

Church and Lettings Risk Assessment post-Coronavirus Lockdown – St Paul’s URC



**From 2 December 2020 – Based on Covid Alert Level
“Tier 2 - High”**

Introduction

This assessment covers use of St Paul’s church for public worship and the halls for lettings. It is based on the latest Government [guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#) (4 July, updated 1 December) and for [multi-purpose community facilities](#). (30 June, updated 30 November. We also include the national [URC guidance](#) (update 4 November)

It can be shared with those who use or intend to use our buildings. For hirers and other groups their own risk assessment and procedures must complement this document so there is clarity for everyone over their mutual responsibilities. We will update with specific RA for certain activities.

Please ensure the latest document is used – government guidance is changing rapidly.

Philosophy

- As a church in our local community it is important that we are aware of our neighbours and reputation; we will maintain high standards of compliance and keep them informed.
- Safety of our members, volunteers, users and local community is our priority. Many members are over 70 or otherwise vulnerable and we do not encourage them to attend, offering other forms of receiving the Word and participating in worship.
- Our risk assessment presumes that everyone from one household/bubble keeps 2m apart from those from other households inside and outside, although guidance permits 1m with additional precautions where 2m is not viable.
- We will discourage anyone attending with symptoms or those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and encourage them to stay at home.
- There will be a one-direction system to minimise people passing in the corridor or at entrances
- At all entrances there will be hand sanitiser and people will be encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly regularly. Face coverings must be worn whilst in the building unless exempted.
- Where possible spaces and equipment will be left for 72 hours before the next use, Otherwise we’ll deep clean, and quarantine any books.
- For the halls Covid Tier 2 forbids meeting indoors with anyone not from the same household/bubble. Outdoors no more than six people from up to 6 households can meet 2m apart. For youth activities or formal support groups up to 15 can attend. 15 for weddings, wakes, 30 for funerals. Educational activity permits up to the safe capacity of the space.
- We will use the main doors for church and the large hall, with the car park entrance used for those who have limited mobility or for circulation when the large hall only is in use.
- Toilets will be cleaned regularly and we ask users to clean surfaces after themselves with materials provided.
- No refreshments will be served after worship to minimise mingling at Covid Tier 2.
- We will collect and keep records of all attendees for 21 days as required by the NHS Track and Trace system manually or via QR code. This will be GDPR compliant and secure.
- We may have to make an additional charge to those hiring the halls to cover cleaning costs.

Process

We have identified risks and assessed the likelihood and the impact of the risk. Items are scored from 1 to 5 (5 being highest) and multiplied to get a Risk Score. Then we set out steps that can be taken to reduce or remove the risk to an acceptable level. If the risk remains “Catastrophic” or “unacceptable,” we have considered further steps or ceased offering the activity.

Person/Group completing this risk assessment SE with MK and CS _____

Date of assessment 1/12/20 V8 _____

Church premises located at: St Paul's URC South Croydon _____ Contact Sue Eardley: Secretary@StPaulsURC.org.uk 07971 068887

Risk Scoring table

Impact	Severe	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Major	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Moderate	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Insignificant	1	1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5
			Remote	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Highly Likely
			Likelihood				

Key to Risk Level

Catastrophic		Undesirable	
Unacceptable		Acceptable	

Note – this risk assessment is dynamic and ‘missing’ risk numbers mean the item has been cleared or is no longer relevant. .

Risk No	Risk		Type*	Inherent risk			Mitigation	Residual risk			Notes
				Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	
Managing Worship safely (ongoing usual safety checks and systems in place)											
6	A	Seating in areas to be used for public worship is too close together.	Prop	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sanctuary capacity 54 individuals/couples. (18 pairs of pews 4.1m wide 1.1m apart) ➤ Specify with markers and monitor with ushers 	2	3	6	

*Risk type: choose from: Data, Financial, Legal/regulatory, People, Property, Reputational, Service Delivery

