

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
16 th July 2021	10	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 Augustine of Canterbury, Whitton	Assessor's name: Roubina de Winton (RdeW) & Sue Thornton (ST)	Date completed: 20/07/2021	Review date: 27/07/2021
Event or service this assessment relates to:	Sunday and Midweek Services, Baptism and Wedding Services		

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.	Consult HSE guidance on identifying poorly ventilated areas Do not prop open fire doors. Required Actions 1) The two sets of double doors at the west entrance to be kept fully open. 2) North entrance door during services to be kept open 3) Open windows that can be opened.	Fr John to communicate PCC's decision to the congregation via email and at all Services.	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Use outdoor spaces if appropriate and available.	Not required as the church is large enough to accommodate the number of		20/07/2021 ST & RdeW

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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.	<p>congregation with prescribed social distancing</p> <p>The congregation will be encouraged to wear their mask. If they do not wish to follow the PCC guidance, they will be required to sit at the front of the church so that if they sang risk of aerosol spreading can be minimised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fr John to communicate PCC's decision to the congregation via email and at all Services • Fr John to communicate this requirement during the planning process for Baptism and Weddings, and inform those in attendance at actual events. • Sides-people to inform the congregation as they enter the church 	<p>20/07/2021 ST & RdeW</p> <p>Reviewed on 27/07/2021 Fr John</p>

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put in place measures to reduce contact between people e.g. retaining social distancing	No additional action is required. PCC's decision is to retain the social distancing measures already in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fr John to communicate PCC's decision to the congregation via email and at all Services 	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	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.	The congregation is to leave the church building after the Sunday services and other services from the back rows so as to retain social distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fr John to communicate PCC's decision to the congregation via email and at all Services. Sides-people ensure this is observed. 	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW Reviewed 27/07/2021 Fr John
	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.	No major event is planned for August. A risk assessment will be conducted for the Harvest Festival and the St Augustine day celebration in September.	Churchward and Fr John	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Surface transmission of Covid-19	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Sanitisers will be continued to be used and the congregation will be reminded to use them	Sides-people and PCC members	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	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.	No additional action is required. The west doors are left open. In addition, door to the WCs is left open to reduce contact with surfaces.	Sides-people	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Good hygiene and cleaning of the building.	See advice on cleaning church buildings . No new action is required- Continue with the current cleaning regime	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Consider hygiene around shared items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people. You could consider a long-term loan system for Bibles and other books to ensure people have access to these.	The services are projected onto a screen on Sundays and service sheets are only for the choir and the sacristan. These are taken home by the individuals using them.	DoM	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to	Midweek service sheets are printed and left on each	Fr John, after reminding the	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	chair. Congregation is asked to take them home and recycle	congregation after the service	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on).	No new or additional action is required		20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	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).	No new or additional action is required	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. No new or additional action is required	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	No new or additional action is required	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
Visitors are unclear on requirements for attending church or visiting the building for other purposes, or anxious about attending.	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.	Consult advice on Track and Trace . QR codes are displayed. Continue with the Track and trace process already in place. Request list of attendees and contacts in respect of Baptism and Wedding	Sides-people Fr John/Vicar	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW Reviewed 27/07/2021 Fr John

Risk	Controls to consider (delete or detail as appropriate to your location and event)	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		services for the purpose of track and trace, should that become necessary.		
	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.	PCC's decision regarding restriction post 19 July to be communicated to the congregation Easing of Covid Restrictions	Fr John and RdeW	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW RdeW 28/07/2021
	Consider specific advice for those who may struggle with continuing restrictions, such as those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or visually impaired.	Encourage congregation members to provide support and share information		
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services.	Not Required		20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Not necessary		20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	Provide welcoming notices that outline safety measures.	Notice will be sent to each member of the congregation and posted on website	Fr John and RdeW	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Current practice interval of 48 hours between each service	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW
	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.		20/07/2021 ST & RdeW

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		Appropriate cleaning to be done before another event by people concerned.	Wardens & Vicar	Reviewed 27/07/2021 Fr John
	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. <u>Noted</u>	Cleaning Team	20/07/2021 ST & RdeW