



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

Common Questions regarding Statistics for Mission

Where can I find the Statistics for Mission form?

The form is available to complete on the online parish returns website <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/>. On the homepage you will find a pdf and word version to help you gather your figures before completing the form.

What is the closing date?

As usual, the closing date was 31st January, but we recognise that in these difficult times it may take a little longer so the form will continue to be available for some time after this date, though we'd recommend you complete it as early as you are able while the figures are most current.

What should we include in "Church at Home"?

As with the previous October Count, the Church at Home question is focussed on worship services, therefore online house groups, youth clubs, Alpha courses, and social events etc should not be included there. There is a comment box should you wish to share with us anything else, aside from services, you have been offering remotely to your congregation.

How do I count Church at Home attendance?

You may be using a number of different ways to engage with people at home, for example YouTube or Facebook. Both platforms offer some viewing numbers and these will give you some indication as to how large your audience is. We've not asked for viewing figures directly as these figures are very variable dependent on how the platform is used and for how long and will require some adjustment. For more information on interpreting view figures please see "Everybody Welcome Online" (in particular pages 9 and 10) by Ven Bob Jackson and Revd George Fisher for some helpful advice https://cofecarlisle.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2020/04/Everybody_Welcome_Online_PDF.pdf

We can't fit as many people as usual into our church building so our October Count figures will be lower than usual.

Attendance 'in person' during 2020 will be impacted by a variety of complex factors, and therefore will be reported and used carefully and sensitively. It is very helpful to know how many of our national worshipping community are currently attending church buildings in person so that dioceses and the NCIs can best know how to support churches and the CofE

worshipping community. The 2020 figures will not be used as part of any measure of growth or decline of local churches.

How do I report numbers of people participating in a service live streamed from church in October?

A service live streamed from church in October will be recorded on the form in two places. Those attending in the church building will be counted in the "in person" October count section. Those watching from home via the live stream will be recorded in the "Church at Home" section.

We are running church at home as a benefice, how do we record the figures?

Ideally, as usual, we'd like separate forms to be completed for each church in the benefice. We ask for this because each year there are a number of pastoral reorganisations across the church, so for us to be able to continue to use data we need it to be as fine grained as possible. Where church at home was offered as a benefice (or any other grouping of local churches) all churches should tick the answers in question 5:

5. What 'Church at Home' services did your church offer or refer people to during lockdown (March 2020 –July 2020) and what has your church offered during October 2020?

Then in question 6, choose one of your churches to enter the figures. The other churches should leave this question blank. Feel free to use the comment box to say which churches were included in the church at home figures.

6. Did your church offer any 'Church at Home' services during October 2020? (If 'Church at Home' services were offered as a group of churches, for example as a parish, benefice or group, then please agree which church will report the 'Church at Home' to avoid double counting)

What if church buildings are closed over Advent and Christmas?

If your church buildings were closed during Advent or Christmas then please enter zero for these questions. We are not collecting figures for online participation (we didn't want to complicate the form too much!), but feel free to use the comment box if there is something particular you'd like to mention.

Supplied by National Church Statistics Unit

Monday 1 February 2021