

Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 14 January 2021

My Ref:

Your Ref

Dear Faith Sector Partner

Nationally and locally a number of faith sector partners in recent days have expressed their concerns about hosting congregational worship in the light of the rising COVID-19 rates.

The view of the Public Health team is that this is a very valid concern. Case rates in Shropshire have risen at an alarming rate since Christmas, as well as across the country as a whole. A driver of this rise is the emergence of a new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is significantly more transmissible than the previously dominant strain. We are already seeing rising admissions into critical hospital care as a result of rising rates.

It's important to note that the Government's lockdown guidance does not prohibit congregational worship. However, we would support any faith sector organisation deciding to pause services at this time with the aim of reducing risk to your faith communities, especially those members who are older and more at risk of severe illness and death.

If you would like to discuss your individual setting with us then, as you know, we are always ready and willing to do so.

In the meantime, thank you again for your continued and outstanding leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Robinson".

Rachel Robinson
Director of Public Health