

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: Services, Communion, Weddings and Funerals

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

THIS IS A PLANNING DOCUMENT ONLY. IT WILL BE UPDATED AND CONTENT MAY CHANGE ONCE GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON REOPENING PLACES OF WORSHIP HAS BEEN PUBLISHED. We are awaiting clarification from government on the extent and nature of what 'supervised individual prayer' means and what exactly will be required. We will update this document as further information becomes available.

On 7th June the government announced that places of worship may open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines from 15th June. The government 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 individual private prayer. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for individual private prayer or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context.

Future versions of this document will be produced when small services such as weddings and funerals with limited numbers are allowed and then for different forms of public worship.

A risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers forms part of an updated document giving advice on access for these groups. This can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Risk assessment template

Church: St. Lawrence Church, Crosby Ravensworth	Date completed: 04/07/2020	Review date: As req'd linked to Govt Guidance and easing of restrictions
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>General</p> <p><u>Church Services, Holy Communion, Weddings and Funerals</u></p>	<p><u>This Document builds on the Public – Individual Prayer Risk Assessment.</u></p> <p><u>The underlined information annotates those areas of additional control required for Services</u></p>	<p><u>Attendance numbers will be limited by social distancing and Government / Diocese restrictions at applicable date.</u></p> <p>When open the building will be supervised by a PCC host. The PCC host will be responsible for preparing and closing down the building.</p> <p><u>Services – For ALL services two PCC hosts should be in attendance</u></p> <p><u>For all services contact details of attendees (one contact for family groups / couple) should be taken and retained for potential Covid track and trace.</u></p> <p><u>There will be no singing or refreshments provided</u></p> <p><u>Organ music can be played before or after service. Any recorded music played during a service must be played at a volume that ensures normal conversation</u></p> <p><u>No collections will be taken by plate. Donations can be made on exit using the wall safe. Emptying of the safe will be carried out at least 72 hrs after a service</u></p>	<p>D Graham</p>	

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		<p><u>Microphones – Clergy / lay readers taking a Service will be issued with a lapel microphone. This will not be re-used for 72 hrs.</u></p> <p><u>Any attendees giving readings can use the lectern and fixed microphone. The lectern and microphone are not to be touched</u></p> <p>Specific opening for individuals to be arrange via Church Secretary No vulnerable / self-isolating individuals will be involved as PCC hosts</p>	<p>PCC Host</p> <p>A Barbour</p> <p>A Barbour</p>	
<u>Holy Communion</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Communion will be administered in bread form only, though both elements will be consecrated. Only the presiding priest will consume the consecrated wine.</u> <u>The presiding priest will wear a facemask to consecrate the elements. This will be applied before the communion elements are uncovered.</u> <u>The presiding priest will sanitise hands and wear latex-free gloves to handle the elements and to distribute the consecrated host.</u> <u>Communion will be distributed to communicants in their pews. In line with government guidance, the presiding priest will be allowed to break the 2-metre distancing rule for these purposes: (1) only so far as necessary to distribute Communion; (2) for as brief a time as possible; and (3) wearing appropriate PPE (a facemask and rubber gloves).</u> <u>Communion will be distributed by dropping into the recipients' hands only, avoiding</u> 		Clergy	

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	<p><u>contact with the skin.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Individual blessings will not be administered.</u> <u>After distribution, the presiding priest will remove the rubber gloves and sanitise before consuming the remaining host.</u> 			
Access to church buildings for Services	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified.	Main front door – door to be left fully open while church building open. Sign on door “Leave Open”	PCC Host	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Existing RA 001 covers Lone Working		
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Two doors to Building to be opened when church in use. ‘No ENTRY’ signs	PCC Host A Barbour / D Graham	13/06/20
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Cleanliness checks as part of general cleaning	A Barbour / D Graham / J Winder	13/06/20
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Water system to be re-established and system purged – 13/06/20	D Graham	13/06/20
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Electricity system to be switched on and system checks completed – 13/06/20 Electrical inspection and certification was carried out while church closed in line with Diocese access guidance	D Graham	13/06/20
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Already empty – but to be checked – 13/06/20	A Barbour	13/06/20

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Preparation of the Church for individual prayer	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	<u>PCC Host to ensure church and vestry open in advance of clergy / lay preacher arrival</u>	PCC Host	
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).			
	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 via Main front door – door - to be left fully open while church building open. Sign on door “LEAVE OPEN” Exit via opposite door which will be marked “EXIT” 13/06/20 In the case of disabled individuals the PCC host will assist with exit via entry doorway Main Aisle will be closed at entry to Chancery. Gate will be closed at top of steps. <u>Any amendment to this arrangement to be agreed between PCC Host / clergy / lay reader</u>	PCC Host D Graham PCC Host Daily preparation by PCC host	13/06/20
	Lighting	PCC host to be responsible for lighting on opening / closing building	PCC Host	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation.	Two doors will be open while building open which will allow air movement	PCC Host	
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	All leaflets, bibles etc will be covered. All Bric a Brac will be removed to kitchen. Visitors book to be removed. <u>Disposable Service sheets to be produced by clergy / lay</u>	D Graham / D Barbour / A Darroch	13/06/20