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				Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	
11	A	Items may be handled by more than one person, increasing the risk of cross contamination	People	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collect own service sheet ➤ Communion Process agreed – gloves for prep and serving, help yourself ➤ Offerings – deposit on exit gloves/handwashing by counters ➤ Hand sanitisers on entry 	2	3	6	
Social Distancing and government precautions											
15	A	Flow of people / congestion or makes social distancing impossible	People	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reinforce message regularly ➤ One way system in warmer months ➤ Ensure signage in place. ➤ Loos one in one out ➤ Face Covers available 	2	3	6	
16	A	Too many people gather in the building. – Rule of six unless specified activities – no mingling under Tier 2	People	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vigilance over max numbers and type of event ➤ Risk assess for each event ➤ Guide 24 individuals/bubbles large hall, 10-12 in small hall / youth room, ➤ Seated / youth / education preferred for lettings ➤ Church rep monitors each event closely 	2	4	8	
17	A	Those using the building don't respect distancing guidance.	People	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reinforce COVID level High rules – no social interaction ➤ Place 2m distancing marks where possible ➤ Display clear signage 	2	4	8	

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				Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure hirers are briefed to reinforce the message. ➤ Remind those who forget 				
18	A	People attend who have symptoms of coronavirus	Legal	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remind congregation weekly ➤ Hirers tell people to stay away if they have symptoms ➤ Clear signage and reminders of symptoms and self-isolation. ➤ St Paul's volunteers protect themselves. 	1	5	5	
19	A	Attendees do not wear face coverings	People	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mandatory unless exempted ➤ Coverings available for worship ➤ Advise hirers to provide coverings ➤ Posters and encouragement ➤ Members and elders to remind people 	3	3	9	
20		Minister's face covering prevents clear messaging	People	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visor alternative when leading worship ➤ Wear covering whenever not preaching and/or when <2m from anyone 	2	2	4	
Ongoing Cleaning											
24	B	Cleaning staff/volunteers unavailable or unable to comply with safe working practice for cleaning	People	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure the cleaner is briefed on safe methods ➤ Provide gloves for those involved and wash hands after removing PPE. ➤ Use warm soapy water for wiping surfaces 	1	3	3	

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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPE MUST be disposed of in designated receptacle. 				
25	A	Materials not available to properly clean surfaces	Serv del	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor stocks regularly 	2	3	6	
26	A	Contamination from high-touch areas such as door handles, switches	Prop	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System for cleaning high-touch areas before let Clean regularly whilst open and after let finished. Where consistent with fire safety and security, use wedges/hooks to hold doors open and ensure doors are closed when the building closes to maintain fire safety. 	2	3	6	See cleaning process checklist
27	A	Someone with Coronavirus is found to have visited the building	People	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close the building immediately for min.72 hrs. Notify authorities for track and trace advice After 72h wash all surfaces Double bag waste, store securely for 72 hrs before putting in bins. Wash hands thoroughly after PPE kit has been removed and disposed of in designated bin 	2	3	6	
28	A	People may carry Coronavirus into the building on their hands	People	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require everyone to wash or sanitise hands on entry. Display clear signage on the importance of washing hands regularly and avoiding face touching. 	2	4	8	Kit in place

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29	A	Toilet facilities cannot be cleaned adequately between users	Property	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cleaning plan in place, ensures toilet facilities safe to use. ➤ Provide sprays and wipes in toilet areas ➤ One in one out system 	2	4	8	
30	A	Someone starts to feel unwell/ develops coronavirus symptoms whilst on the premises	People	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Isolate the person in a separate room whilst arrangements are made for them to be taken home or into medical care. ➤ All in contact asked to wash everything and await news ➤ Croydon Action card used 	2	4	8	
31	A	Increased risk of airborne transmission of disease	People	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minimise noisy events, no singing or shouting ➤ Keep doors and windows open where possible ➤ Ensure compliance with government numbers 	2	4	8	Ongoing
Other risks											
32	A	Reputation amongst neighbours of non-compliant let	People	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advise neighbours beforehand ➤ Clear contract terms ➤ Ensure all out by 7pm ➤ Letter sent to neighbours August 2020 ➤ Someone onsite for lets to ensure compliance 	2	2	4	
32a	A	Reputation among neighbours of too much mingling after church (13 Oct guidance)	People	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cease formal refreshments ➤ Encourage people to stay apart ➤ Stay vigilant to complaints ➤ Welcome new people 	2	2	4	

