

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](#).

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 John the Divine Hall	Assessor's name: Revd Alison Judge – AJ Ann Newson - AN	Date completed: 25 August 2020	Review date: Ongoing
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Risk assessment sent to session leaders date and name
Hall	Number of People Standing & Seated	Each group to assess according to activity but adhering to social distancing of 2 metres or 1 metre with mitigation	Session leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Name of group/leader's name/leader's contact/number of group members/space hired/day & time of week	Contacts details in Parish Office	AJ & AN	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	On arrival, clean - cleaning using their own materials.	As per matrix /sign off sheet	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Managing entry and exit – one-way flow if possible or queueing system	Queuing Management	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	All people to sanitise their hands on entry/exit	Wall sanitiser units provided	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Ensure 2-metre distancing between individuals	This should be part of their own Risk Assessment for them to manage and is part of the hirer agreement	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Wearing of face masks in public spaces indoors “strongly encouraged”	Should be part of their Risk Assessment	Session Leader	AJ 010920

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Risk assessment sent to session leaders date and name
				Reveiwed 130421
Hall Cont	Ventilation – doors or windows open during session	Hall Doors & Fire exit at side of hall. Ensure all windows secured at the end of session.	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Any literature or materials brought and taken away by clients or leaders; nothing left in the space at the end	Part of the cleaning matrix	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Toilet use	Ladies in use. Gents to use wheelchair accessible toilet. Gents not in use.	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Waste disposal	Use the bin in the kitchen. If you anticipate having more than a minimal amount of waste please use your own black sack and take it to the bins by the church.	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Retention of contact details of members to assist NHS test and trace	They must record and hold the information in compliance with GDPR	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Tell members with symptoms not to attend	This is a mandatory part of hire agreement	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	If you hear from Test and Trace about a positive test, let the church know	Ensure in Hire agreement	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	End of session, clean surfaces which have been used and sign sheet to say you have cleaned before and after	All cleaning requirements on the cleaning matrix are completed & signed off by the Session Leader	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Risk assessment sent to session leaders date and name
	All Hirers must provide a risk assessment for the space they are using	Copy to be retained in Parish Office	Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Ensure there is sufficient signage to toilets			AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421
	Kitchen is closed. Please ask your group to bring their own bottle of water.		Session Leader	AJ 010920 Reveiwed 130421