

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer and funerals

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 |

Churches and cathedrals are legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provides for churches to open for funerals from 15th June.

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 individual private prayer. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for individual private prayer or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context.

Future versions of this document will be produced when different forms of public worship and access are allowed.

A risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers forms part of an updated document giving advice on access for these groups. This can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Risk assessment template

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| Church: St Mary Magdalene, Ashton on Mersey | Assessor's name: Jane Mottram | Date completed: 29/06/2020 | Review date: |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------|

| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
|---|---|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here. | One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible | Clergy and other staff enter through the church centre doors. Public will enter through the church south porch doors | No action needed | |
| | A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | An example can be found here. | No lone working | |
| | Buildings have been aired before use. | | Helen Jarvis | 25/06/2020 |
| | Check for animal waste and general cleanliness. | | Helen Jarvis | 25/06/2020 |
| | Ensure water systems are flushed through before use. | See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies | Jeremy Barnes | 26/06/2020 |
| | Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. | | Helen Jarvis | 25/06/2020 |
| | Holy water stoups and the font are empty. | | No action needed | |
| Preparation of the Church for individual prayer and funerals | Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. | | | |
| | Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below). | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here. | | |

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|---------------|---|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| | 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 exit. | All public will use the main church doors – south porch for entrance and exit. A one-way system will be in place, clearly marked with signs and floor markings. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. | Doors will be kept open during private prayer for ventilation and to reduce touch points. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user. | All books and printed material has been removed from public spaces. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items | Areas including the chancel, prayer room and the church centre have been closed off and signed as ‘no access’ | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |
| | Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance | No action needed | | |
| | Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas | No action needed | | |
| | Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Remember 2m in all directions from each person. | Aisles and the flow of visitors has been marked out to ensure 2m distancing. Volunteers are on hand to enforce. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. | Seating areas are marked out to ensure 2m distancing. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |

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| | Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | A one-way system is in place with clear signage. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed. | Areas including the church centre and toilets have been closed off and signed as 'no access' | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |
| | Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Hand gel is provided on a table at the entrance / exit of the church centre for clergy, staff and other key holders. And at the south porch entrance / exit for the public. A 'friendly notice' is also displayed to encourage hand hygiene. | Helen Jarvis / Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |
| | Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions . | No action needed | |
| | Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. | Guidelines are displayed on the main doors alerting people to the importance of safe practices. | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |
| | If the church has been used in the last 72 hours ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes. | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . The church was unused 72 hours prior to being prepared. After it was prepared and | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |

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| | | before public are welcomed in Joseph Mottram was employed to clean the church centre entrance area and the church including wiping down all potential touch surfaces. | | |
| | Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Toilet facilities are not available. Hand gel is provided instead. | | |
| | 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 toilet facilities | | |
| | Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. | One bin is provided in the church for disposing of cleaning wipes and any tissues used. The bins are double lined and emptied into the main waste at the end of each day. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) | If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces. | | | |

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| Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . | If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. | Volunteers are not in the vulnerable group. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. | Volunteers will wipe down used chairs and touch surfaces at the end of each opening. A more thorough clean will take place once a week. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Cleaners are to wear disposable gloves, which are provided | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Antibacterial wipes have been provided. No historic surfaces need to be included in the cleaning. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | The volunteer on duty will remove waste at the end of each opening. | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |
| | Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | Daily removal | Helen Jarvis | 26/06/2020 |

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| Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms | If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted. | We have advised that anyone has visited the building and is confirmed to have coronavirus should contact Jane Mottram. The building will then close for 72 hours. | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |
| | If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. | Public Health England guidance available here. | | |
| | If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning. | Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here. Following on from any closure, full cleaning will take place prior to re-opening. | Jane Mottram | 26/06/2020 |