

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
16 th July 2021	10.2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update has been reviewed to reflect step 4 of the [roadmap to ease restrictions](#) issued by the UK government and is intended for use from 19th July onwards. As step 4 sees the easing of all legal restrictions it is recommended that risk assessments currently in place are re-run to ensure they fit the new circumstances. The Church of England's [guidance on step 4](#) may be a helpful reference point.

It is recommended that you carry out a separate risk assessment for each activity type e.g. public worship, use by community groups, concerts etc. and that these are regularly reviewed with reference to local Covid infection rates and other relevant circumstances. You may decide to have different mitigations or safety measures in place for different events. Where activities run simultaneously or back-to-back, each iteration of the risk assessment should address the shared or consequential risk.

Risk assessment templates for outdoor worship and for contractors and construction workers are also available on the [Church of England Coronavirus page](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Private prayer
 - Public worship with or without congregational singing
 - Funerals, weddings, baptisms, ordinations
 - Livestreaming or recording services
 - A choir or music group singing indoors as part of a public, livestreamed or recorded service
 - Formal childcare or where part of a school
 - Essential voluntary and public services
 - Use as a vaccination or testing centre
 - Community and support groups
 - Provision of youth services
 - Opening shops/cafes
 - Opening for visitors/tourists/educational visits as a heritage attraction
 - Opening for concerts, plays etc
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual
 - Shared or consequential risks of activities running simultaneously or back-to-back (eg crossover of people at entry/exit points)

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 as long as they are properly managed, but having any significant numbers of people coming through your building makes the possible impact – in particular someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller churches with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate. Gathered congregations and major services may attract people from far afield, which is likely to add to the risk profile. Consider whether you need to consult your wider membership and users.

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 Michael at the North Gate	Assessor's name: Miss Myriam Frenkel	Date completed: 20/07/21	Most Recent Review: 29/07/21
Event or service this assessment relates to:		All Public Worship; Refreshments After Public Worship; Normal Daily Opening; Normal Daily Office Opening	

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Aerosol or droplet transmission of Covid-19	Increase ventilation in your building: natural ventilation by opening doors, windows and vents or mechanical ventilation if appropriate/necessary.	Doors and windows kept open as much as possible, medically vulnerable people seated near doors.	Vicar, Staff, Wardens, Sidespeople	Anthony Buckley or deputy, before services
	Use outdoor spaces if appropriate and available.	Courtyard used for coffee for those who wish.	Vicar to announce	Anthony Buckley before services
	Request or consider requiring people to wear a face covering, unless exempt, when inside your building. This may particularly apply to activities that increase risk of aerosol spread such as singing.	Request mask wearing by those at the back, near the doors, where we seat the medically vulnerable. Offer special shielding service if felt to be helpful.	Vicar to gauge need for shielding service and instruct sidespeople.	Anthony Buckley before services.
	Put in place measures to reduce contact between people e.g. retaining social distancing	Offer an extra hymnbook for anyone wanting to remain socially distant.	Vicar to instruct sidespeople.	Anthony Buckley before services.
	If practical in your building, 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 door for exit.	Church diary maintained by staff and Vicar. Due consideration given to overall traffic in the building when planning events.	Vicar, Church Administrator and Staff to keep numbers and	Myriam Frenkel and Anthony Buckley, weekly.

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
			activities under review.	
	For events where the building is likely to be especially busy, or the activity is particularly energetic, pay particular regard to the need for additional mitigations such as social distancing and face coverings.	Doors and windows kept open as much as possible, medically vulnerable people seated near doors.	Vicar, Staff, Wardens, Sidespeople	Anthony Buckley or deputy, before services
Surface transmission of Covid-19	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Hand sanitiser provided at every entrance, outside the loo, and at front for communicants if they wish.	Church Caretaker to check supplies.	Hand sanitiser provided at every entrance, outside the loo, and at front for communicants if they wish.
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Doors left open as much as possible, people welcome to bring their own prayer book or use online.	Vicar to announce plan, Staff, Wardens, Sidesmen to open doors where possible.	Doors left open as much as possible, people welcome to bring their own prayer book or use online.
	Good hygiene and cleaning of the building.	We continue to clean, especially mindful of frequently touched surfaces.	Church Caretaker to co-ordinate.	We continue to clean, especially mindful of frequently touched surfaces.
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one	Single-use cards and papers which are provided are all for	Church Administrator to	Myriam Frenkel, 19/07/21 onwards

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	up, and request that people take these home with them.	people to take home, and we will encourage that.	ensure printed matter complies	
	Consider hygiene around shared items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people.	People welcome to take away Bibles. Enough prayer and hymn books for one each.	Vicar to announce.	People welcome to take away Bibles. Enough prayer and hymn books for one each.
	Put in place a cleaning rota/system for children’s materials and toys, and consider providing cleaning materials for these if safe to do so (keeping all such materials out of the reach of children).	Children’s toys used only on Sunday, and thought given to sharing of toys.	Church Caretaker, Children’s church leaders.	Children’s toys used only on Sunday, and thought given to sharing of toys.
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	A hand drier is supplied. Soap is available, as is hand sanitiser at the entrance/exit to the loo.	Church Caretaker	A hand drier is supplied. Soap is available, as is hand sanitiser at the entrance/exit to the loo.
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Part of normal cleaning	Church Caretaker	Part of normal cleaning
Visitors are unclear on requirements for attending church or visiting the building for	Display an NHS Track and Trace QR code, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system. Encourage visitors to use one or other of these options.	NHS Track and Trace QR codes available at entrances and in the Parish Room. A paper option is available for those who need it.	Records to be removed as the form is filled in, Vicar.	Anthony Buckley, daily.