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		<u>reader minimum of 72 hrs in advance. To be set out on pews in advance of service using gloves.</u> <u>At the end of service attendees to take service sheets with them.</u>	Clergy / Lay Reader	
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed.	Pew cushions on rows where use is allowed are to be removed. 13/06/20 Risk of transmission with kneelers negligible	D Graham	13/06/20
	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.	Entry via Main front door Exit via Back door One way down central aisle - out via North Aisle. Signage to be installed	D Graham / A Barbour	13/06/20
	Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use.	Hand sanitiser station on RHS table on entry to church with Poster. Additional Sanitiser station in toilet. 13/06/20 Sanitiser stations to be checked on opening and replenished as required	D Graham / A Barbour PCC Host	13/06/20
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Organ once re-built to be locked to ensure no un-authorized use. Current temporary organ to be signed “Do not touch” 13/06/20 <u>If organ is used for service then it should be signed “Do not touch” and left for 72 hrs before re-use or keyboard and other appropriate parts sanitised before re-use</u>	D Graham D Graham PCC Host	13/06/20 13/06/20

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	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	<p>Use of every 3rd pew in a row. Staggered across aisles. Pews that can be used to be labelled with “Please ensure social distancing” Closed pews to be Signed “DO NOT USE – Social Distancing Requirement”. Dent Chapel to be permanently locked. 13/06/20</p> <p><u>For services one PCC host to guide attendees to seats allowing for social distancing between individuals, couples or family groups.</u></p> <p><u>Attendees will remain seated throughout the service unless taking communion when they will come to the end of their pew</u></p>	<p>D Graham / A Darroch</p> <p>PCC Host</p>	<p>13/06/20</p> <p>13/06/20</p> <p>13/06/20</p> <p>13/06/20</p>
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Signage of one-way system above as appropriate - 13/06/20	D Graham / A Darroch	13/06/20
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	<p>On entry RHS Table alongside sanitiser and in toilet. Distancing signage on pews that can be used. 13/06/20</p> <p><u>Service Notices to be posted at entrance door, entrance table and toilets.</u></p> <p><u>These will provide health and safety information</u></p>	<p>D Graham / A Barbour</p> <p>PCC Host</p>	13/06/20
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	<p>General intention is to minimise surfaces being touched; doors fixed open, lights switched on.</p> <p>On closure of building toilet door handle, toilet handle and seat, sink tap and hand rail on open pews to be wiped down.</p>	Any specific cleaning to be carried out by PCC Host	

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		<p>Candles – Individuals to bring own matches / lighter albeit matches available via PCC host</p> <p>Should church be closed for 72hrs plus between openings then no need for Covid linked cleaning</p>		
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Not Applicable		
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	<p>Toilet facilities to be closed and only opened by PCC Host if required.</p> <p><u>Where toilets are opened for a Service Notices to be posted and one way entry / exit system followed.</u></p> <p>Toilet stocks, paper towels, soap, sanitiser to be checked on church opening and replenished when required.</p> <p>Stocks held on site including sanitiser.</p>	<p>PCC host</p> <p>PCC Host</p>	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them.	Bin bags to be used	J Winder	
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for cleaning.	As Above		

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anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Clean down any surfaces after opening.	A Barbour	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	As above if required	A Barbour	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Sourced and available	A Darroch	13/06/20
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Sourced and available	J Winder / A Barbour	13/06/20
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Toilets closed unless emergency use therefore limited waste	J Winder	
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	As above	J Winder	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Church to be closed for 72 hrs between Sunday opening. Where a special opening is arranged then PCC host to wipe down appropriate surfaces before closing	D Barbour / A Darroch	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-			

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	healthcare settings.			
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.			

WELCOME BACK!!

As you enter, please note:

Please apply hand sanitiser as you enter.
A dispenser is available.

You will be asked to give your name on entering church. This will be retained for three weeks for Test & Trace purposes.

There is nothing to collect on entering Church - no service books or hymn books. Disposable service sheets are available in the places where you can sit. You must take these home with you and not leave them in Church.

Please go straight to your seats. You can sit in your family groups or bubble.

Face masks are optional, but please maintain minimum 2-metre social distancing at all times.

Toilet Use

The toilet is open.

Please only use it if you have to!
You use this facility at your own risk.

A one-way system is in operation. Please enter from this side. On leaving, pass through the kitchen and return to your seat via the main aisle.

Please leave the toilet door open when you are finished, for ventilation purposes.

PLEASE LEAVE VIA THIS DOOR

Only use the main entrance if you are unable to manage the uneven ground in the Churchyard.

Please remember to wash your hands thoroughly as soon as you get home.

If you want to give towards the work of the Church, please leave your donation in the plate

**THANK YOU FOR
JOINING US AND FOR
YOUR PATIENCE WITH
THE HEALTH AND
HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS**