



N.B. This document will be updated and contents may change as government guidance regarding places of worship has been published reflecting latest position

On the 23 June 2020 government announced that places of worship may open for public services as well as private prayer at of 4 July, with social distancing and all the necessary risk mitigations. 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 church and cathedral buildings to members of the public entering for services and private prayer. As well as indicating best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes decide on whether to open for individual private prayer and services or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. This risk assessment is to be adapted to the circumstances of the parish,

Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. Control measures to be revised and updated when the latest government guidance is reviewed and published. **Diocesan guidelines** have also been issued for ease of reference reflecting the government directives and liturgical guidance.

Face Coverings: Government has advised that cloth face coverings (and not surgical masks) could be worn for reassurance by people in enclosed areas Churches do not need to supply face coverings for visitors. Clergy to wear face mask for distribution of communion.

Children: While children are unlikely to become very ill, they are capable of both being infected by the virus and of spreading it. Parents or guardians bringing children into a church should not be discouraged from doing so, but it will be important for parents to manage their children appropriately, particularly ensuring they touch as few surfaces as possible for their own safety.

Vulnerable People: It remains a person’s own choice to come to church to pray. Churches may wish to consider setting aside a section only for people who are more vulnerable to serious disease if infected, and clearly signposted as such, or otherwise having a designated time only for people who are more vulnerable and wish to pray privately.

Completion of the risk assessment

Places of worship are also workplaces and should therefore be aware of their responsibilities as employers under existing health and safety law. Places of worship have a duty of care to volunteers, to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

Version Control				
Version 1	11/06/2019	Checked by Director Estates	Checked by H&S Manager	Reviewed by COO
Version 2	02/07/2020			Reviewed by COO



Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:		Date Assessed:		Assessed by:		
Task/Activity:		Review Frequency:		Reference:		
Access to church buildings for clergy for the purposes of private prayer services and/or livestreaming		Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance		COVID- 19 Risk Assessment		
Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Lone Working	Clergy and staff	Lone Working Policy			10	Lone Working Policy can be found here
Legionella	All	Ensure that all taps, toilets and other water storage devices are run well to flush the systems before anyone uses them, especially if the church has not been in use for some time. Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	5	2		See government Guidance (here)
Lapse of compliance certificates		Review Parish certificates for Gas safe, Electrical Inspections etc and instruct specialists where necessary				Contact Diocesan Estates Team for support where H&S/parish staff furloughed/shielding The checklist for reopening of buildings and cleaning provided by Ellis Whittham should be used



Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:		Date Assessed:			Assessed by:	
Task/Activity:		Review Frequency:			Reference:	
Preparation of the church for individual prayer		Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance			COVID- 19 Risk Assessment	
Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Harm due to Legionella/ Gas/ electrical non-compliance	Clergy Parishioners Visitors	<p>Where church has not been reopened for some time Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.</p> <p>Health and Safety walk-round to identify hazards, e.g. blocked exits etc</p> <p>Check emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.</p>	5	1	5	<p>For advice and Support contact Diocesan H&S Manager</p> <p>Email:scripps@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</p>

Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:	Date Assessed:	Assessed by:
Task/Activity:	Review Frequency:	Reference:
Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance	COVID- 19 Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Contact with Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by not maintaining social distancing	Clergy Parishioners Visitors	<p>Church plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Ideally 2m in all directions from each person min 1m with mitigations according to latest govt guidance</p> <p>Flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building and during services considered to maintain physical distancing requirements.</p> <p>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.</p>	5	2	10	<p>Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing. Contact Diocesan Estates Team on gaining relevant consents.</p> <p>LISTED or LISTABLE BUILDINGS:</p> <p>All restrictions on making alterations or any permanent damage to surfaces of listed buildings still apply. Contact Diocesan Estates team for advice on non-destructive solutions.</p> <p>Consider online booking systems e.g. ticketsource.co.uk which is free for free events to support track and trace. GDPR rules apply</p>



		<p>Maintain as much ventilation within the church space as possible; keep doors open if possible, to decrease transmission risk through touching and allow a flow of fresh air into the church.</p> <p>Diocesan guidance for services reviewed and implemented.</p> <p>Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing</p> <p>Further mitigating actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing off intermediate pews (avoid self- adhesive tape, use ribbon or non- adhesive hazard warning tape) • Numbers within the buildings sufficiently reduced to assist in maintaining required social distances at all times. 				<p>Indicate at entrance maximum number of occupants, beyond which a queuing system must be used.</p> <p>Signage installed within the building to remind occupants to maintain two metre distance at all times.</p> <p>Weddings and funerals limit 30 including clergy.</p>
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Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:	Date Assessed:	Assessed by:

