

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:
 - Private prayer
 - Public worship
 - Livestreaming or recording services
 - Funerals, weddings, baptisms
 - Formal childcare or where part of a school
 - Essential voluntary and public services
 - Other exempted activities such as support groups
 - Opening for visitors/tourists, including opening shops and cafes
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
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

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| Church: St John the Baptist, Shedfield | Assessor's name: Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipley | Date completed: 7 January 2021 | Review date: 15 February 2021 |
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| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
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| 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. | Minimal numbers of people involved in recording of services. All are asked to consider their own vulnerability and only be involved if they feel safe to do so. Social distancing maintained by anyone not in the same household. Cleaning regime for potentially contaminated surfaces is place to reduce potential for virus spread with records of completion recorded on cleaning log. | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Revd Jane Isaac 7/1/2021 |
| | Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible. | Entry through main doors of church and exit through Study Centre doors. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/2021 |

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| | A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | An example can be found here . At least two people are involved in recording. Where individuals are in church alone they carry a mobile phone. | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Revd Jane Isaac 7/1/2021 |
| | Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building. | Doors are open 20 minutes prior to service. People are reminded of the need to maintain social distancing whilst outside church building. Steward will be present outside church to control entry into church. Further three stewards on duty inside church: one by hand sanitiser and two who will guide people to their pews and ask them not to move around once in their pew. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/2021 |
| | Holy water stoups and the font are empty. | No stoups and font always empty unless baptism. Relevant guidance regarding baptisms adhered to during baptism services. | Julia Jordan, verger | Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/2021 |
| | Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard | No livestreaming at present. Recording using battery powered devices. | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Jane Isaac, Incumbent and Ruth |

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| | | | and Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shiple, Curate | Howlett-Shiple, Curate 7/1/21 |
| | Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands. | Hand sanitiser stations available at entrances and exits. Steward to monitor people on arrival at church and direct them to the hand sanitiser. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/2021 |
| | Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below). | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Cleaning routine initiated. Cleaning recorded on cleaning log. Appropriate wipes and sprays and gloves available. | Julia Jordan | Julia Jordan 7/1/21 |
| | 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. | Face coverings are mandatory and this advice is advertised on the website and on posters about church services. Anyone refusing to wear a face covering will be denied access to the building (unless they are exempt). Spare face coverings are available for worshippers who attend without a face covering. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | 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. | All doors are open before and after services. Most services do not require an Order of Service. Where an Order of Service is required these are quarantined for at least 72 hours before reuse. Hymn books are not used at present. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system. | Consult advice on complying with Track and Trace . Track and trace information recorded for all attending services. Information is kept for 21 days and is then destroyed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| 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 | National lockdown is in place. | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent 7/1/21 |
| | Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible. | No change from normal Sunday use. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | 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 | All those required for opening to the public are encouraged to consider their own vulnerability, and that of | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent 7/1/21 |

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| | people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building. | members of their household, and will only be able to facilitate the opening and cleaning of the building where they personally feel it is safe to do so. There will be no requirement, or encouragement, for anyone to facilitate opening or cleaning of the building where they do not consider it to be safe. Anyone who is self-isolating will not be allowed to be involved. | | |
| | Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services | Considered and not deemed necessary. Numbers attending are monitored and the need for a booking system will be kept under review. Clear signage indicates that if the safe number of attendees is reached further entry to the church will be denied. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary. | Area Dean aware of the pattern of services available across the Deanery. | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent | Revd Jane Isaac, Incumbent 7/1/21 |

