



Department for  
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Nusrat Ghani MP  
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Dear Nusrat,

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 June on behalf of several of your constituents, regarding their concerns about the recent update in guidance for amateur choral singing. I am replying as the Minister for Digital and Culture.

Professional performing arts activity is permitted, following the move to Step 3 on 17 May. Non-professional groups of up to six people can now sing indoors, in line with the rule of 6 applying to many other indoor activities and gatherings, and can perform or rehearse in groups of up to 30 outdoors. In addition, multiple groups of 30 can now sing outdoors, provided the groups are kept separate throughout the activity, in line with other large events that follow the [organised events guidance for local authorities](#).

This is an important step forward in the return of non-professional performing arts activity from Step 2. However, I know that continued restrictions on amateur singing in larger numbers are deeply disappointing to amateur choirs and performance groups across the country who are eager to see a full return to this much loved activity.

I know how frustrating this is and want to assure you that everyone across government wants to ease these restrictions as soon as possible.

Ultimately, we have followed the views of public health experts on singing. We are aware that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. A [NERVTAG](#) assessment of transmission of COVID-19 in singing and music events found there was '[...]evidence to suggest that singing can produce more aerosols than normal talking or breathing. Singing for any appreciable amount of time therefore may present a risk for the creation of infectious aerosols and allow for infection transmission.'

The DCMS commissioned [PERFORM study](#) looked into this further and reported that singing at the loudest volume increased the production of aerosol, which was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#) indicating that 'singing produces more aerosols (a statistically significant factor of between 1.5-3.4 in median number and mass concentration) than speaking at a similar loudness'.

All of these studies highlight the key factors of physical distancing, ventilation and volume, which is why we have published the [suggested principles of safer singing](#).

Since these studies and the work from SAGE, the Covid context has changed with the emergence of more transmissible strains. This would include the so-called Kent variant



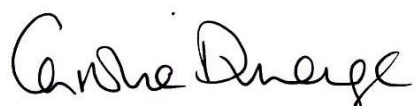
B.1.1.7 which research suggests may be 70% more transmissible, and now the variant B1.617.2 first identified in India, which looks to be even more transmissible. This means the risks associated with transmission have increased since these studies were undertaken.

For these reasons it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions, so that we can see the impact of this before moving to the next step. The Performing Arts Guidance sets out what this means for amateur singing in more detail. I am aware that some amateur groups perform in professional contexts, and even in national institutions, such as the Royal Albert Hall. Whilst the limits do not apply to activity taking place for work or commercial activity, I would remind you that it is for organisers and venues to determine how to operate in accordance with the relevant guidance and regulations.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review in line with the changing situation. Further details on moving to step 4 of the Roadmap will be set out as soon as possible, and the decision to move to step 4 will be made subject to the four tests for easing restrictions.

I hope your constituents and yourself find this information useful.

With best wishes,



Caroline Dinenage MP  
**Minister of State for Digital and Culture**