their place with the participation manager. They will receive a players’ checklist detailing the COVID restrictions that will be in place, and the requirements expected of them. At the time of booking they must confirm that they have read this, and that they will conform to the rules in place.

The rehearsal format

In general, the format of an event should be based on a cycle of 45 minutes playing followed by 15 minutes break. An all-day event could have a longer break for lunch. During breaks everyone should go outside, and doors and windows will be opened to ventilate the room. Where possible, this should ideally be done throughout the whole event, but this is not mandatory. While outside,

participants may socialise, but only in groups of six or less and with social distancing of 2m. The COVID monitor is authorised to enforce this. If there is poor weather, participants may choose to wait in their car.

Cobweb Trustees

17 April 2021

Appendix 1

The meaning of “social contact limits” in the context of organised events is clarified here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-events-guidance-for-local-authorities/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-events-guidance-for-local-authorities#roadmap-step-3>

This states:

These social contact limits for permitted organised gatherings will be:

- **Indoors** - rule of 6 or 2 households
- **Outdoors** - 30 people

Organisers should also mitigate risk to public health by controlling attendance, limiting numbers to take account of the space and ventilation of a venue and implementing effective infection prevention and control measures.

There is a clear distinction between social contact limits and the total number of attendees at an organised event. (This does not apply to spontaneous gatherings in public). There is no specific limit on the total number of people who can attend an organised event. This will be determined primarily by the size of the indoor space, also taking into account the potential for ventilation of the rehearsal room, entry and exit points, availability of toilets and parking etc. However social contact is limited to individual groups of 6 indoors and 30 outdoors. So a very large venue could host a large number of people indoors, but people can only interact or “mingle” in groups of 6 (or in 3 households). The organisers are responsible for ensuring that mingling beyond that limit does not occur. For that reason, to leave no room for error, we agree with Making Music that there should be no mingling at all indoors at our events until step 4.

In summary, the document referenced above sets out 3 mandatory requirements to be met:

1. *Event organisers follow all relevant COVID-secure guidance depending on the type of event, and complete a related risk assessment. This guidance varies according to the type of event and could include [outdoor events](#), [funfairs](#), [performing arts](#) or [sports events](#) (full list in the [Existing guidance](#) section).*
2. *Organisers and attendees adhere to all legal requirements, including maintaining group sizes permitted by social contact restrictions at the relevant step in the Roadmap and preventing mixing between groups, enforcing social distancing guidelines and mandating face coverings in indoor areas where required.*
3. *All reasonable action has been taken by the event organiser to mitigate risk to public health.*