

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
8 th June 2020	2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
12 th June 2020	3	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

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, it 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. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are 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.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Church: Christ Church, Derry Hill	Assessors: Linda Carter (Team Vicar) Ian Liddle, Richard Carter (PCC Health & Safety)	Date completed: 08.10.2020	Review date: 24.11.2020
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Local application of measures (Additional information)	Action by whom?	Completed
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	<i>Vestry door on south side</i>	LC	14.05.2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	<i>Take account of Ecclesiastical Ins. and Parish Lone Working policies and Guidance – ensure others are aware of whereabouts and diary appts. Keep mobile phone on. Check in with texts/calls.</i>	LC	14.05.2020
	Buildings have been aired before use.	<i>All doors, external and internal opened for 2/3 hours on several occasions</i>	LC & RC	From 14.05.2020 Ongoing
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	<i>Church to undergo professional deep clean.</i>	'Absolutely Cleaning Svcs'	15.06.2020
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	<i>Taps left running and toilet flushed as advised below on several occasions</i> See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	LC & RC	From 14.05.2020
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	<i>Lighting and organ checked</i> <i>In regular use since 02.08.2020 for services</i>	LC & RC	14.05.2020 Ongoing
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	<i>Font emptied post Easter and lid replaced</i>	LC	14.05.2020
Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	✓	LC, RC	14.05.2020	

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Deciding whether to open to the public	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	<i>N/A</i>		
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	<i>MV website, ACNY, Facebook and email provide regular updates</i>	LC	Ongoing since March 2020
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	<i>Those who wish to attend a service to telephone or email LC by 8pm Saturday Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas: online recording of services to be made available</i>	LC + PCC	Ongoing since 02.08.2020
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	<i>All required actions completed</i>	LC & RC	16.06.2020
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	<i>Professional deep clean plus additional cleaning carried out Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.</i>	'Absolutely Cleaning Svcs' LC & RC	15.06.2020 16.06.2020
	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.	<i>Private Prayer Entry via main west door Exit via sanctuary door on south side. Signage in place Sunday Worship Entry via Main Door. Emergency exit via sanctuary door. People to maintain 2m social distance from church gate. Use hand sanitiser at main door*, proceed to seat as directed by CWs. (*See also Church Heating below)</i>	LC LC	18.06.2020 18.06.2020

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Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism		<i>Exit also via Main Door when directed by LC/CWs (Steps up to and down from sanctuary door not desirable for use at service) Verbal reminder re social distancing outside Floor markers in church.</i>	CW LC	At each service At each service ✓
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	<i>See above</i>		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	<i>Doors remain open during opening hours See below for arrangements during cold weather</i>	LC	Ongoing
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	<i>All items removed to Vestry &/or Choir Vestry</i>	LC & RC	16.06.2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	<i>'Mary' & 'Joseph' statues, cross in Children's Area and candles removed to Vestry</i>	LC	18.06.2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	<i>Kneelers cleaned and removed to exclusion areas of the church Sunday Worship Kneelers moved to excluded pews</i>	'Absolutely Cleaning Svs' LC & RC LC	16.06.2020 Before services resume
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	<i>All items from Children's Area removed to Choir Vestry</i>	LC & RC	16.06.2020
	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.	<i>Private Prayer Initial walk-through discussed with Standing Cttee Further consideration to safe social distancing – limit to 4 people in attendance at any one time – signage at entrance</i>	LC + Standing Cttee via Zoom LC	08.06.2020 18.06.2020

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Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	(or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	<i>Sunday Worship – depending on type of service & number, either: Use alternate pews, 1 household per pew, 1 h/hold in choir stalls, CW only in Children’s Area, 1 h/hold in Font corner, 1 h/hold on Vestry pew = 12 h/holds up to maximum of 30 people or 2 h/holds per pew or use every pew with diagonal seating to accommodate 15-20 h/holds No groups to exceed 6 people Managed by CW/Stewards/Vicar at each service</i>	LC,RC,IL + CWs	08.07.2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	<i>Private Prayer 4 chairs in nave at front of church – signage will clearly indicate this Sunday Worship Excluded pews blocked with chairs Order of Service placed on pews in use</i>	LC LC, RC LC	18.06.2020 At each service At each service
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	<i>Private Prayer Signage will clearly indicate main aisle and sanctuary. Floor markings to remind re 2m social distancing Sunday Worship Additional floor markings at 2m intervals People to be directed to seats on arrival and when to leave (one household at a time)</i>	LC LC	18.06.2020 ✓ At each service
	Limit access to places where the public does not need to go, maybe with a temporary cordon if needed.	<i>Private Prayer The following are excluded areas: Toilet, Kitchen, Choir Vestry, Font area, Children’s Area, Pews, Balcony Signage and physical barriers eg. the small red chairs Access to balcony via kitchen: Clergy, Churchwardens and Organist (for practice) only, with prior notification</i>	LC	18.06.2020