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| <p>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.</p> | Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. | All steps have been taken. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | 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 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). | Church website, A Church Near You and social media are updated regularly and include guidance on requirements such as bringing a face coverings and that if covid-safe numbers are reached no further entry to the church will be permitted. Links are provided to both national Church of England and diocesan guidance and also to Government guidance. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below). | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . CofE guidance on cleaning have been reviewed. Cleaning routine initiated. Cleaning recorded on cleaning log. Appropriate wipes and sprays and gloves available. | Julia Jordan, verger | Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/21 |
| | 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. | Advice on face coverings can be found here . CofE and Government guidance on face coverings have been reviewed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | | Face coverings are mandatory for all those attending the church. This advice is advertised on the website and on posters about church services. Anyone refusing to wear a face covering will be denied access to the building (unless they are exempt). Spare face coverings are available for worshippers who attend without a face covering. | | |
| | 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 through the main church doors is clearly signposted. There is a one way system in place within the building. Exit is via the Study Centre doors. Entrance, exit and one way flow are clearly indicated. During services the flow of people is monitored and directed by the stewards. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside). | Doors opened 20 minutes prior to services. Steward on duty outside the church to monitor and advise on social distancing outside the church. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | | All people attending are reminded that they must not mingle with anyone outside their own household or support bubble. | | |
| | Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. | All doors are opened before and after the service to improve ventilation. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in. | Guidance on church heating can be found here . Heating has been serviced and heating system reviewed to confirm that it does not constitute a transmission risk. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets. | All Bibles, hymn books and leaflets have been removed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on) | No devotional items are out. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces. | Kneelers have been removed from pews designated for private prayer. Other kneelers left in place as only used on Sunday and will not be used again for at least 72 hours. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas. | Children’s resources have been removed and stored in the choir vestry. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | 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). | Pews are filled as directed by stewards taking into account the need for physical distancing in the pews and the flow of visitors. During communion services the bread is distributed to people in their seats to avoid congestion on the aisles or at the altar rail. Both the priest and the congregation wear face coverings at the time of distribution. Hand sanitiser is provided before people receive communion. All CofE guidance on communion are followed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. | During private prayer seating areas and one way flow through church are clearly signed. During services people are guided to their seats by stewards who have a clear policy on which seats are available and the order in which seats are occupied. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | One way flow through the church is clearly signed. People are guided to their | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | | seats before the service by stewards. On leaving the church stewards direct the order in which people leave the building in order to maintain physical distancing at all times. Those with limited mobility are asked to remain in their seats until the rest of the congregation have left. | | |
| | Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed. | Places where the public do not need to go are clearly signed. Chancel gates are closed during private prayer. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Wall mounted hand sanitiser units are available on entry and exit points. Stewards monitor people on arrival and direct them to the sanitiser point. Hand sanitiser is provided before the distribution of communion. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions . No temporary permissions required. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. | Notices on noticeboard and in the porch. Information also posted on the website. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Appropriate wipes and sprays are used. Cleaning routine in place and cleaning is recorded in the cleaning log. | Julia Jordan, verger | Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/21 |
| | Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. One toilet is available during public worship with wipes, soap, disposable hand towels and a bin available. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. One toilet is available during public worship with wipes, soap, disposable hand towels and a bin available. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. | Waste receptacles have disposable liners. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone) | 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. | All Public Health England guidance will be followed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| <p>with Coronavirus symptoms)</p> <p>Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.</p> | <p>If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.</p> | <p>All involved in cleaning the church are encouraged to consider their own vulnerability, and that of members of their household, and will only be able to facilitate the opening and cleaning of the building where they personally feel it is safe to do so. There will be no requirement, or encouragement, for anyone to clean where they do not consider it to be safe. Anyone who is self-isolating will not be allowed to clean.</p> | <p>Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden</p> | <p>Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21</p> |
| | <p>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.</p> | <p>Frequently touched surfaces including pews used for private prayer, all door furniture, tops and edges of pews have been identified and a cleaning routine developed. This is available in the vestry. The verger coordinates the cleaning rota and assures that all involved in cleaning are aware of the requirements. A sign off sheet is available in the priest's</p> | <p>Julia Jordan, verger</p> | <p>Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/21</p> |

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| | | vestry and is signed daily by the person responsible for cleaning the church. | | |
| | Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects. | Surfaces are kept clear and bibles and hymn books have been removed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Appropriate sprays, wipes and disposable gloves are provided. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Appropriate sprays, wipes and disposable gloves are provided. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | Removed by verger. | Julia Jordan, verger | Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/21 |
| | Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | Removed by verger. | Julia Jordan, verger | Julia Jordan, verger 7/1/21 |
| Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms | If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted. | Church will be closed for 48 hours with no access permitted if we are aware of a case. Notices will be placed on the church doors and the website. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |

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| | If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. | Public Health England guidance available here. Church will be closed wherever possible. If this is not possible Public Health England guidance on cleaning will be followed. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |
| | If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning. | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here. If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours cleaning will be undertaken following the guidance. | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden | Adrian Jordan, Churchwarden 7/1/21 |