

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
2 nd December 2020	7	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update has been reviewed in the light of new guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and is intended for use from 3rd December onwards. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly.

From 3rd December, regardless of tier, churches are permitted to open for all purposes that can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. There may be specific local regulations, especially in tier 3 areas, that place additional restrictions on certain activities. There are varying limits on mixing of households that apply in different tiers. Before completing this risk assessment you can see what is permitted in your tier by checking [this document](#).

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. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, the template is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. Specific guidance linking to advice on the lockdown period is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

Separate risk assessments for outdoor worship and for access by contractors and construction workers are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Public worship
 - Livestreaming or recording services
 - Funerals, weddings, baptisms

2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual

3. Consider who might be harmed and how?
 - Risk of transmission of Coronavirus – mitigations below
 - Clinically vulnerable – requested not to attend

4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:
 - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
 - record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
 - consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
 - check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

Risk assessment template

Church: Holy Trinity, Hinckley	Assessor's name: Revd Simon Wearn (SW)	Date completed: 7 th January 2021	Review date: 7 th May 2021
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for purposes of recording and/or livestreaming services (with no congregation present) Risk: 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. 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. Check that those attending for livestreaming or recording can do so within the limits for places of worship in the relevant tier.	Those livestreaming are not clinically vulnerable. This is permitted under current regulations.	MC, LO & SW	07/01/21 SW
	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.	Entry by North porch, exit by South porch. Signs in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	N/A for services		
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.	Arrival spaced out. Small congregation.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Not used / Empty	SW	07/01/21 SW

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Equipment safely installed or set up	LO, MC, SW	07/01/21 SW
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	In place by all doors	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Church cleaned before and after use.	SW, PS, ED	07/01/21 SW
	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.	Face coverings are mandatory Signs in place	SW	07/01/21 SW
	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.	Internal doors opened (between Welcome Area and Nave). Words for liturgy are projected.	SW, MC, LO	07/01/21 SW
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	QR Codes displayed, booking system in place, paper alternative available.	SW	07/01/21 SW
Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities	Consider how the tier system applies to the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area, consider whether anybody attending would be likely to be traveling from a higher or lower tier	People attending Holy Trinity come from the local area	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	No clashes	SW	07/01/21 SW

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	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.	Key staff are not clinically vulnerable. Others cleaning, welcoming, and attending will be informed not to come if clinically vulnerable.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Online booking system in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Services are complementary and advertised.	SW	07/01/21 SW
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes Risk: 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.	Steps in place	SW	07/01/21 SW
	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 the tier in which the church is located (or provide a link to https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know).	The booking page on our website lists hygiene requirements and precautions.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	Cleaning in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	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.	Signs in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW

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	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.	Entry is by the North porch, Exit via the South porch.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Floor signs at entrance in place to encourage spacing.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Where possible, this will be done, apart from fire doors	SW	07/01/21 SW
	If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.	Heating is safe and will be used.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	Bibles have been removed, service sheets are not used.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Not Applicable		
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	Removed	SW AK	07/01/21 SW
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas.	Crèche not used at present	SW	07/01/21 SW
	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).	Usher will show people to their seats, whilst distancing.	SW	07/01/21 SW

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	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Distancing in place, with pews marked off and seating assigned.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Will be directed by welcomers and service leader.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed.	Vestry, Chancel and Office with limited access.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Hand sanitise in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	N/A		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices in place	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Cleaning before and after use.	SW PS Cleaning Team	07/01/21 SW
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	In place	SW PS	07/01/21 SW
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	In place	SW PS	07/01/21 SW
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	In place	SW PS	07/01/21 SW

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Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.	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.	OK		
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Cleaners in place.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Identify surfaces that are frequently touched and by many people (often common areas), e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets, and specify the frequency and level of cleaning and by whom.	Items on the cleaning protocol	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.	Surfaces clear	SW	07/01/21 SW
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Gloves provided	SW	07/01/21 SW
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Cleaning materials provided and stock checked.	SW PS	07/01/21 SW
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	PS to oversee disposal	SW PS	07/01/21 SW
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Removed after each use	SW PS	07/01/21 SW
	Cleaning the church after known exposure to	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Will note.	SW

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someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Will bear in mind.	SW	07/01/21 SW
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Noted.	SW	07/01/21 SW