

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
6 th August 2020	5	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update includes risk factors around the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship from 8th August.

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

The [government guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#) requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public. This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to opening up church and cathedral buildings to clergy and members of the public entering for any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Private prayer (clergy only)
 - Livestreaming services (clergy only)
 - Private prayer (general public)
 - Public worship
 - Rites of passage services
 - Opening for visitors and tourists

2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
 - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:
 - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
 - record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
 - consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
 - check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

Rev	Assessor's name: The Revd Penny Warner (PW)	Date completed: Latest draft 03.07.2020 Reviewed 15.07.2020 Reviewed 05.08.2020 Reviewed 08.08.2020 Reviewed 01.09.2020	Review date: 10.07.2020 24.07.2020 05.08.2020 01.10.20
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	Front door (fire exit at rear) One way system in place to enter/exit with physical division between sides	PW	PW 10.06.20
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Doors locked on entry and phone to be carried.	PW	PW 10.06.20
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Doors to be wide open before opening to public and remaining open throughout private prayer/worship.	PW	PW 10.06.20 & ongoing
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Regular checking on entry throughout the week	PW	PW 10.06.20 & ongoing
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Regular checking on entry throughout the week	PW	PW 10.06.20 & ongoing
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Ongoing as part of church checks. Maintenance & repair in	PW	PW 10.06.20 & ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		progress.		
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Font is empty. Water at baptism poured only by priest.	PW	PW 10.06.20
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	N/A	N/A	N/A
Deciding whether to open to the public	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Discussion at Deanery Chapter with clergy colleagues. Local shops and businesses are reopening. Usual pattern for timing and practical arrangements creates no conflicts.	PW	PW 03.07.2020
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Website Facebook Email Newsletter Twitter Phonecalls as widely as possible	PW Volunteers	PW 03.07.2020
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Discussed with PCC via email correspondence. Additional service planned at 9am to disperse numbers. Booking not expected to be needed but the situation is to be monitored weekly.	PW & PCC	PW & PCC 02.07.2020
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit	N/A.	N/A	N/A

