

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
6 th August 2020	5	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update includes risk factors around the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship from 8th August.

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](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:

- Private prayer (clergy only)
- Livestreaming services (clergy only)
- Private prayer (general public)
- Public worship
- Rites of passage services
- Opening for visitors and tourists

2. Consider the hazards:

- Transmission of COVID-19
- Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
- Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

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

Church: St. Peter's Parish Centre	Assessor's name: Amanda Blease	Date completed: 03/08/20	Review date: 24/09/20, 08/10/20
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Preparation of the Parish Centre for general use by staff team and other user groups/hirers. ***This risk assessment must be read in conjunction with a separate, approved risk assessment provided by Group Leaders/hirers for their own activities.	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Toilet facilities checked regularly throughout the day. Zak's also monitoring toilets in Noah's Ark	Lewis/Amanda	
	Hand sanitisers available for visitors to use and kept filled up.	Hand sanitiser is available in the entrance lobby with signage to encourage use. Sanitiser also available on Reception Desk. Sanitiser also on upstairs landing.	Lewis/Amanda	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Checked daily	Lewis/Amanda	
	Remove leaflets from display cabinet	All leaflets in display cabinets in centre have been removed and will be kept in office until further notice	Amanda	Done
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all <i>except those exempt</i> .	Signage is displayed on Entrance Foyer door stating 'Face coverings are MANDATORY in this building'. To be politely	Amanda/Lewis/Group Leader	17/08/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		enforced and users reminded of the need to use face coverings if they don't have them.		
	Signage advising anyone with symptoms of Coronavirus (or who have family members with symptoms) not to enter the building	Signage placed on Front Entrance door and table in foyer.	Amanda	
	Signage put up in Entrance Foyer advising everyone that they need to sign in/out for track and trace purposes.	<p>All session leaders informed they need to sign in/out of books on Reception Desk. Signing in sheets retained in Parish Office for 21 days.</p> <p>As of 24/09, QR codes put up on Front Door and in centre for NHS track and trace purposes.</p> <p>Pens available on Front Desk and to be put into quarantine once used – marked tub available for used pens to then be removed for 3 days before being replaced.</p>	Amanda	24/09/20
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Posters put up throughout the building	Amanda	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Regularly each day. Supplies to be monitored.	Lewis/Amanda/Group leaders	
	Rooms to be designated as storage areas for upholstered furniture and soft furnishings that can't be easily cleaned.	Signage has been placed on The Den and The Lounge saying these are designated storage rooms and are out of bounds until further notice	Amanda	
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Use of Noah's Ark and resources is limited to one user group (Zak's Childcare) at present. Items not to be used have been removed and placed in storage rooms.	N/A	
Use of the Parish Centre by staff team for work purposes ***All the above controls to be noted plus these ones.	Staff team to be encouraged to work from home, <i>as far as possible</i> , so as to minimise risk of transmission			
	Booking system for meetings by staff team to be used so as to ensure there are no room clashes, maintain social distancing etc	All bookings of the centre to be made with Amanda. Quiet Room designated as main meeting room for staff team and 'out of bounds' to other user groups.		
	Staff to sign in/out of building in both registers on Reception Desk as a matter of good practice and for track and trace purposes.			

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Provision of hand sanitiser for hands for use on entering and leaving the building, at the very least.			
	Face coverings not legally required by staff as they are in their workplace. Face coverings to be worn by staff if they come into contact with people in the centre who are not part of the staff team.			
	Use of plastic chairs only in designated rooms. Staff members to wipe down touched surfaces and own chairs after their use.			
Use of the Parish Centre by church groups and external hirers/groups. ***All the above controls to be noted plus these ones.	Risk assessments to be provided by each hirer/user group ahead of group re-starting.	To be provided to, and agreed by, Amanda. To be reviewed regularly.		
	Booking in/out system to be used	Group leader to sign in/out in folder on the main reception desk. Group leaders also to maintain their own individual registers of who is in their sessions.		
	Choose one point of entry into the centre to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.	Use main front door as point of entrance. Ahead of pre-booked sessions, internal doors are to be propped open to ensure 'no touch' access. Entry door in to Reception Foyer to be propped open and access monitored at the start/end of sessions.	Lewis/Amanda/Group leader	

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	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Hirers/group leaders told of the need for social distancing on the car park	Amanda	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	When Sports Hall in use, entrance door to be left open or ajar (if weather inclement) to ensure air flow. Windows to be opened in Sports Hall and on landing immediately outside of entrance door, as far as possible.	Lewis/Amanda/Group leader	
	Reminders about social distancing to be placed around the building		Amanda	
Cleaning the Parish Centre before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	N/A		
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	In conjunction with Group Leaders	Managed by Lewis and Amanda	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Disposable gloves to be available in the building. Supplies to be monitored.	Lewis/Amanda	
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Supplies to be monitored.		
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Lewis/Amanda/Group leader	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.		Lewis/Amanda/Group leader	
Cleaning the Parish Centre after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Liaison with user groups by Amanda – cancel activities if possible		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Liaison with user groups by Amanda	Lewis/Amanda	
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.		Lewis/Amanda	