

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

Church:	Assessor's name:	Date completed:	Review date:
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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	Not possible		01.06.20
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Complete	Clergy	01.06.20
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Complete	Deiniol Heywood	01.06.20
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Complete	Deiniol Heywood	01.06.20
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies Complete	Deiniol Heywood	01.06.20
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Not needed yet. Need to check before end of September.	David Wickham	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Complete	Deiniol Heywood	01.06.20
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.	Complete	Deiniol Heywood	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	Determine cleaning process from opener and closer. Complete – see below	Deiniol Heywood & Doreen Clarke	
	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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blue notice – general welcome, worship. Repeat in lych gate 2. A-Frame at path junction with posters at access process. 3. At entrance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) alcohol-based hand sanitiser, stand alone unit. b) alcohol-based cleaning wipes for furniture. c) Bin for wipes. 4. Blue “Everyone welcome” notice board: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) How to come in b) How to sit down c) How to pray c) How to worship e) For children... f) How to donate g) How to leave 5. Pews set at required distance apart for social 	Deiniol Heywood in overall control. Various tasks to be completed by Dick Rivett & Caretaker.	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		distancing. Sanctuary closed off. 6. Arrows on floor indicating flow. 7.Exit via Vestry door. 8. Hand washing available: a. Instructions b. Soap c. Paper towels in holder. d. Bin		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Outer door and glass doors to be open. Vestry door to be on latch but pulled over.	Person who opens the church each day.	Ongoing.
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Book stand items hidden by display board.	Dick Rivett	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Vestry, Toilet and Kitchen area will be locked. Sanctuary will be roped off. Remaining pews and chairs will be roped off.	Dick Rivett	
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Kneelers to be put in Vestry	Dick Rivett	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Not applicable	N/A	N/A
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Remember current guidelines in all directions from each person.	Benches will be used. Current social distancing regulations will be followed	Dick Rivett	
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Notices outside church. Removable arrows on church floor.	Dick Rivett	
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Entrance	Deiniol Heywood	21/6/20
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices and display boards to be prepared. Need to be updated as instructions change.	Deiniol Heywood & Liz Lewis	
	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.	Person who opens church will use disposable gloves and ensure that all handles, santisers, open benches etc are cleaned.	Person opening the church.	Ongoing role, no completion date.
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Daily by opener.	Person opening the church.	Already done?
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Not opening toilets	N/A	N/A

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	All disposable liners to be removed when church is opened by gloved opener. New ones inserted into bins.	Person opening the church	Ongoing role, no completion date.
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.	N/A	N/A	N/A
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.	Cleaners will be the people opening the church and closing the church.		
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	By end of July need to consider if more cleaning is needed. If needed liaise with Caretaker.	Standing Committee	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Ensure adequate supply for church openers, closers and caretaker.	Supply Purchase: Liz Lewis	Ongoing role.
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	N/A	Supply Purchase: Liz Lewis	Ongoing role.
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Church openers and closers. Wheely bin by vestry door.	Deiniol Hewwood	21.6.20
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Daily removal on opening of church.	Deiniol Heywood	21.6.20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Ensure church is closed. Notices amended to say closed. Identify who is going to carry out deep clean. And check PHE advice.	Dick Rivett & Doreen Clarke	
	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.	Dick Rivett & Doreen Clarke	
	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.		

Opening procedure:

1. Enter through vestry door.
2. Put on gloves (cleaning cupboard).
3. Unlock and fix open doors.
4. Use spray and blue paper towels to spray door furniture (vestry and inner and outer main doors), open benches, handwashing station, sanitising station (entrance), GoodBox.
5. Check levels of:
 - a) sanitiser
 - b) cleaning wipes
 - c) soap
 - d) paper towels
 - e) *cleaning spray, blue paper and gloves for staff*
6. Empty both bins and place bin bags in Wheelie Bin
7. Reline bins and dispose of gloves

Closing procedure:

1. Put on gloves (cleaning cupboard).
2. Close and lock doors.