

Risk Assessment (Covid 19) for Opening Church Buildings to the Public



St Stephen's and St Wulstan's
Selly Park

St Stephens & St Wulstans, Selly Park : The Building of St Stephens for Sunday Worship, Life Events and Restricted Weekday Access Use

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
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

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 any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Principles for carrying out a Risk Assessment (Church of England)

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Public worship
 - Life Event services – **separate Risk Assessment to be prepared recognising specific issues related to such services**
 - Opening for specific groups: MMTC West – **separate Risk Assessment to be prepared dealing with MMTC specific matters**
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
 - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

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 so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
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.

5 Steps to St Stephens Covid 19 Risk Assessments:

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment

- carrying out a risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance
- sharing the results of the risk assessment with staff and on website

2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures

Increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning by:

- encouraging people to follow the guidance on hand washing and hygiene
- providing hand sanitiser around the building, in addition to washrooms
- frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
- enhancing cleaning for busy areas
- setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets
- providing hygienic hand drying facilities

3. Help people to work from home

Take all reasonable steps to help people work from home by:

- discussing home working arrangements
- ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
- including them in all necessary communications
- looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible

Where possible, maintain 2m between people by:

- putting up signs to remind staff, worshippers and visitors of social distancing guidance
- avoiding sharing workstations
- using floor tape to mark areas to help people keep to a 2m distance
- arranging one-way traffic through the building if possible
- switching to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible

5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:

- considering whether an activity needs to continue
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
- staggering arrival and departure times
- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

Risk Assessment

Church:	Assessor's name:	Date completed:	Review date:
St Stephens Selly Park	Laurie Fearon	10 th August 2020	Monthly

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church: Ensuring general safe access after a prolonged period of closure. (Note: building opened for private prayer in line with guidelines for 2 hours, 6 days per week in period prior to	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified Route set out with signage; Identify best entry / exit configuration for services when seating configuration settled.	Entry: via Foyer double doors Exit for Services: via Foyer double doors (last in; first out – guided by stewards)	LF / TP LF 26.08.2020	 LF 26.08.2020
	Buildings have been aired before use.		Staff	LF 26.08.2020
	Check for general cleanliness.		Staff	LF 26.08.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
opening up for Services, etc. – separate Risk Assessment was put in place for this stage, and is held on file)	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	LF / TP	LF 26.08.2020
	Switch on heating systems, if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.		SH	
	Ensure the font is empty.		LF	LF 26.08.2020
	Facilities for live streaming services : Acquire and plan placement of AV equipment. Put in place Risk Assessment to cover the new set-up to include ensuring safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables routing, trip hazards, safe placement of any tripod / stands		TB / AW / LF	
	Update website and any relevant social media.		AO / CF	
Deciding whether to open to the public	General survey of building and agreement on type / style of use.		LF / CH / PCC	
	Consider if a booking system, or similar control, is needed for specific events/services			
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).			
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship	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.	Entry: via Foyer double doors Exit: : via Foyer double doors (last in; first out – guided by stewards)		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	External signage for entrance; Access control / stewarding			
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.			
	Remove chairs from Foyer	Store in Cranmer & Hudson Taylor Rooms (temporarily)		
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Nave; Foyer.	Staff	CF – 26.08.20 (boxed & stored in office)
	Worshippers to use own Bibles	Include in guidance note to send to Church Family.		
	No refreshments to be served, but visitors may bring along their own water bottles	Include in guidance note to send to Church Family.		
	Cordon off access to any restricted / 'non'-access areas	Cranmer Room; Kitchen; Stairs & lift to 1 st floor (office suite, Tyndale Room, Roseveare Room); Hudson Taylor Room : to be used for storage of quarantined chairs Foyer servery area.		
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas			
	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	Marked Central and Side Aisles – using masking tape.		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	from each person (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).			
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up rows of chairs either side of central aisle with 2m row spacing. • Mark row positions with masking tape on floor. • Two chairs width separation between people not in same household or 'bubble' 		
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Control exit flow through by stewarding, and advising when people can leave		
	Service planning: be aware of, and reduce, risk of aerosol transmission. No led or congregational singing.	Government & CofE guidelines	CH	
	Reducing risk of aerosol transmission (general) Mandatory wearing of face coverings / masks within the building by ministers, worshippers, staff, volunteers and visitors.	Government & CofE guidelines (wef 08.08.2020)		
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x Small tables in Foyer, plus • Standalone Dispenser. • Sanitiser at leader / speaker position. • Sanitiser & wipes at AV / PA control desk(s) 		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing , 2m social distancing, etc.	Signs at entrances: Symptoms? No entry General personal precautions: No physical contact; Hand sanitising on entry; 2m social distancing; Face covering / mask mandatory. Toilets: Hand washing signage; Use of cleaning wipes on touch points. Disposal of cleaning wipes.		
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Post / prior to use cleaning. Prop open doors to Nave to limit use of handles when public in building		
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate liquid soap provision and paper towels, and a pedal bin for the paper towels. Signage	Foyer area Toilets / Washrooms. Provide surface wipes for 'self-cleaning' of surfaces after use		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.			
	Compile record of attendance of worshippers and visitors for possible track and trace use; retain each day's record for 21 days		Decide person responsible: ?Duty Warden?	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Leaving the building	On leaving by appointed route, encourage church family and visitors not to linger, but leave the churchyard promptly.		
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.			
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.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.			
	Set up a cleaning duty list to cover opening and closing arrangements.		Staff	
	All cleaners provided with disposable gloves, masks, and as necessary disposable plastic aprons.		LF	
	Rotating and quarantining chairs between use of Nave. Anticipate that number of chairs used for a service would be between 36 and 62 dependant of mix of gathering (singles, couples, families)	Use of disposable gloves when moving chairs. Quarantine used chairs for 72 hours, storing them in the Cranmer Room as necessary		
	Suitable cleaning materials to be provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Dettol anti-bacterial wipes for hard surfaces; Anti-bacterial / disinfectant sprays for soft surfaces	LF	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		Single use colour coded 'J Cloth' type cloths for wipe downs – in line with following coding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue for loo (specifically toilet area) • Pink for sink (kitchen sinks and food areas) • Green for clean (hard surfaces / door handles) 		
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Ensure copious supply of black sacks and easily accessible waste bins; Bins to be emptied after each use	LF	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.			
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.			