

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings

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
7 th January 2021	4	St Mary Magdalene, Ashton on Mersey

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.

7th January 2021 – Changes to the opening of doors - 1 external door will be kept open to indicate the the church is open, the internal south porch doors will be closed due to keep the heat in, and wiped down after each touch. The church centre doors will be open to improve ventilation and reduce touch points.

Risk assessment template

Church: St Mary Magdalene, Ashton on Mersey	Assessor's name: Jane Mottram	Date completed: 29/06/2020 Updated 22/07/2020	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	Clergy, other staff or key holder to enter through the church centre doors. All others to enter through the church south porch doors. Signs on the centre doors and directing people to South Porch	No action needed	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	No lone working at present.	
	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	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
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.		
	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. Welcomers are in place to direct and manage the flow of people.	Helen Jarvis	26/06/2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	1 external door will be kept open to indicate the the church is open, the internal south porch doors will be closed to keep the heat in, and wiped down after each touch. The church centre doors will be open to improve ventilation and reduce touch points.	Helen Jarvis	26/06/2020 Updated 07/01/2021
	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	Jane Mottram	26/06/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		centre have been closed off and signed as ‘no access’		
	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 are widened during private prayer and volunteers are on hand to direct people to seating, keeping 2m distance from others at all times.	Helen Jarvis	26/06/2020 Updated 07/01/2021
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	As above Markings have been removed due to the small number of people coming in. Volunteers are able to indicate seating areas.	Helen Jarvis	26/06/2020 Updated 07/01/2021
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	As above	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.	Helen Jarvis / Jane Mottram	26/06/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		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.		
	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 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.	Jane Mottram	26/06/2020
	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.		

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		Hand gel is provided.		
	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. The disabled toilet is available for use. Supply of soap is checked on a weekly basis by JM	Jane Mottram	22/07/20
	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.			
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 on Sundays.	Helen Jarvis	26/06/2020

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	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
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.		

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	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