

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
16 th July 2021	10	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update has been reviewed to reflect step 4 of the [roadmap to ease restrictions](#) issued by the UK government and is intended for use from 19th July onwards. As step 4 sees the easing of all legal restrictions it is recommended that risk assessments currently in place are re-run to ensure they fit the new circumstances. The Church of England's [guidance on step 4](#) may be a helpful reference point.

It is recommended that you carry out a separate risk assessment for each activity type e.g. public worship, use by community groups, concerts etc. and that these are regularly reviewed with reference to local Covid infection rates and other relevant circumstances. You may decide to have different mitigations or safety measures in place for different events. Where activities run simultaneously or back-to-back, each iteration of the risk assessment should address the shared or consequential risk.

Risk assessment templates for outdoor worship and for contractors and construction workers are also available on the [Church of England Coronavirus page](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Private prayer
 - Public worship with or without congregational singing
 - Funerals, weddings, baptisms, ordinations
 - Livestreaming or recording services
 - A choir or music group singing indoors as part of a public, livestreamed or recorded service
 - Formal childcare or where part of a school
 - Essential voluntary and public services
 - Use as a vaccination or testing centre
 - Community and support groups
 - Provision of youth services
 - Opening shops/cafes
 - Opening for visitors/tourists/educational visits as a heritage attraction
 - Opening for concerts, plays etc
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual
 - Shared or consequential risks of activities running simultaneously or back-to-back (eg crossover of people at entry/exit points)

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 as long as they are properly managed, but having any significant numbers of people coming through your building makes the possible impact – in particular someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller churches with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate. Gathered congregations and major services may attract people from far afield, which is likely to add to the risk profile. Consider whether you need to consult your wider membership and users.

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: King Charles the Martyr, Potters Bar Barnet Deanery St Albans Diocese	Assessor's names: Atalie Gaines – Vicar Phil Townsend – Church Warden Bill Simpson – Church Warden	Date completed: July 2021	Review date: ??
Event or service this assessment relates to:			