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark			
	Details on requirements such as bringing a face covering in communications.	Communicated 2 weeks in advance and on pewsheets, social media and email communications. Spare face coverings available in church	PW	From 26 th July 2020
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Completed and monitored on an ongoing basis.	PW	PW from 10.06.2020
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Completed below	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Choose one point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.	Front door for entry & exit. Signage displayed	PW in discussion with wardens	PW 10.06.2020
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Chalk markings outside at 2m apart before services if needed. Taped marking in hallway and lounge at 2m apart.	PW	PW 03.07.2020
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all except those exempt.	New Signage asking people to wear a face covering on display. Stewards prepared to inform people on entry. Spare disposable masks	PW, stewards and wardens	26.07.2020 Reviewed and revised on 08.08.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		available.		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	All relevant doors opened on staff arrival and remaining open throughout. Rooms not in use remain locked and signed closed.	PW	PW 10.06.2020 & ongoing
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Pew bibles, leaflets etc removed. Hymn books not in use Sets of service sheets for each individual services, stored separately and quarantined for whole week after use. Single use weekly notice sheet. Single use for funerals and wedding.	PW	PW 10.06. 2020 08.08.020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Any additional literature removed.	PW	PW 01.07.2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed on pews in use for each of cleaning so that entire surface can be wiped down. Kneelers/cushions removed	PW	PW 03.07.2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	N/A	N/A	
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including	Walk through completed. Signage in pews in place.	PW in conversation	PW 03.07.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	safe flow of visitors. Remember 2m in all directions from each person (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Directions given on signage Instructions given for flow of traffic during services by priest, in service booklet and by the guidance of stewards. As of 26 th July face coverings strongly advised. As of 8 th August, face coverings mandatory.	with wardens	
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Completed. Signage in place.	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Completed. Signage in place & hand sanitizers Physical barrier in lounge to keep entry/exit system flow.	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Rooms not in use are locked with “Not in Use” signage – kitchen, toilets, upper room, choir vestry and creche. Vicar’s vestry – Vicar only. Side aisles can be taped off if not in use to save additional cleaning.	PW	PW 03.07.2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Purchased (at least 70% alcohol) On entry, exit and in nave for before Holy Communion.	PW	PW 03.07.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		Refill purchased also.		
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Signage and restrictions in place using furniture and signage.	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notice in place re social distancing requirement, cleaning hands and wearing face coverings, as of 26 th July. Info sent out in advance via social media etc also.	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	High risk surfaces wiped after use (anti bac spray and wipes available)	PW & volunteers	PW 10.06.2020 & ongoing
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Kitchen remaining closed. Bins available for used anti bac wipes.	PW	PW 10.06.2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Toilets restricted to 1 person at a time in Ladies/Gents – signed on doors. Gents: cubicle only in use. Ladies – accessible cubicle only in use. Antibac wipes available, handwashing posters and antibac soap. Bins available for used anti bac wipes.	PW	PW 10.06.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Ongoing.	PW & volunteers	PW 10.06.2020
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Stewards to record names and contact details where possible. To be retained alongside service register for 21 days then destroyed.	PW & volunteers	PW 03.07.2020 & ongoing
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	Poster on church door. Notices on website, Facebook, Twitter, a Church Near You, including copies of Risk Assessment and our local planning and guidance. Emailed to those we have contacts for. Communicated via phone to those not online	PW & volunteers	PW 03.07.2020
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	Used services to be cleaned between uses of the building by volunteers – i.e. after 9am service before 10.30am. Suitable materials and volunteers prepared for this.	PW & volunteers	PW 03.07.2020
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	No cleaning volunteers will be over 70 or self isolating.	PW	PW 03.07.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Volunteer list being kept and volunteers called up as needed.	PW and wardens – ongoing	PW & wardens ongoing
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Purchased and available	PW ongoing	PW 10.06.2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Purchased and available. Anti bac spray and wipes tested on pews etc.	PW ongoing	PW 10.06.2020
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	To be removed after cleaning each time, and on exit before locking up by last person to leave.	PW & volunteers	Ongoing
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	After each cleaning of church On last person's exit	PW & volunteers	Ongoing
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Closed from Tuesdays to Sundays – unless a funeral takes place in which case necessary cleaning will be completed before and after.	PW & volunteers	Ongoing
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here. See above	PW & volunteers	Ongoing
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here. See above	PW & volunteers	Ongoing

Additions & Updates

5th August 2020

- We are following all advised Church of England procedures and practices for the safe conduct of public worship, baptisms, weddings and funerals – updates are monitored, and changes made as appropriate. Up to 30 people may attend.
- **Face coverings strongly advised** by C of E from 26th July 2020 – people informed via social media, newsletter. Spare disposable masks available for use. 2m distancing still in use wherever possible in church and on church grounds.
- As per advice from the Diocese based on Church of England and Government guidance, the officiant may remove their face covering when speaking during the service to enable clarity, and those who have hearing impairments to lip read. When face coverings become mandatory we will follow all advice on this and update practice where needed.
- **Face coverings mandatory** from 8th August 2020 – people informed in advance via newsletter, social media. Spare disposable masks available for use. 2m distancing still in use wherever possible in church and on church grounds. This applies to community rooms and activities as well as worship areas, on advice of Diocese and Archdeacon.
- The PCC have discussed by email and agreed the COVID secure meeting of Slimming World in the upstairs church hall. Advice from the Diocese of Manchester has been sought. Slimming World have a copy of our risk assessment and requirements and have their own Risk Assessment specific to their group and activities.
- Each group wishing to resume hire of rooms must produce a COVID secure risk assessment. This must be approved by the PCC before use of the room – the PCC's decision will be made bearing in mind most recent local situation and advice of Diocese of Manchester.

- We are revising our use of orders of service. There will be a set of orders of service for Sundays at 9am, Sundays at 10.30am and Tuesdays at 10.30am. After each service these will be placed in boxes and quarantined until the next use. This exceeds the 72 hours recommendation. This will help us to save paper. A single use news sheet will be produced for each service.

