

Towards Re-opening Church Buildings: Covid-19 Risk Assessment Checklist for Parish Churches

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group

This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to situations where there is limited access to church buildings the purposes of private prayer, livestreaming, construction, carrying out of contractual work, building maintenance and cleaning. This template relates exclusively to Covid-related risks, not general risks. If you would like more information about your responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations then information and templates can be found on the [HSE website](#).

A further version of this will be produced when small services such as weddings and funerals are allowed, then for private prayer, then for some form of public worship. At present no public access is permitted to church buildings under government guidance.

Risk assessment template

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date and name
Preparation of the Church for: - private prayer and/or livestreaming by a single member of the clergy (and a member of their household if needed) Advice on access for the clergy available here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified.		ST	8 th June 2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted	An example can be found here .	ST	8 th June 2020
	Buildings have been aired before use.		ST	8 th June 2020
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	See the advice note on keeping church buildings clean.	All church sitters	Ongoing
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	ST	Ongoing
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		ST	Ongoing
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.		ST	Ongoing
Preparation of the Church for: - construction workers and/or professional contractors Advice on access for construction workers and advice on access for contractors available here.	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		ST	Ongoing
	Confirm that each contractor has carried out their own risk assessment (for themselves and their staff and sub-contractors) and has employers and public liability insurance in place.	Ensure they have included any work equipment, emergency equipment (such as fire extinguishers), ventilation systems and access routes.	Tim Cole	Completed 2019

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	Have hand sanitiser available for people to use on entry and exit of the church building.	<u>Parish Buying</u> will launch procurement routes for supplies for church use on 28 th May.	Malcolm Waller	8 th June 2020 Still needs to be affixed to walls – action John Johnson to find someone to do this JOHN PLEASE HAND SANITISER FIX TO NOTICEBOARD in church porch not to wall of porch
	Confirm who has responsibility for locking and unlocking the building.		See rota	8 th June 2020
	Confirm whose responsibility it will be to carry out cleaning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • Kitchen/servy areas if it is necessary for these to be used • Frequently touched surfaces e.g. doors 	See the advice note on keeping church buildings clean.	Lisa Crook cleans toilets Church sitters will clean door handles and surfaces at the beginning and end of each 2 hour period	8 th June 2020

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			using disinfectant	
	Whoever has responsibility for toilets, ensure a supply of soap and disposable hand towels will be available.		Lisa Crook	Ongoing
	Confirm who is responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste e.g. hand towels from the site.	In the church hall – Lisa Crook In the church itself – those church sitting should notice if paper handkerchiefs have been disposed in the bin and placed in the wheelie bin outside using disposable gloves provided	Lisa Crook	Ongoing
	All waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them being exposed	For hall – Lisa Crook For church – John Johnson to check	Lisa Crook John Johnson	Ongoing
	Prepare a suitable form to record contact details of people entering the building.	Log books already in church office and church	Malcolm Waller and ST	Completed 1 st June 2020
	Confirm evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.	Important for West door to be opened as well as North porch door. ST to explain evacuation procedures to church sitters	ST and church sitters	Ongoing
	Direct all users to leave the building by one exit only, avoiding bottlenecks.	Will be explained to church sitters	Church sitters	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the church after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	Check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		Churchwardens	Ongoing
	Check PCC/Chapter liability insurance is up to date.		Malcolm Waller	Ongoing
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable) to protect their skin from exposure to cleaning materials.	<u>Parish Buying</u> will launch procurement routes for supplies for church use on 28 th May.	Churchwardens	Ongoing
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	See the advice note on keeping church buildings clean.	Church wardens	ongoing
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.			
	If 72-hour quarantine is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<u>Public Health England guidance</u> available here .		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	See the advice note on keeping church buildings clean.		
ADDITIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT FOR OPENING CHURCH TO VISITORS	<p>Signs to be up on entry to church asking people to social distance</p> <p>Church sitters to have two tables between them and visitors to allow social distancing</p> <p>Masks will be provided for church welcomers and kept in the the church vestry. Not to be</p>			

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	<p>given to visitors as this involves breaking social distancing</p> <p>Gloves to be mandatory for clearing waste bins at the end of each two hour duties especially if tissues have been dropped in bins. Bins to be relined. Bin liners and disposable gloves to be clearly visible</p> <p>Surfaces to be wiped down by church sitters including door handles on departure (obviously not all surfaces in the church but the tables they are sitting at and any obvious surfaces people will be wiped down). Door handles of church doors to be sprayed and cleaned with antiseptic spray also on departure. Antiseptic spray to be clearly visible</p> <p>Whispering strictly forbidden</p> <p>Any conversations in church should only happen when people are not praying in the church. If they happen they must be at a distance of two metres or more</p> <p>No drinks to be offered or made on premises. Church sitters to bring their own drinks with them.</p>	All of this section ongoing	ST and Church sitters	

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Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation.	North door will be left open during two hours		Church sitters	ongoing
Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	We will rope off library and hymn book area using red and white safety tape and remove black service books and small hymn books from the nave and placed out of view. All paper and magazines to be placed out of view.		ST Tim Cole has safety tape	11 th June 2020
Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed.	Not required to be removed			
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.	Signs will be put up to this affect		ST and churchwardens	11th June 2020
Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use.	Will be in entrance porch and in church too		ST	11 th June 2020
Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions (link to be added when guidance is live).			
Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Tables to be placed between church sitters and visitors to maintain church distance		ST and churchwardens	11 th June 2020

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Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Signs will be placed in church to enable safe movement. Especially in North porch		ST and churchwardens	11 th June 2020
Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Signs to be placed in various obvious places		ST and churchwardens	11 th June 2020
Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Church welcomers will wipe down surfaces after use		Church welcomers	11 th June 2020
Candles	Candles can be lit but only by lighting a candle from an existing candle. This is easy due to the fact that they are long thin candles. Use of matches risky due to infection so matches to be removed from public are		ST	11 th June 2020