Registered Charity: 1168081

Health and Safety Policy

Introduction and Scope

Cumbria Singers (CS) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all those involved in the musical activities it organises.

- This includes but is not limited to: members, paid musicians (in future called staff), volunteers and members of the public.
- This includes but is not limited to: rehearsals, concerts and fundraising events.

Responsibilities

- Overall responsibility for health and safety sits with CS Trustees .
- The practical responsibility for health and safety at events and activities organised by CS is delegated to the Trustee/s who agree to undertake this role.

Statements of general policy

1. CS will seek to prevent accidents and cases of ill-health by managing the health and safety at the events and the activities it organises.

   To do so it will:

   - undertake relevant risk assessments to be completed prior to events and activities taking place. (Where regular venues are used the risk assessment will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if required.)

   - liaise with the officials at the event / rehearsal venue who have the overall responsibility for health and safety on its site and following their recommendations.

2. CS will provide clear instructions and information to ensure that members, staff and volunteers are competent to do their work in a healthy and safe manner.

- Tasks performed by members, staff and volunteers will be risk assessed and appropriate instruction to be provided (e.g. preparing and serving hot drinks, erecting staging).

3. CS will engage and consult with members and volunteers on health and safety conditions by:
   - briefing members, staff and volunteers on health and safety risk assessments for new venues/ activities and updating on any changes in risk assessments for regular venues / activities.

- establishing clear lines of communication for members, staff and volunteers to raise health and safety concerns.

4. CS will implement emergency procedures:

    - evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident.
    - It will ensure that at least one individual is responsible for knowing fire procedures for hired venues and for communicating them to those present.
    - It will comply with Government regulations and recommendations to minimise the impact on the members, staff and volunteers attending its events and activities of National Emergency/ies that endanger Public Health e.g. Pandemics such as Covid 19.

5. CS will seek to ensure satisfactory health and safety conditions at hired venues and for hired equipment by:

    - using and storing the equipment safely.

    - checking that the electrical equipment has recently been PAT Tested if appropriate.

6. First Aid : CS will ensure that they are aware of First Aid procedures, kits and equipment at hired venues.

    - Where practical, Cumbria Rural Choirs will recruit members and volunteers with First Aid experience to be available to assist if required.

    - Where appropriate (e.g. for larger events) CS will train members or volunteers in First Aid and/or work with professional First Aid organisations/ the designated First Aider for the hired venue.

7. Sound Safety
   Cumbria Rural Choirs takes the responsibility of protecting the hearing of members, staff, volunteers and audience members seriously.

   CS will:
    - Ensure that there are open lines of communication for individuals to raise concerns about hearing.
    - Take concerns seriously: the Committee and Choral Director will work with individuals to minimise risk.
    - Take into account the protection of the audience's hearing when designing stage and audience layout for concerts.

To be reviewed every 3 years Approved December 2024 Next review Dec 2027

Appendix 1: How to approach health and safety

Health and Safety is one of those terms that can bring dread and derision in equal measure. With some of the stories you hear it's easy to see why it has a bad reputation. In practical terms though, all it really means is spending a little bit of time thinking about what risks exist in a particular situation and what can be done to minimise them.

It's mostly common sense and is not about removing every single possible risk – that's impossible! The point is to identify likely risks and then take sensible steps to minimise them. The key words to apply are; reasonable, sensible and practical. For example:

- Insisting audience members hand bags in to avoid the risk of tripping – not reasonable, sensible and practical
- Setting out seating so audience members have enough room and access – is reasonable, sensible and practical

1. The legal implications

The Health & Safety Executive advises on health & safety in the workplace and there are certain things that employers must do. Most of our groups are not employers and so the requirements do not apply to them. However best practice is to treat volunteers as employees and groups have a responsibility to consider and manage the health and safety of anyone they work with (members, volunteers, audience, contractors, professionals etc.).

2.What does this mean for our group?

This guidance covers the things you should be thinking about and the documentation you should have in place when it comes to health and safety. We anticipate for most of our groups this will mean thinking about risks and hazards at your rehearsal and concert venues – and anywhere else you might perform or organise activities.

3.What should we actually do?

- Develop a basic (one page) health and safety policy – this will help to focus your thinking and commitment to health and safety and provide a simple framework for dealing with it.
- Carry out a simple risk assessment for the venues you use – this is the practical side of identifying and minimizing risk.

Often the venues will have their own health and safety policy and risk assessments – and it is a good idea to check this and ask to see them. But you should still do your own risk assessment specific to the activities you will be doing at the venue.