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33	A	Reputation amongst those hiring of St Paul's being difficult or officious	People	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with them to make hiring as easy as possible ➤ Be clear of expectations. ➤ Check what other halls are doing ➤ Swift refunds if we have to cancel 	2	2	4	
34	A	Track and Trace data is leaked	Data	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure all contact slips are collected and stored securely ➤ Be clear about GDPR notices ➤ Data collected is limited ➤ QR code used where possible 	2	2	4	
35	A	People congregate before or after church in groups	People	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remind people to not 'mingle ➤ Offer alternate ways to meet safely 	2	2	4	

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Risk		Type*	Inherent risk			Mitigation	Residual risk			Notes	
Risk No			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
Gathering for Worship with Children – based on URC guidance											
36	A	Parents attend with Under 5-s – Offer of a crèche	People	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Known children – crèche offered in small hall to enable parents to worship plan and maintain current family bubbles ➤ Visitors – remain with parents, explain on arrival and offer space to take them out for fresh air etc if needed ➤ Crèche volunteers – only if willing and safe to do so 	4	1	4	Known children already in bubble
37	A	Over 5s attend for worship – important they are part of church family together for a part of the service Consider this is a youth activity with guidance checked.	People	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Known children sit in front pulpit side in group of up to 15 with parents nearby but distanced. ➤ Join group in large hall or youth room ➤ Same children (under 15 in number) each week/group ➤ Juniors and senior groups both in large hall one leader each ➤ Visiting children – stay with parents (service < 45 mins) or join group leaving – so long as whole children group size less than 15. ➤ New regular attenders – revise plan and re-assess. 	4	1	4	

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38	A	Materials and equipment used by children requires cleaning	Prop	4	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 tables for exclusive use in hall ➤ No use between Sundays 72 hr natural decontamination ➤ Squirt and blue paper towel available for cleaning regularly. 	4	1	4	
39	A	Safeguarding children activities	People	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low numbers of helpers for JC to reduce spread ➤ Someone always in corridor for support ➤ 3 groups meet with open doors and within earshot of each other 	2	2	2	

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Specific considerations for Groups and Lettings

Contract – revised contract to include

- Letting only to groups permitted under 2 December guidance
- Risk assessment to have been carried out by hirer if a business or chain
- Clarity in contract about numbers and ages attending and precautions to be taken
- Doors and windows to be open wherever possible
- All attendees to be advised to wear face coverings indoors
- No noisy music or alcohol permitted
- Details to be kept of all attendees for 21 days / QR codes to be used.
- Add additional sum for cleaning of all surfaces and provision of sanitiser.

Barnabas Fellowship (new) Not permitted under COVID level High

- 2 groups of no more than 6, socially distanced indoors or out, 15 minute sessions
- Initiation / booking specifically to support those most in need of contact.
- Any refreshments to be served at table by volunteer
- Layout of chairs in the large hall with ventilation and table separation.
- Zoom attendees could increase numbers

Funerals

- Follow guidance in terms of distancing, seating and sanitising for opening sanctuary above and refreshments afterwards.
- Currently up to 30 people permitted in the Sanctuary plus Minister and organist if there is one. No more than 15 for wake with no social interaction.
- No singing permitted (current guidance)
- Attendees help themselves to order of service or projected
- Cleaning surfaces / doors before and after (and leave for three days)

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Hall regular users – e.g. sports or support groups exempted from guidance on indoor meeting, on basis of youth / education / support group / sports

- Use large hall even if a small hall let to enable distancing
- Liaise with their parent organisation (if there is one) about risk assessment and requirements.
- Consider making kitchen off limits – enter and exit from large hall or car park doors unless they are the only user and keep them open wherever possible
- One at a time in toilets and corridor
- Request users to clean toilet areas after let
- Ask cleaner to pay particular attention to cleaning let areas
- Extra small hall window keys available to open windows and check shut afterwards.
- Use QR code or collect all contact details.

Children's parties, teaching, wedding receptions

- Social events not currently permitted.
- Wedding receptions up to 15 people seated without social interaction permitted.
- teaching / educational courses / physical education permitted up to 15 participants.

Youth Council table top sale, jumble sales, card sales

- No longer permitted under Covid level High

Mounting Christmas decorations and opening for 3x Private Prayer

- Masks and social distancing maintained during installation
- Sufficient ushers with squirty sanitiser and booking system in place to mitigate any infection risks

Carol service – public events

- usual Sunday measures, no singing, additional ushers and booking system in place
- care to ensure all are aware of safe distancing and no refreshments.