Task/Activity:	Review Frequency:	Reference:
Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance	COVID- 19 Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces	Cleaners	<p>*If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open, then there is no need for cleaning. If opening more frequently cleaning to be scheduled in between services or occasions of private prayer</p> <p>Cleaning rota established to cover opening arrangements.</p> <p>All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable and masks for toilet cleaning).</p> <p>Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if</p>	5	2	10	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here



		<p>historic surfaces are to be cleaned.</p> <p>Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.</p> <p>Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.</p>				
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Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:		Date Assessed:		Assessed by:		
Task/Activity:		Review Frequency:		Reference:		
Responding to visitor falling ill potential coronavirus exposure		Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance		COVID- 19 Risk Assessment		
Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection – by touching contaminated surfaces	Clergy Parishioner Visitors Cleaners	<p>If a visitor presents with temperature and/or persistent cough, NHS 111 should be called for advice and the church should be vacated.</p> <p>The church building must then be closed for 72 hours with no access permitted.</p> <p>If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.</p>	5	2	10	<p>Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.</p> <p>Public Health England guidance available here</p> <p>All people present in the church must be instructed to self-isolate for 14 days.</p> <p>Track and trace records may be requested.</p>



Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:	Date Assessed:	Assessed by:

Task/Activity:	Review Frequency:	Reference:
Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance	COVID- 19 Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by individual non-compliance with procedures	Stewards	At least two stewards present in the church throughout the time it is open for services and ideally private prayer. Stewards to ensure that hand sanitisation occurs at entry and exit points, social distancing including a one-way system is maintained by people in the church and if a pre-determined capacity is reached, restrictions imposed on entering the church. (Through, for example, a “one in, one out” policy families to be treated as a unit.) People with cold or flu-like symptoms should be asked not to enter.	5	2	10	Training for stewards provided and documented. Register of stewards retained



		<p>Stewards not from vulnerable or shielding group</p> <p>Stewards practice good hand hygiene through either regular hand washing and following guidance refraining from eating or drinking.</p>				
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Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:	Date Assessed:	Assessed by:

Task/Activity:	Review Frequency:	Reference:
Use of Candles	Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance	COVID- 19 Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Fire	All	Stands ensure that votive candles are held safely and will not ignite the fabric of the building. Bucket of sand placed near votive candles to be used to extinguish lit candles in an emergency.	5	2	10	
Burns as a result of lighting votive candles		Volunteers to monitor np. of candles burning and check that votive candles have not been placed at other sites around the Cathedral and if they have extinguish them. Candles must be extinguished by stewards before closing the church. Votive candles are to be spaced apart to enable individuals to light with the greatest safety.				



Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish:		Date Assessed:		Assessed by:		
Task/Activity:		Review Frequency:		Reference:		
Communication		Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance		COVID- 19 Risk Assessment		
Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk	Controls in Place	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk/ Priority	Additional Controls Required
Lack of understanding/ compliance	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitors	Risk assessment published on parish website Notices in Church indicating capacity Announcement in parish newsletters Announcements reflecting local situation the start of services Training for volunteers and stewards Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	5	2	10	Briefing to participants for lifecycle events (e.g. baptisms, weddings and funerals) so that it is clear what to expect Keeping up to date with changes to guidance



Risk/Priority Indicator Key

Severity/Consequence

1.	Negligible (delay only)
2.	Slight (minor injury / damage / interruption)
3.	Moderate (lost time injury, illness, damage, lost Parish)
4.	High (major injury / damage, lost time Parish interruption, disablement)
5.	Very High (fatality / Parish closure)

Likelihood

1.	Improbable / very unlikely
2.	Unlikely
3.	Even chance / may happen
4.	Likely
5.	Almost certain / imminent

Risk/Priority Indicator Matrix

Likelihood	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Severity				

Summary		Suggested Timeframe
12-25	High	As soon as possible
6-11	Medium	Within the next three working days
1-10	Low	Whenever it is viable to do so

Weekly Review Checklist

Action	✓	Confirmed by	Comments
Parish have reviewed the updated guidance from the government and the Diocese			
Reviewed and update the risk assessment to incorporate any changes to the guidance			
Ensured sufficient stocks of cleaning material soap, hand sanitiser and disinfectant are available			
Identified and implemented any new recommended control measures			
As numbers increase within the offices as workplaces review the risk assessment and social distancing procedures			
Signage recommended has been in installed where necessary			
Procedures arising from the reviewed risk assessment to be communicated to all employees			

Useful Links:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/COVID19-PPE-Safe-Mask-Wear-Poster.pdf>

