

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 Matthew's Stretton Church Hall	Assessor's name: Kath Holbourn	Date completed: 21 st August 2021	Review date: 21 st October 2021
Event or service this assessment relates to:		Operational management of the Church Hall	

Risk	Controls	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Aerosol or droplet transmission of Covid-19	Maintain good ventilation in the Church Hall through natural ventilation by opening doors and windows, as weather permits, during use.	Incorporated in the Church Hall User Checklist	Users	
	Use outdoor spaces if appropriate and available.		Users	
	The use of face coverings is no longer mandatory inside the building however this may be suggested where large groups prevent other social distancing measures being in place. All users need to be aware that the risk of aerosol transmission increases where users are active and during activities such as singing.	Incorporated in the Church Hall User Checklist	Users	
	Wherever possible, put in place measures to reduce contact between people e.g. retaining social distancing		Lead User	
	Use one point of entry into the Church Hall to manage flow of people and indicate this with	Signage in place	Users	

Risk	Controls	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different door for exit. All users will be expected to prevent crowding at exits, particularly when children are being picked up.			
	For events where the building is likely to be especially busy, or the activity is particularly energetic, Users will be reminded about the need for additional mitigations such as social distancing and face coverings.	Incorporated in the Church Hall User Checklist	Lead User	
Surface transmission of Covid-19	Hand sanitisers should be provided by regular users for their staff/children. Meeting and Casual users will be reminded to bring hand sanitiser with them.	Within the Church Hall User Checklist	Lead User	
	Users are encouraged to identify where contact of people with surfaces can be reduced, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors.		Users	
	Cleaning schedules and good hygiene and cleaning of the building are essential. Regular Users are expected to comply with Government guidance on frequency of cleaning (minimum twice daily) and the Hall User Guidance. All Users are expected to clean frequently touched surfaces on the conclusion of their activity.	Explicit guide to cleaning is in the Church Hall User Checklist	Lead User	
	General tidiness – reducing clutter enables effective cleaning so each User is required to ensure that nothing is left in the Hall at the end of the session.		Lead User	
	Noticeboards – to only display essential information and all notices must be laminated. Artwork if laminated can be displayed.		Lead User	

Risk	Controls	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	In the toilet facilities, an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels are provided, and bins for towels, are available.		Cleaner to top up	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Lead User	
	Kitchen fridge-freezer – is owned by a specific User and will not be used by other Users without their specific permission. The User is responsible for ensuring weekly cleaning; general cleanliness and ensuring the safe management and disposal of foods within it. No foodstuffs are to be left over a holiday/ lockdown period.		Fridge Owner	
	Termly deep clean – the Church Hall is cleaned weekly but a deeper clean will be undertaken during each major school holiday prior to return.		Cleaner	
Contingency planning by regular users of the Church Hall	Regular users of the Church Hall are required to have contingency plans in place to identify how they will deal with positive cases of COVID-19 and how they would continue to operate if asked by PH England to reintroduce measures outlined in: GOV.UK Contingency framework: education and childcare settings August 2021 .		Lead User	
Supporting NHS Test & Trace	Whilst not obligatory, The Church Hall Management Committee asks Users to keep a record of attendees at each session in order to facilitate the work of NHS Test & Trace in the event of a positive case being identified.	Incorporated in the Church Hall User Checklist	Lead User	

Risk	Controls	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the Church Hall after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible, the Church Hall would be closed for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Procedure in place	Vicar	
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then the PCC would follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.		Richard Johnson	
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then cleaning would be carried out as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Procedure in place	Cleaner	
Non – compliance by Users	Clear communication with Users of the Hall about the requirements necessary during the pandemic. Regular Users are subject to unannounced inspections. Where concerns are found, these would be brought to the attention of the User for immediate action. Ongoing concerns may result in access to the Church Hall being denied.		Church Hall Management Committee	