

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Question**

Will the Minister –

- (a) provide the dates and minutes of any meetings held at which the current guidelines advising against singing were discussed;
- (b) advise what research was considered in any such meetings, including whether the study published in August 2020 by the University of Bristol arising from the research project known as PERFORM (Particulate Respiratory Matter to Inform Guidance for the Safe Distancing of Performers in a COVID-19 Pandemic) was taken into account; and
- (c) agree to a meeting with me to review the current policy in order that singing activities can resume safely as soon as possible?

**Answer**

(a)

Discussions took place at the Scientific Technical Advisory Cell (STAC) on three occasions - 20<sup>th</sup> July, 17<sup>th</sup> August and again on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September – to apply changes to guidance allowing school-aged children to sing and play wind instruments in small groups of three. The minutes for these meetings are not released where content still relates to government policy under development.

The key references for the evidence base that was considered in preparing evidence for STAC are a range of studies on aerosol droplet transmission of COVID 19 and cluster infection and include risk assessment, observational research and meta-analysis:

Becher, Lia, Amayu Wakoya Gena, and C. Völker. "Risk assessment of the spread of breathing air from wind instruments and singers during the COVID-19 pandemic." (2020).

Kain, Morgan P., et al. "Chopping the tail: how preventing superspreading can help to maintain COVID-19 control." medRxiv (2020).

Parker, Alexander Stuart, and Kenneth Crookston. "Investigation into the Release of Respiratory Aerosols by Brass Instruments and Mitigation Measures with Respect to Covid-19." medRxiv (2020).

Parker, Alexander Stuart, and Kenneth Crookston. "Investigation into the Release of Respiratory Aerosols by Brass Instruments and Mitigation Measures with Respect to Covid-19." medRxiv (2020).

Buonanno, Giorgio, Lidia Morawska, and Luca Stabile. "Quantitative assessment of the risk of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 infection: prospective and retrospective applications." medRxiv (2020).

Asadi, Sima, et al. "Aerosol emission and superemission during human speech increase with voice loudness." *Scientific reports* 9.1 (2019): 1-10.

Prakash, Meher K. "Eat, Pray, Work: A meta-analysis of COVID-19 Transmission Risk in Common Activities of Work and Leisure." *medRxiv* (2020)

(b) The University of Bristol research was not available on the two earlier dates when STAC met to discuss this matter. However, the key outcomes of the Bristol evidence reviewed had similar conclusions for the risk of respiratory droplet spread in singing and woodwind and brass instrument playing.

(c) A meeting with Ministers and relevant officers took place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September and the Minister for Health and Social Services remains available to discuss the matter.