

Return to Dance Guidance

Webinar

One Dance UK & NIDMS Expert Panel

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Chair: Andrew Hurst

Panellists: Nick Allen, Emma Redding, Kim Hutt

Live Q&A

1. Timepoint: 30:43

Q. To return to the dance studio are **air filtration systems** needed?

A. [NA] As much natural ventilation as possible is best. If your studio has windows, they should be open. What we currently understand with regards to the aerobiology of the virus is that it doesn't fly around in the air – most air filtration systems aren't going to necessarily be an advantage and most air conditioning systems aren't going to spread it. This is part of the evolving science and government guidance at present states that we should just be trying to improve ventilation as best as possible.

2. Timepoint: 31:57

Q. Will the guidance due to be published apply to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Island?

A. [AH] No – only England. Whilst the guidance should be useful for anybody working in these kinds of contexts, it very explicitly says that public health is an evolving issue across each of the nations. What the guidance lays out is a framework for the assessment and management of risk – we are talking with the other governments of Scotland, Northern Island and Wales, and in the meantime hope that the guidance will be at least be useful for everybody.

3. Timepoint: 33:15

Q. I'm a teacher with no studio space of my own, so I hire facilities from secondary schools and social clubs. When they eventually let me back in, **who is responsible for the cleaning?** Me, the venue owner? Or both?

A. [AH] The guidance recognises that a lot of activity happens across a range of buildings. This is effectively a joint responsibility, although if you're hiring a venue, they should be able to provide you with their own COVID-19 risk assessment, and you should be able to see what they have done and put in place – they must provide this for you. They would be directed to do a deep clean of any space before it is reopened. You should check that this has happened, and should consider the changeover of space users. If you are having multiple different groups within the space, you will also need to think about time for airing and cleaning the space.

4. Timepoint: 34:40

Q. Regarding symptoms and **antigen testing**.

A. [NA] Even though you're showing symptoms, you could still turn a positive test, and if you have received a negative test, this doesn't necessarily mean that you don't have Corona Virus.

5. Timepoint: 35:04

Q. Please can you clarify what is the **breathing impact** that is in the government guidelines? Does this refer to cardiovascular activity? Will this impact on the level of activity that will be allowed?

A. [AH] There isn't anything about breathing specifically. There are much more strict guidelines in place for singing, as well as brass and wind instruments however as a result of some of the science about droplets being spread through that activity. We have asked this question very early on about dancers and it has not appeared to be of such concern.

[NA] We have been working with Jennifer Smith, the director of Public Health England around this, alongside our colleagues and professionals in sport, particularly contact sports. With regards to questions around, 'can it spread' – you have a greater expiration rate when you are cardiovascular-ly more challenged, and as such, there is a chance that you will be expelling breath even further. Research has been commissioned into the aerobiology of coronavirus and expiration, so there will be more information coming through soon. At this stage, we have been told that those risks don't exist.

6. Timepoint: 37:25

Q. Do we need to **social distance** further than 2 meters?

A. [NA] The guidelines are likely to suggest for wind, brass and singing that those social distances are extended quite significantly. We're waiting for final confirmation of those, but with our social distancing (in dance contexts and at the Birmingham Royal Ballet), we will be sticking with 2 meters. The more you can socially distance, the lower the risk. Again, this is about risk mitigation, not elimination. The greater distance between dancers, the more space you have, the lesser that risk will be.

[KH] Based on our experience at London Contemporary Dance School, we started out with large floor markings in our studios for social distancing. We are hoping to reduce these to a minimum of 2m/2m between each person in the studio. When we are working with that level of social distancing however, we will be keeping the intensity of our classes quite low to ensure that there is less aerosol being produced by the dancers. When classes are designed to be slightly more intense, we will likely increase social distancing to ensure that we are keeping safe.

7. Timepoint: 38:15

Q. Can the virus be **transmitted through sweat**?

A. [NA] This is a respiratory virus and is not transmitted through sweat – it does not relate to the water droplets that you have on your body when you're sweating.

8. Timepoint: 39:54

Q. Will self-employed teachers need to carry out a separate **risk assessment** for each place of work or just the one to use across the board?

A. [AH] The performing arts guidance recognises that there are lots of people working freelance or who are self-employed. These individuals do have a responsibility to carry out a risk assessment with regards to addressing COVID-19. However, if you are using

somebody else's space they too have a responsibility to conduct their own risk assessment. You should be asking to see their risk assessment as well as carrying out your own. The guidance mentions that anybody self-employed and working with a small number of people doesn't necessarily need to have this written down, but you will need to be able to prove that you have carried out a risk assessment in order to be covered by insurance. There are some generic templates, but we have also been looking at risk assessments that have been put together by BAPAM- The British Association for Performing Arts Medicine, which is a helpful document. You should talk to the owner of the space about cleaning, see their risk assessment, and ensure that you deem it safe to bring others into that space.

9. Timepoint: 41:45

Q. In terms of **surface hygiene** — it would be great to have clear recommendations around floorwork in contemporary dance.

A. [AH] - referred to slide -

[NA] This is around recognising your risk assessment regarding common touchpoints, be it feet, on the floor, bodies on the floor, the barre... whatever those common touchpoints are you want to mitigate risk by having regular cleaning.

[AH] Elsewhere, in other countries are requirements of deep cleaning between the use of the same space for different groups. The same group working in the same space all day long would be fine, but this will be essential to think about if you have different groups using the space.

[KH] With regards to bare feet – if there is no cleaning of the floor between social bubbles of people, or between classes, it could mitigate the risk a little to keep socks on.

A. [ER] Having spoken with a couple of schools in France who are insisting on socks for contemporary work, it is important to bear in mind that that, of course, comes with its own risk, particularly if the floor is quite slippery. We need to advise some common sense here as well.