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Aerosol or droplet transmission of Covid-19	Increase ventilation in your building: natural ventilation by opening doors, windows and vents or mechanical ventilation if appropriate/necessary.	Consult HSE <u>guidance on identifying poorly ventilated areas</u> Do not prop open fire doors. North and South Porch doors to remain open during services	Wardens when opening up	
	Use outdoor spaces if appropriate and available.	Possibility of outdoor services over the summer – Vicar to discuss with those who provide the sound and recording as to if this is possible	Vicar Wardens AV team	
	Request or consider requiring people to wear a face covering, unless exempt, when inside your building. This may particularly apply to activities that increase risk of aerosol spread such as singing.	People are welcome to wear face coverings in church and it is recommended that they do so when coming up for communion.	Vicar to communicate to congregation	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put in place measures to reduce contact between people e.g. retaining social distancing	If people wish to sit apart from others they are able to do so. We will provide signs for them to place on seats either side of them asking others to give them space. We will provide stickers that indicate if people do not wish to share the physical peace (i.e. by shaking hands or hugging) and requesting that the sign language peace is shared with them	Vicar Admin Asst	
	If practical in your building, 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 door for exit.	We will continue to ask people to enter through the North Porch and exit through the south porch or down the link to the main door, or out through the hall after refreshments. (The fire door in the hall should be opened when post service refreshments are being served to increase air flow).	Vicar Wardens	
	For events where the building is likely to be especially busy, or the activity is particularly energetic, pay particular regard to the need for additional mitigations such as social distancing and face coverings.	People are to be encouraged to remember that the virus has not gone away when we have services that are likely to have large numbers attending, and be mindful of those who chose/ or who chose not to wear a face covering and keep social distancing.		
Surface transmission of Covid-19	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Hand sanitising stations will stay in place – at the north and south porch entrances, by the main door, by the candle stand and we will introduce one as people come up to receive communion. Halls Admin to ensure there is a pump by the front of the church.	Wardens Hall Admin	
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire	Doors to be left fully open so that people don't have to touch them.	Wardens	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Halls Administrator to ensure that the Cleaner wipes all touch points on the day after services (ie. Monday and Wednesday morning).	Halls Admin	
	Good hygiene and cleaning of the building.	Halls Administrator to ensure that Cleaning regime is continued, inc. doors to vestries and toilet facilities	Halls Admin	
	Consider hygiene around shared items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people. If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	Posters to remain asking people to take booklets that they touch away with them. Service booklets are used once a week, so are quarantined for a week between use, although people may wish to take a copy away and keep it as theirs. Welcomers to communicate this to people as they attend services.	Vicar Welcomers	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on).	Candle stand in the prayer corner is the only devotional object that we have in church. Candles to be removed once they are extinguished. Signs to stay. Bottle of hand sanitiser to stay.		
	Put in place a cleaning rota/system for children's materials and toys, and consider providing cleaning materials for these if safe to do so (keeping all such materials out of the reach of children).	Children and Families worker and team contacted to initiate re-opening the childrens area in church.	Children and Families Worker	
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap	Halls Administrator and cleaner to continue to monitor	Hall Administrator	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.		Cleaner	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Halls Administrator and cleaner to continue to monitor	Hall Administrator Cleaner	
Visitors are unclear on requirements for attending church or visiting the building for other purposes, or anxious about attending.	Display an NHS Track and Trace QR code, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system. Encourage visitors to use one or other of these options.	The Track and Trace QR code will stay in place for people to check in. We will encourage people to sign in to church services, although this is now not a legal requirement	Vicar Admin Asst	
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements or requests such as bringing a face covering and options for those who may be anxious.	Vicar to update	Vicar	
	Consider specific advice for those who may struggle with continuing restrictions, such as those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or visually impaired.		Vicar Wardens	
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services.	At the present time this is not needed for regular Sunday worship, however it may need to be implemented for services that we know are likely to have a higher congregation e.g. Remembrance, Bereavement service, Christmas services etc.	Vicar Admin Asst	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Vicar to speak to other churches	Vicar	
	Provide welcoming notices that outline safety measures.	Vicar to assess what is already in place and update them	Vicar Admin Asst	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.			
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<u>Public Health England guidance available here.</u>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <u>cleaning church buildings can be found here.</u>		
Risk of passing on the virus during the distribution of the Eucharist	Setting up for the eucharist Setting up the altar	The Priest or other visiting minister should set up for the eucharist –liaising with the sacristan so that only the priest and sacristan/ server are touching the items used for distribution. All should sanitise their hands before and after setting up, before touching any vessels or the elements. They should then wash these in warm soapy water after use and return them to the safe after the service. The used linen should be put aside for washing and not be reused.	Priest Visiting Priest Sacristan Wardens Sacristan	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>If a visiting priest is presiding, the warden/ Sacristan will open the vestry and the safe for them to gain access to the silver and elements.</p> <p>The priest will need a chalice, pattern, ciborium, Cruets, lavabo jug and bowl, Corporal, purificator, lavabo towel, Altar cloth.</p>		
	Visiting priest	A visiting priest should where possible bring their own vestments and stole – if this is not possible, they should borrow one from the vestment chest, returning it after use to be quarantined for at least a week before it is used again by another person.	Visiting Priest	
	Offertory procession	<p>All the elements needed should be set up before the service by the presiding priest.</p> <p>As we return to a 930 Sung Eucharist the elements maybe bought up during the offertory hymn. This will be agreed with the priest/ servers on the day.</p> <p>Giving will be encouraged with a retiring collection using the card machine/ text giving.</p>	<p>Priest</p> <p>Priest Wardens Welcomers</p>	
	Presiding	Whilst we are able to offer Communion in 2 kinds the PCC (27Jul2021) decided that we will wait for local Covid levels to fall before we offer this.	Priest	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>If the congregation receive in one kind the Liturgical Faith and Order Commission have made clear, this is still 'complete communion'.</p> <p>The priest should put on their mask to distribute and sanitise their hands before touching any vessels or the elements.</p> <p>Individual wafers should be placed in the ciborium before the service, and the lid replaced during consecration to prevent the priest speaking over them.</p>		
	Distribution	<p>The congregation will be offered individual wafers, as is our practise here at KCM.</p> <p>The priest will count the number of communicants in the congregation.</p> <p>The priest will sanitise their hands and put on a mask before opening the ciborium to distribute to the people.</p> <p>If a chalice assistant is required this will be notified via the MAPPa in advance. The chalice assistant will put on a mask and sanitise their hands before touching the chalice.</p> <p>The people will be asked to come to the front to join a socially distanced queue returning to their seats down the side aisles – they will be invited up row by row to minimise the number of people moving about at any one time. There will be no kneeling at the altar rail to ensure that people keep moving.</p>	<p>Priest</p> <p>Stewards</p> <p>All</p> <p>Steward</p>	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>Those wearing facial coverings should sanitise their hands to take off their face coverings and before receiving communion, they should then sanitise their hands again as they replace their face covering once they have received.</p> <p>The steward will invite the congregation of both services up to the altar rail after the choir have received.</p> <p>Members of the congregation should move as directed to receive communion. Joining a socially distanced queue to reach the priest. Leaving their face covering on as they receive.</p> <p>The wafer will be placed into their hands, being dropped from a small height to prevent physical contact between the priest and the communicant.</p> <p>The priest will not say any words out loud at the distribution to prevent aerosol transmission of particles. In order to minimise overall risk, intinction (dipping the bread into the wine) should not be practised.</p> <p>Once parishioners have received, they should return to their seats via the side aisle closest to their seat to avoid walking past other people who are still waiting to receive. Face covering should be worn on the way up to and returning from receiving.</p>		
	Blessings where people are not receiving communion	Blessings will be done at a distance.	Priest	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>The priest will not say any words out loud to prevent aerosol transmission of particles but will make the sign of the cross.</p> <p>Those who wish for a blessing should stand at the altar rail. As above</p>		
	<p>Cleaning up after the Eucharist and service</p>	<p>The presiding minister/ server is responsible for cleaning up and putting away all the items used in the Eucharist.</p> <p>This includes washing the silver and putting it back in the safe</p>	<p>Priest Server</p>	