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other purposes, or anxious about attending.	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements or requests such as bringing a face covering and options for those who may be anxious.	Website is updated weekly, and includes our risk assessment.	Church Administrator to oversee updating website.	Myriam Frenkel, weekly.
	Consider specific advice for those who may struggle with continuing restrictions, such as those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or visually impaired.	Individuals encouraged to voice their concerns. We have a hearing loop.	Vicar to remind everyone in his email lists, and announce as required.	Anthony Buckley, as required.
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services.	A booking system is used for our concert series (separate risk assessment), but numbers for services are predictable and safe.	Vicar and Staff to keep numbers and activities under review.	Myriam Frenkel and Anthony Buckley, weekly.
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Vicar is in constant touch with the Deanery.	Vicar	Anthony Buckley, weekly
	Provide welcoming notices that outline safety measures.	We are communicating with members of the church directly, and sidesmen will provide advice and help to those entering. We will add notices if needed.	Vicar in weekly emails and verbal communication, and Vicar to assess needs.	Anthony Buckley, weekly
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.			
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here.		

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	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.		
Additional risk assessment specific to St Michael's				
Contamination of, or through, the kitchen area	The kitchen is cleaned regularly. We have replaced hand towels with paper towels. Those who wish will be reminded they are welcome to go outside for their coffees and teas.		Church Administrator and Church Caretaker	Weekly Myriam and Rachael
Contamination during monthly breakfast	Two tables joined to ensure those seated opposite each other are at 2m distance minimum. One person to serve the food to everyone, to avoid multi-touching of appliances and food. Everyone asked to sanitise their hands before taking a seat at the table.	The breakfast occurs once a month.	Vicar	Monthly, Anthony Buckley
Too many people attempting to enter the church at one time	Anthony is aware of those likely to attend church, and will consider additional services for those who are clinically vulnerable if this proves helpful.		Vicar & Administrator	Weekly Anthony & Myriam
	Someone to be positioned by the door before services to direct people to wait as need be		Vicar	Weekly Anthony
	Anthony will keep in good communication with expected attendees and those who arrive		Vicar	weekly Anthony
People sitting too close to others	People who wish to sit separately can place a spare hymnbook next to them to indicate this.	People can be seated in the Lady Chapel and Tower Room if needful.	Vicar	weekly Anthony

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Coins/notes passing hands	There will be no collection. People who wish to give can do so online or by placing money in the collection box fixed at the back of church. The cash is exclusively counted by the office, who have access to gloves.	Contactless donations possible via our contactless device. Hand sanitiser is available by the collection box.	Vicar & Finance Manager	Weekly Anthony and Anna
Multi-touching of books and leaflets	There will be no leaflets. People are welcome to bring their own prayer books if they have them. Pre-quarantined (at least 3 days) books will be provided.	At the end of the service these books will be put back into quarantine (at least 3 days)	Vicar & Administrator	Weekly, Anthony
People getting too close to each other when coming forward to receive Communion	People will receive standing, waiting behind each other. If necessary, a reminder to give each other space will be given. They will come up one by one.		Vicar	Weekly, Anthony
Shared touching of the altar rail	People will receive standing, waiting appropriately behind each other. No-one will kneel at the rail.	If anyone cannot come forward, Anthony will go to them.	Vicar	Weekly, Anthony
Contact through receiving the elements of Communion	Those receiving the common cup will be encouraged not to touch it. The Priest will sanitize hands immediately after the prayer of consecration (and before getting out the Communion vessels before the service).	Hand sanitiser will be available for communicants. The wafers will remain covered until the Eucharistic Prayer.	Vicar	Weekly, Anthony
Presence of someone with symptoms	We will remind people in our communications that anyone with symptoms should not attend. If anyone enters who seems to have symptoms of the virus, or if anyone develops symptoms during the service, we will ask them to return home and seek medical help, pointing them to the appropriate Government guidelines.		Vicar and Administrator	Weekly, Anthony & Myriam

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Not knowing who is attending if we hear later that someone present has the virus and we need to be part of “track and trace”	Track and Trace QR code is available at our entrances and in the Parish Room. A paper alternative is available. We can contact congregants via lists held by Anthony. Other users likewise know to contact us if need be.	New faces are often in touch with Anthony as part of the welcome.	Vicar	Weekly, Anthony
Anthony invites individuals to chat, be part of an act of streamed worship or small group discussion	Anthony ensures all involved know the guidance, and ensures that, if different groups are meeting at the same time, due communication and procedures are followed.	Proposed meetings are discussed as appropriate with staff and wardens.	Vicar	Weekly, Anthony
Spread through interactions at children’s church	We will continue to use separate rugs/cushions by households, reducing the amount of interaction between households.	Those who wish can bring their own resources to reduce risk of spread further.	Children’s church leaders to let everyone know.	Weekly

Further specific guidance for use of the parish room or use of the church by external organisations is covered in specific guidance issued for those usages. Please look at these guides as necessary and contact the Church Administrator (church.administrator@smng.org.uk) if you need any further information.