10. Timepoint: 43:45

Q. Is the assumption that various activities are more high **risk** e.g. contemporary, gymnastics - more time spent on floor?

A. [NA] This goes back to the point that, chances are, if you have higher expiration rates and more contact points, then there are more risks and you should consider more mitigations.

[ER] At Trinity Laban we will be doing more ballet and Cunningham in term 1 and less Release and floor-work, so as dancers can remain more upright. We're also delaying our contact improvisation work and duet work until January. Term 1 for us will be very much focused on training as opposed to contact and performance.

[KH] This is the same with us (at London Contemporary Dance School). We will be introducing improvisation and floor-work classes, but we are in a fortunate position to be able to fully clean the floors between our fixed groups.

11. Timepoint: 44:30

Q. I work in high schools as a separate job. **Am I limited to the numbers of children I can**

work with? I go into 3 schools potentially every week. Then teach dance at 3 venues all different children. My main employer suggests I may have to choose which job I do as presumably I am the risk?

- A. [AH] A number of different things come into play here. There is some guidance on how to support after school activity (after school & summer clubs) which suggests that dance is going to be allowed as part of that - this talks about maximum group sizes. The way to manage the risk in this case would be to keep social distance from the groups (or social/fixed bubbles) – you should stay distanced and not come into close contact with any members of any fixed groups as this will increase risk.

[ER] In terms of how we're trying to apply the guidance and manage risk at Trinity Laban, we will have students come in groups of 12-15 per studio, due to our space. Questions around how many students should be in a bubble - I think this really depends on your studio space and size. We're having 2m distances between students measured from sternum to sternum – for us that means 12-15 people. Students will come into the building, stay in their group and stay in the studio, they will have a couple of classes and then they will leave, that's when we will clean the studio space. Our teachers however will be moving from bubble-bubble, they will be teaching across. This is why it is important that they socially distance and not come into close contact with students.

[KH] One other thing we considered if a teacher is moving from bubble-bubble is to face away from the students. This is much easier of course if your studio has a mirror as the students can follow along and you'll all be doing the movements together. If you have less space however that's an additional consideration.

12. Timepoint: 47:58

Q. What about the 200 scientists who have suggested the **virus is air born**?

- A. [NA] Presumably this refers to the open letter that was sent to the World Health Organisation (WHO). This is not based on evidence at this stage – there is still so much unknown which is why we're talking about risk mitigation in a way that enables us to appreciate the possible gaps in our knowledge and understanding. This is an evolving science and that is why we would strongly support the use of face masks in studios until such time that we can be absolutely certain that it's (COVID-19) not flying around further than 2m.

13. Timepoint: 49:35

Q. Is it safe to wear a **face mask** during heavy breathing for **asthmatics**?

- A. [NA] If you have someone who is struggling with shortness of breath, or someone who is asthmatic, then now might not be the right time for them to be doing this sort of exercise in this environment. This would be exposing them to increased risk. This is not an optimal environment, and so when you're doing your risk assessment, if there is clinical vulnerability, we would suggest that this person should not be taking indoor classes.

14. Timepoint: 50:49

Q. Will you cover the aspect of the use of air conditioning in dance studios? / The studio I hire has no windows but air conditioning, is this safe?

- A. [NA] This too is also an evolving science – air conditioning units are not responsible for spreading viral load.

15. Timepoint: 53:22

Q. Are there **differences in guidance** between professional dancing, participatory dance, dance in education and dance in the community? (I wasn't aware dance companies had been given the green light to return to the studio and it makes me wonder whether this means public classes, grassroots etc can return with masks and risk mitigation?)

A. [AH] You may have seen that there was a surprise announcement by the culture secretary last week, saying that they had developed a 5-stage roadmap for re-opening the performing arts. This hasn't been published yet, but we have asked numerous questions. It has been suggested that stages 1 and 2 are already possible, which is essentially training and rehearsals and performances behind closed doors for recording purposes. When the announcement is made today, we will have some more clarity on that roadmap, timeline and what is allowed and when. We will continue to push hard for this clarity after the announcement today.

16. Timepoint: 54:51

Q. What are your thoughts on gloves as **PPE** would you suggest this also? what are the max numbers in a room for a class environment?

A. [NA] The government guidelines will talk about PPE in a clinical environment (which dance settings are not). If you have any common touch points you should be looking to wipe these down, but there is little strength around using gloves. Wipe downs, antibacterial gel and regular handwashing should help mitigate the risk.

17. Timepoint: 56:43

Q. Would siblings have to be in the same **bubble**? Even if they are different ages and abilities?

A. [AH] This is very possible. People will still need to think about what happens outside of their fixed bubbles in school or in dance.

[NA] We are basing our fixed groups on artistic need. We have various households who won't dance together artistically but who live together – the value of the fixed group is that you don't have to isolate a larger group of people if there does happen to be an outbreak. We have asked for clarification on what would happen in the scenario whereby you have a dancer from one fixed group who develops symptoms and what would happen to others in their house. The advice that we have been given is that, if a dancer is symptomatic then the rest of that fixed group would need to isolate, as would their partner (if they are in a different fixed group), but the partners fixed group would not need to self-isolate at this stage unless they too developed symptoms. This is not about elimination, it's about mitigation. You could talk to your public health officer about how far you should take this mitigation to try and protect yourself and your company.

18. Timepoint: 58:52

Q. How much safer is it to be **working outdoors**? / What is the max number of dancers outdoors?

A. [NA] Absolutely, outdoors, because of the ventilation and additional space will definitely be safer. From the BRB's perspective, our policy will be, come in, dance, get out, and then we will be running complimentary exercise sessions in a local park. This environment will help us to reduce risk.