4. What should go in our policy?

The policy should set out:

- your commitment to providing a healthy and safe environment for your activities
- who is responsible for health and safety in your organisation

- the areas to consider in providing a healthy and safe environment and actions to be taken

5. What is a risk assessment?

It is the process of assessing a venue or space to identify potential risks and then deciding if, and what, action needs to be taken to reduce those risks..

The best thing to do is to visit a venue before your event/activity and carry out a risk assessment. It should be done at least done several days before the event/activity so you have time to take any necessary action that may result from your risk assessment.

If you use a venue frequently (e.g. rehearsals) you do not need to do a risk assessment for each rehearsal – although you should review it annually or when something changes at the venue.

If you use a regular concert venue it is sensible to review your risk assessment before each concert – even if it is just to confirm nothing has changed.

What you need to think about as part of your risk assessment will depend on your specific activities and the venue but some common things to consider are:

- **Likely causes of slips, trips and falls**:
  - Electric cables - ensure they are covered and clearly marked
  - Equipment (e.g. instrument cases) not stored sensibly
  - Risk of spills (refreshments etc.) – know where the cleaning-up facilities are and have them to hand - should you limit refreshments to certain areas? Is there a wet floor sign?
- **Setting up, moving and using equipment/heavy objects:**
  - Are enough people allocated to moving/setting up equipment?
  - Does everyone know their role and have clear instructions?
  - Are work areas clear?
  - What equipment will you need?
  - Who will carry out final checks?
  - Is the equipment working properly?
  - Do you need professionals to set-up up any equipment? (e.g. staging)
  - Does any equipment need to be cordoned or have a warning sign? (e.g. hot lights)
  - Will anyone have to work at height?
- **Venue requirements:**

Fire - know the exits and assembly points, keep them clear - make the audience aware

Are there adequate toilet facilities?

Is there sufficient lighting? (don't forget about outside lighting for evening performances)

Access for unloading equipment – is there enough space to safely unload and carry equipment?

- Weather - for outside performances consider the weather:
  - Sun - is there enough shade for people – can you provide free water?
  - Wind - risk of equipment (e.g. music stands)
  - Rain - electrical equipment
- First Aid - see below
- Sound levels - see below

6. Training

Members and volunteers who help at your events should be provided with basic health and safety training. Good internal training is normally perfectly sufficient; a tour of the venue and facilities, highlighting potential risks and providing clear instructions for any tasks.

There are courses available for Health and Safety training but they cost money and are normally more than is required for community music groups. The Health and Safety Executive have lots of free leaflets that are a good reference point for internal training and handing out to volunteers (the one on Manual Handling may be of particular relevance). One area to consider formal training is First Aid (see below).

7. First Aid

As with Health and Safety legislation only employers have to provide first aid, and the legal provision does not extend to self-employed people. However it is definitely something you should consider when organising events and activities and take sensible and practical steps to provide First Aid.

At the most basic level you should be aware of the location of the First Aid kit at any venue you use and any local numbers that may be useful in case of an emergency. If you are organising bigger events for the public then you should consider providing qualified First Aiders. There are several options here:

Identify existing qualified people in your group – or related to your group

The simplest way is to ask your group if anyone is already qualified. This could be a medical professional or someone who has done a First Aid qualification in a different walk of life - through their work for example.

One thing to remember when asking a member to provide First Aid cover is their availability during a performance. It can be fine at a rehearsal - but if your lead flautist is the First Aider and needs to provide assistance just before their solo it will be a problem.

Another option is asking members if they have any friends or relatives who are qualified and would be willing to volunteer at concerts.

Train someone in your group or a volunteer to be a First Aider

If there isn't anyone already qualified is someone interested in being trained? Again, it doesn't necessarily have to be a member - a friend or relative of a member may be interested in training and

volunteering. There are lots of places that do basic courses for event first Aid. The Red Cross and St John Ambulance are good places to look.

Employ the services of trained volunteers for events

This is a good option to consider for very large events. There are lots of organisations who can help and there is normally a fee involved. Generally organisations will ask for some information about the event, provide risk Assessment and quote based on that. Some of the most well know are:

- The British Red Cross Society
- St John Ambulance

8. Hearing safety

As a music group being aware of the hearing health of your members and audience is important.

There are Noise Regulations in place for professional musicians who are exposed to excessive noise levels on a frequent and intensive basis. It is not such a pressing issue for amateur groups and the regulations do not apply. However, it is something to be aware of and referencing it in your health and safety policy is a good way to do this.

It is not something you necessarily have to be pro-active about. It may just be a case of making your members aware that you take the issue seriously and that they can raise any concerns they have. Of course if concerns are raised you should take them seriously. There are practical things you can do - find out more in our hearing loss resource.

Appendix 2: Risk Assessment Framework

Risk Assessment Form Template.pdf