

## St Edmund's Risk Assessment for Opening the Church Building to the Public

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	9	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

*This update has been reviewed to reflect the [roadmap to ease restrictions](#) issued by the UK government and is intended for use from 29<sup>th</sup> March onwards ('phase 1b'). It incorporates sections on singing, workplace testing, and planning for wider use of buildings including for non-worship purposes. At all times churches should check national and, if relevant, local restrictions to ensure the activity planned is currently permitted. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly and checked against this latest version of the risk assessment.*

England entered the government's roadmap out of lockdown on 8<sup>th</sup> March with the re-opening of schools and other education settings, and an increase in permitted reasons to leave home to meet one person outside for social purposes. As they have been throughout the third lockdown (from 5<sup>th</sup> January) churches are permitted to open for communal worship, private prayer and a number of essential purposes where they can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. There may be specific local regulations recommended by local authorities that place additional restrictions on certain activities.

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.

The government acknowledges that places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership for many individuals, and in bringing communities and generations together.

<b>Church:</b> St Edmund's Roundhay	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Revd NC Wright <b>Key:</b> Revd NC Wright (NW) Operations Manager Sarah Meredith (SM) Churchwardens (CW)	<b>Date completed:</b> 28.3.21 to 31.3.21	<b>Review date:</b> 28.3.21 to 31.3.21
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Access to church buildings for purposes of recording and/or livestreaming services (with no congregation present)</b>  <b>Risk:</b> contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Consider if anyone required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Can someone else fulfil their role in the recording/livestreaming? Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the livestreaming or recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely. Make sure that only those essential for livestreaming or recording enter the church.	Advice on livestreaming and recording can be found <a href="#">here</a> This advice has been checked. No one on the list is vulnerable or has vulnerable household members.	complete	NW 28.3.21
	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.	North-porch door – entry & exit as at different times.	complete	NW 28.3.21
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Policy already in place	complete	NW 28.3.21
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.	Experience over previous 12 months is that there is a gentle flow	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Empty	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	All professionally installed	Complete	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	All supplied and installed	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Undertaken – see below		NW 28.3.21
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce or download signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law and requiring these for all except those exempt.	Signage in place and spare face coverings for all available.	All checked & in place	NW 31.3.21
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Minimum contact on doors as open for air circulation. Electronic news sheets and orders of service distributed before service.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	In place on the door and sign in point. Sign in sheet operated too.	Sign in sheets replenished	NW 31.3.21
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities</b>	Consider how the national lockdown applies to the particular circumstances of the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area, consider the implications of where people travel from and the distance involved.	PCC, wardens & incumbent of the opinion it is inline with step 1, 29 <sup>th</sup> March, that the benefits to the community are now far in excess of any risks, which are mitigated. The congregation is local.	Complete	NW 31.3.21
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Not an issue	Complete	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Check if any clergy, staff or volunteers required for opening to the public fall into clinically extremely vulnerable categories or have members of their household who do, and ensure there are enough people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building.	None in clinically extremely vulnerable categories, or with household members who are. Cleaning by contract cleaners, Plus additional cleaning by a small team – sufficient volunteers.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Consider whether to discourage clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation or visitors from attending services altogether or setting aside a time for them to attend for individual devotions.	Warning of the dangers put in the service info for in person services, ongoing when open.	Notified congregation 29.3.21 & each week	NW 31.3.21
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Not considered necessary based on Christmas	Complete	NW 31.3.21
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	NW discussed with URC & Methodists	Complete	NW 28.3.21
<b>Deciding whether to have a choir or music group singing/performing</b>  <b>Risk:</b> Aerosol spread of coronavirus may be increased by singing and playing of wind instruments	Check current guidance on singing to establish what is permitted. This can be found in the Church of England <a href="#">guidance</a> on conducting public worship and on in the Government guidance for <a href="#">places of worship</a> .	Checked and a small socially distanced choir is considered essential & we will follow the full RSCM guidance for these circumstances.	Discussed with director of music	NW 31.3.21
	Ensure that singers from different households can be socially distanced from one another, and from anyone else present (including a conductor, camera or microphone operator or, if present, a congregation).	Already implemented and successfully undertaken for Christmas services, same arrangements in place.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Put in place measures to create a physical barrier between singers and any congregation.	5 -6 meter distance between singers & congregation	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Remind any members of congregation present that at present they are not allowed to sing indoors.	Undertaken each service	Complete	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>#Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes</b>  <b>Risk:</b> Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.	Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	All undertaken and in place	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering. Clearly state the limits on attendance for weddings, funerals, commemorative events and any other permitted activities where upper limits apply (or provide a link to <a href="#">this document</a> ).	Links to all relevant info in place	Complete update in week ending 3.4.21	NW 31.3.21
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	Guidance followed	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	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.	Signage in place and complies with the law.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	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.	North porch door and all notices in place. All emergency exits in place.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Queue manager in place plus two meter markings	Complete	NW 31.3.21
	Make any temporary arrangements for managing the approaches to the entry points and any parking areas to ensure social distancing can be observed (taking	See previous plus car park sufficiently spacious	Complete	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	into account any consequential risks arising from changes to circulation).			
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Done for each service – ongoing	Ongoing	NW 28.3.21
	If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.	Servicing up to date and system on all the time.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Remove items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people.	All removed	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	Small number for partially sighted, all have to sanitise on entry before picking up. Stressed each service to take home.	Ongoing	NW 28.3.21
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Undertaken – prayer area cordoned off	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	All kneelers removed. Medical advice taken on cushions and keep – if “soiled” then destroy	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas.	All removed	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Remember 2m in all directions from each person (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Safer churches guidance, including ideas on floor plans, has been followed. All in place – 1 meter side to side for seating – mitigation).	See below  Complete	See below  NW 28.3.21
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Undertaken	Complete	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Undertaken	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed.	Undertaken	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	All in place strategically and for toilets	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Seating changed to ensure compliance.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	All in place	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Undertaken for each service	Ongoing	NW 31.3.21
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Undertaken for each service	All checked	NW 31.3.21
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Undertaken for each service	All checked	NW 31.3.21
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Yes	Complete	NW 28.3.21
<b>Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals, commemorative services and ordinations</b>	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place.	Advice on baptisms can be found <a href="#">here</a> .  Advice on weddings can be	Separate assessments are undertaken for	NW 28.3.21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>found <a href="#">here</a> (scroll down to Can weddings go ahead?).</p> <p>Advice on funerals can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The government’s advice on commemorative events can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	each office in compliance with C of E guidance and advice.	
<b>Use of the church for permitted activities other than private prayer or worship</b>	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place. Check that any external group using the church has COVID-secure working practices in place, including their own risk assessment where necessary, and will comply with what is required by the church.	<p>The government’s guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities for permitted activities (including formal childcare and support groups) can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The government’s guidance on the use of hospitality spaces can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<b>N/A at present.</b>	NW 28.3.21
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>	If the church building has been closed for 48 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	N/A	N/A	N/A
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	NW checks and discusses with any cleaning team not part of contract cleaning.	Complete	NW 31.3.21
	Identify surfaces that are frequently touched and by many people (often common areas), e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets,	Identified on cleaning schedules and undertaken accordingly	Complete	NW 31.3.21
Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .				



Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Risk:</b> Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.	and specify the frequency and level of cleaning and by whom.			
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.	Undertaken	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use.	All removed	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Yes	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Yes	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Contract cleaner	Complete	NW 28.3.21
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Only open for one service a week at present and removed the day after.	Complete	NW 28.3.21
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	<b>All guidance will be followed in the event of exposure</b>	Ongoing	NW 31.3.21
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>		