September Update

- Junior Church resumes in a COVID secure manner as of Sunday 6th September. See separate Risk Assessment. NB Parents/carers to leave children at door and not remain in the session with them, unless in exceptional circumstance. Children to remain with households when not in Junior Church.
- Toilets reopen – one person per room. Cubicle only open in Gents. Accessible cubicle only open in Ladies. Antibacterial wipes available and handwashing posters displayed.
- Households discouraged from socialising. Reminders on pewsheets, email newsletter, social media etc.
- Priest to greet people at 2m distance outside before service where possible and return to vestry straight after services to discourage mingling between households and keep a clear exit to church and churchyard.
- NHS Covid 19 APP QR codes displayed on entrance to church and separate QR code for Community Room upstairs.
- Slimming World to continue to meet as commercial group with own RA subject to condition of abiding by law and not allowing “mingling” and social interaction between households. Consultant informed prior to 28.09.20.
- As of 28th September 2020, 15 people only by law to attend weddings, baptisms and other life cycle events 6 people (unless within public worship then safe COVID 19 secure limit applies as per public worship), funerals 30 people.

COVID-19 Privacy Notice

List of Clergy, Staff and Visitors to Church buildings

This notice explains how information about you will be used temporarily by the **PCC OF ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, STALYBRIDGE** during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis so we can put in place a list of clergy, staff and visitors to the church building/s, as requested by the Government in support of NHS Test and Trace.

1. Who we are

THE PCC OF ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, STALYBRIDGE are the data controller (contact details in section 7. below). This means we decide how your personal data is used and why.

2. The information we collect about you and why we need it

Although we may have your contact details already for our usual work the Covid-19 pandemic has created a unique situation and additional reasons for us to collect the name and contact telephone numbers of all clergy, staff and visitors who visit/use our church building/s in order to support NHS Test and Trace. This is specifically in relation to contact tracing, which is the process of identifying, assessing, and managing people who have been exposed to a disease to prevent onward transmission and the investigation of local outbreaks.

For more information about Test and Trace, and how they will use your personal details, please see the Government guidance website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

In summary, Test and Trace:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus to find out if they have the virus;
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had; and
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus.

This is voluntary, and you don't have to provide your details, however, if you do, they will only be used for the purpose of sharing them with NHS Test and Trace.

3. Lawful basis

We will use your information lawfully, as explained below:

- **Consent** – We need your consent in order to collect your name and contact telephone number and share this with NHS Test and Trace if requested. You will give us your consent by providing your details in the List/Form.
- **Explicit consent** – We need your explicit written consent to collect your data on the basis that you may have revealed a religious belief by using our church building/s. You will give us your explicit consent by completing the List/Form.

You can withdraw your consent at any time after giving your details by letting us know you no longer want us to keep or share your personal data for this purpose, however, once we have given your details to Test and Trace we will no longer be able to prevent processing. To contact us, please see our contact details at 7. below.

4. Sharing your data

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with NHS Test and Trace if requested.

Personal data that is collected will be used only to share with NHS Test and Trace. It will only be used for the purpose specified in this Privacy Notice.

5. Data Retention

We will keep your name and telephone number for a maximum of 21 days and will dispose of it after this period.

6. Your Legal Rights

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR or DPA 2018, you have the following rights with respect to your personal data: -

- The right to be informed about any data we hold about you;
- The right to request a copy of your personal data which we hold about you;
- The right to withdraw your consent at any time, while the [*name of church body*] still has your data;
- The right to request that we correct any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date;
- The right to request your personal data is erased where it is no longer necessary for us to retain such data;

- The right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of your personal data, to request a restriction is placed on further processing;
- The right to obtain and reuse your personal data to move, copy or transfer it from one IT system to another. [*only applicable for data held online*]

7. Complaints and queries

If you have any questions about this privacy notice, including any requests to exercise your legal rights, please contact us using the details set out below.

The Revd Penny Warner, Vicar of St George, Stalybridge
St George's Church, Church Walk, Stalybridge, SK15 1DL 07393 420763 revdpennywarner@outlook.com

If you do not feel that your complaint has been dealt with appropriately, please contact ***The Revd Penny Warner, Vicar of St George, Stalybridge (see above)***

You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office. You can contact the Information Commissioners Office on 0303 123 1113 or online: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/your-personal-information-concerns/> or <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>