

Covid -19 Safety in rehearsals and shows

This document is created as of March 9th 2021; and updated July 5th 2021. It is likely to be amended on a regular basis, and as we find out more about the situation closer to our return to physical rehearsals. It will remain in place until both the pandemic ends and we feel that all significant risk is past.

We are likely to voluntarily keep more safety procedures in place for longer than is the legal minimum, and would like to ask all actors, crew, volunteers, and visitors to join us, to help keep everyone safe.

Additional guidance is expected to be found at https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm#cleaning_hygiene

Return to venues

We will be returning fully to face-to-face rehearsals in August 2021; this allows not only for the government's lifting of most restrictions, as previewed, but also for all UK adults to have at least been offered their first vaccination. However it should be borne in mind that the vaccinations only reduce the risk of serious covid illness, they do not eliminate it, and that some people may not have been vaccinated for health or personal reasons.

Arrival

We are aware that not everyone has the possibility to install track and trace on their device. Therefore, to keep details in one place, we will have a sign-in book. All persons crossing the threshold/ entering the rehearsal/performance space will be asked to sign in, and out with their name, time, and if a visitor, provide a method of contact.

If a person who has visited us, subsequently finds that they have tested positive for Covid-19, then they are required to inform us, so that we can in turn inform everyone who was present at the time, so that they can test, and if required, isolate themselves for the required time.

We ask people to not attend if they are ill, even if they do not think that it is Covid.

Actors, stage crew, visitors, and volunteers, who are ill, are asked to not attend in person, and will be able to participate in rehearsals from home, using the Zoom video app.

There will be no penalty for non-attendance if the person concerned is ill, or isolating, as long as they have let us know. This will be deemed a completely acceptable (and encouraged) unavoidable reason for missing rehearsals at short notice.

Unless they are medically exempt; all actors, crew, volunteers and visitors are asked to wear a face mask in rehearsals/ backstage, other than the times that they are performing/ rehearsing a scene.

Venue hygiene

We will be checking all kitchen and toilet facilities at rehearsal and show venues, prior to cast arrival, for cleanliness, and if in doubt, the facilities will be cleaned ahead of everyone else's arrival by a designated crew member or company director, wearing appropriate PPE.

This is because our rehearsal and performance spaces are shared workspaces, also used by other people and organisations.

All cast and crew are urged to bring their own mug from home for tea/coffee (again due to shared facilities), and to be responsible for washing their own mug / plate using supplied detergent.

Sanitizer

We reserve the right to request that hand sanitizer is used by all cast and crew on arrival to the rehearsal or performance space. We will supply sanitizer from the company funds though people are welcome to bring their own.

If ill

If a cast or crew member is ill with anything which may be infectious, they are asked not to come into rehearsals where they will come into contact with other people.

Rehearsals & performances

Shows will not involve kissing or similar contact. Affection between characters can just as well be shown by other expression like the holding of hands. Hand sanitizer should be used before and after such scenes.

Visitors

We will not be permitting drop-in visitors. Visitors who will be permitted must be visiting in sole pursuance of their job, eg chaperones, regional or national trade union representatives, carers, police, medical staff, show/venue bookers, journalists, etc, and they must be expected ahead of time. All visitors will be required to comply with our usual safety rules.

“Do not disturb” signage to that effect will be placed on rehearsal venue doors where we sometimes get unexpected people “pop in” to see what we are doing/ who we are (we rehearse in a community centre so sometimes people walk in looking to see if we are a social club or a coffee morning), or to avoid using the separate entrance for church worship upstairs. Under our covid-safety rules, such persons will not be permitted to enter unless they are experiencing an emergency.

Ventilation

Where possible, doors or windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation, or failing that, air conditioning used.

Shared workspaces

As we work in spaces also used by other groups of people, we will take especial care to clean and disinfect the space after our use. This will require designated people from our group to disinfect all surfaces touched or handled by other groups as well. We expect this of other groups using the space before us, and will follow the same procedure afterwards.

Handwashing

All spaces in which we work will have multiple handwashing facilities, as well as the provision of hand sanitizer.

Costumes

Individual costumes will be stored as usual in “character bags” in our community centre cupboard but will be sealed in ziplock bags for the cast, to keep items separate. Sharing of ziplock bags will not be permitted.

Stage food or drink

On-stage food or drink will be separate for each character, already plated as a prop by a crew member with clean hands and wearing a mask, and covered in clingfilm until the last minute. Any on-stage utensils will be kept specifically marked per actor, so that no accidental sharing occurs.

Cleaning materials.

A box containing sanitizer, cleaning materials and relevant disposable PPE will be in the theatre teams rehearsal props cupboard, and taken with the team on tour to performances.

This will include

- Disposable masks (to be thrown away after use)
- Dettol spray
- hand sanitizer in dispenser
- disposable rubber gloves (to be thrown away after use)
- washing up liquid
- washing up sponges (to be thrown away after use)
- liquid soap in dispenser
- disinfectant wipes (to be thrown away after use)
- bin liners
- bleach