



7 July 2020

To: Licensed and PTO Clergy  
Readers  
Deanery Lay Chairs  
PCC Secretaries  
Churchwardens

Dear sisters and brothers,

I want to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to everyone for the many and varied ministries that you have carried out during lockdown with such grace and faithfulness. I am so grateful for the manner in which everyone has co-operated with the, often difficult, advice that has been issued as a result of Government and Church of England guidance.

Over recent days the Government and the Church of England have issued new advice and guidance in relation to the easing of lockdown restrictions. As we emerge from lockdown there is now more discretion afforded to dioceses and parishes about how we move forward in response to particular issues.

Specific attention has been given over the last few days to diocesan advice regarding:

- Clergy, Lay Ministers and Volunteers in the Clinically Vulnerable Group
- Use of Church Premises for Community Purposes

In order to take account of what has been heard from clergy and parishes across the diocese, and which also takes account of the changing position of other dioceses.

### **Clergy, Lay Ministers and Volunteers in the Clinically Vulnerable Group**

It has been the advice of Manchester Diocese that those who are fall into the **Clinically Vulnerable Category** (which includes those who are over 70) should not engage in ministry that involves direct public contact. This has been consistent with the advice given by other dioceses across the Church of England.

In the light of new, recently revised guidance from the Church of England this advice has been revisited and is now updated.

The national guidance indicates that those in the Clinically Vulnerable Group may now undertake church work or voluntary activity which involves direct contact, providing they observe Government and Church of England Guidance on social distancing etc.

The revised diocesan policy is that:

- those in the Clinically Vulnerable Group may now officiate at funerals, weddings and public worship.
- those who are in the Clinically Vulnerable Group must make their own decision about whether to officiate at services in a church building, churchyard or crematorium. In reaching this decision they must weigh the personal risks and follow both Government and Church of England guidance.
- if any individual who is in the Clinically Vulnerable Group who are benefited or licenced to a particular responsibility decide that for their own personal protection they cannot officiate at services they must not feel under any pressure. The health and well-being of all clergy is an absolute priority.

Individuals will simply need to work with their PCC and Area Dean to ensure that services can be covered.

- volunteers and employees who are in the Clinically Vulnerable Group may now undertake activities within their church, subject to the agreement of the PCC/Incumbent.

The parish risk assessment will need to take account of this and parishes will need to check with their insurers.

It continues to be the diocesan advice that those who are in the **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Group** should continue to follow the shielding advice from the government.

The Government have determined that those who are in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Group are:

- Solid organ transplant recipients.
- People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell).

- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.
- Other people have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions.

It is therefore advised that anyone in this category should not engage in employment or volunteering outside of their own homes at this time.

The Government has stated that individuals should **self-isolate** if:

- they have any [symptoms of coronavirus](#) (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- they're waiting for a coronavirus test result
- they've tested positive for coronavirus – this means you have coronavirus
- they live with someone who has symptoms, is waiting for a test result or has tested positive
- someone in their support bubble has symptoms, is waiting for a test result or has tested positive

**nobody** who is self-isolating should attend church to officiate, work or volunteer under any circumstances.

### **Use of Church Premises for Community Purposes**

The use of church premises for essential community work has always been permissible during lockdown.

The Government have confirmed that the premises of a place of worship can be used by other user groups, where those activities are permitted by law to take place.

With this in mind the diocese now advises:

- Individual PCCs can determine if their premises can be used by other user groups, to undertake activities that are permitted by law.

Activities and businesses that cannot yet operate are [listed in this guidance](#)

The government has provided extensive guidance about multi-purpose community facilities eg community centres, village halls (and by definition it is assumed church halls)

[COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)

This information is for those managing multi-use community facilities. It signposts to relevant guidance on a range of different activities that can take place in these spaces, in line with the government's roadmap to ease the existing measures to tackle COVID-19.

Particular attention is drawn to the following sections of the guidance:

Section 2 Core principles for safely reopening community facilities

Section 3a: Early years and youth provision

Section 3b: Voluntary sector and other service provision

Section 3c: Recreation, leisure and social gatherings

Section 3d: Meetings and civic functions

In the days and weeks to come the guidance issued across the diocese will be updated in line with emerging government and Church of England advice. Updates will be published and shared as quickly as is practicable.

Please be assured that I, and my Leadership Team, will continue to support you and will be praying with you and offering practical support in the time to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ David Manchester'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

**+David Manchester**