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Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Limit access to places where the public does not need to go, maybe with a temporary cordon if needed.	Sunday Worship <i>Excluded areas: Kitchen, Choir Vestry, Balcony (except organist), some pews.</i> <i>Access to balcony via kitchen: Organist, 3 choir members</i> <i>Access to Vestry: Clergy only</i> <i>Signage and manage during services</i>	CR LC	30.08.2020 At each service
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Private Prayer <i>Hand sanitiser at entrance and exit points</i> Sunday Worship <i>Hand sanitisers at main door and in church (to be used on entering and leaving church)</i> <i>Soap, hot water and paper towels in Toilet</i>	LC LC, CWs	18.06.2020 At each service
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	<i>None necessary apart from as noted above</i>	LC	18.06.2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	<i>Signage in entrance porch re:</i> <i>Hand sanitiser, Social distancing, COVID-19 symptoms</i> <i>Max no. of attendees for Private Prayer, & Sunday Svs</i> <i>Contact details</i> <i>Test & Trace QR code</i>	LC LC LC	18.06.2020 At each service 27.09.2020
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes.	Private Prayer <i>Daily cleaning of access areas.</i> Sunday Worship <i>Alternative arrangements will apply – see below</i>	RC & LC LC, RC, CWs	Ongoing 02.08.2020 ongoing
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Private Prayer <i>Toilet and Kitchen are exclusion areas. Hand sanitiser provided</i> Sunday Worship <i>Hand sanitisers provided</i>	LC	18.06.2020

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Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	<i>Sunday Worship Soap, hot water, paper towels and bin in Toilet Sanitiser wipes for high touch surfaces provided</i>	LC	At each service
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	<i>Private Prayer One bin with disposable liner in access area. To be emptied daily (using gloves)</i>	LC or RC	18.06.2020
		<i>Sunday Worship One bin with disposable liner in toilet. To be emptied at end of Sunday service</i>	LC or RC	At each service
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	<i>CWs to record names and telephone numbers Explanation and consent notice to be published on website & noticeboards, at time of 'booking' and at the beginning of each service (GDPR)</i>	CWs LC	At each service ✓
<i>Test and Trace QR Codes on notice board in porch and in church</i>		LC	27.09.2020	
Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	<i>Via Notices, email, Noticeboards, Facebook, MV website and ACNY website</i>	LC	Every week since end July 2020	
Preparing for and conducting worship services	Opening and closing the church – only secure access point is via the Vestry used by the Vicar. Ensure risk of transmission is minimised	<i>Opening and closing the building to be the responsibility of the Vicar only Sanitise hands and door handles before and after the service</i>	LC	Ongoing (since 22.03.2020)
	Access to candles, lighters, communion ware etc in Vestry	<i>Vicar to ensure necessary items are in place, candles lit etc before the service, and replaced afterwards. Communion vessels to be thoroughly washed after each service. No server</i>	LC LC	At each service At each service

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Preparing for and conducting worship services	Limit movement of persons during a service to minimise risk of transmission	<i>No sidespeople Readers and intercessors – from their pew, remove face covering, use separate mic One CW to direct people to seats before service and to the exit after the service One person if available outside to manage flow of people Holy Communion – wafers to be brought to the congregation. Priest to sanitise hands before touching wafers, wear mask for distribution Distribute wafers in paper cases at end of each pew, Approach from back of church</i>	LC, CWs	At each service August 2020 August 2020 ongoing
	Minimise risk of transmission via books/paper/cash	<i>Quarantine orders of service spread out on pew for 72 hours. (Used fortnightly) Retiring collection – cash to be ‘quarantined’ for 72 hours before counting</i>	LC LC	At each service At each service
	Minimise risk of transmission person to person	<i>Social distancing observed at all times Face coverings to be worn by everyone inside church building unless exempt (supply of masks at church) Sanitise hands on arrival Congregation remain in pews throughout the service Sharing the Peace – at a distance (BSL), no physical contact outside ‘households’ Receive communion in one kind (wafer only) No congregational singing – choir only Congregation to leave the church building promptly at the end of the service (under direction of CW) Sanitise hands on leaving Signage and verbal reminders</i>	Attendees CW LC	At each service At each service At each service

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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 .	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	<i>When there is a Sunday service:</i> <i>Close the church building immediately after Sunday Service, until Weds evening.</i> <i>Cleaner to resume duties (Friday pm)</i> <i>Church open for private prayer Thu-Sat 10am-4pm</i> <i>Porch area open Tue, Wed 10am-4pm</i> <i>When there is no Sunday service:</i> <i>Church is open for private prayer Tue-Sat 10am-4pm</i> <i>Sun Midday-4pm Daily cleaning of access areas</i>	SJ LC RC & LC	August 2020 ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	<i>Current cleaning arrangements comply</i>	LC	18.06.2020
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	<i>See above. This will be reviewed on a regular basis</i> <i>Holiday cover arranged</i>	RC & LC LC	18.06.2020 08.07.2020 As required
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	<i>Supply of gloves available</i>	LC	14.05.2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	<i>Supply of regular cleaning products in stock</i>	LC	14.05.2020
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from site.	<i>Currently RC & LC (see above comments)</i>	RC & LC	15.06.2020
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	<i>Private Prayer</i> <i>Waste bin to be emptied daily</i> <i>Sunday Worship</i> <i>Waste bin in toilet emptied immediately after the service</i>	RC or LC RC or LC	15.06.2020 At each service

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Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	<i>The church will be closed for 72 hours</i>	LC	18.06.2020
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	LC	18.06.2020
Heating the church during cold weather	Ensure adequate ventilation in the church building Refer to COVID-19 Church Heating Document issued 1 st Oct 2020 (House of Bishops)	<i>Sunday Worship only</i> <i>When heating is turned on two higher level windows to be left open during the service.</i> <i>Main door left open. Sanctuary door closed. Porch door closed when service begins. Inner double doors may be kept closed. Hand sanitiser will be available at the main door and inside the church to use after entering through inner double doors to remove any risk of transmission of infection from shared use of the door handle.</i>	LC, RC, IL	08.10.2020