

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public – provision of refreshments

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.

This risk assessment has been produced locally based on the above to address the provision of refreshments. It should be used in conjunction with the Church of England Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public a template for which can be found under 'Documents' on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#)

Underlying Assumptions for this Risk Assessment

The transmission of COVID-19 is thought to occur mainly through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through contact with contaminated surfaces. The amount of time that the virus can survive on a surface is variable, but 72 hours is commonly considered to be a maximum.

The recommended mitigations for avoiding transmission are:

- Frequent use of hand sanitising
- Social distancing
- Removal/avoidance or cleaning of surfaces
- Possible continued wearing of face covering (to reduce the possibility of contaminating others)
- Good ventilation

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. The activities for which this risk assessment is conducted include:
 - Public worship with congregational singing
 - Funerals, weddings, baptisms, ordinations
 - Provision of refreshments
 - Opening for visitors/tourists
2. Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual

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 Barnabas Horton-cum-Studley	Date completed:	Date approved by PCC:
Event or service this assessment relates to:	Provision of refreshments	

What is the general risk?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What is the specific risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to ensure this action is carried out?	Done
Visitors are unclear on requirements for attending church or visiting the building for other purposes, or anxious about attending.	Provide welcoming notices that outline safety measures. Display an NHS Track and Trace QR code, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system. Encourage visitors to use one or other of these options. Consult advice on Track and Trace.	Changes in guidance not communicated leading to increased risk of infection.	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements or requests such as bringing a face covering and options for those who may be anxious.	PCC Secretary	
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services.	Unclear guidance for vulnerable visitors/members of congregation	Consider specific advice for those who may struggle with continuing restrictions, such as those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or visually impaired.		
Risk of virus transmission by breathing in infected airborne droplets	Good ventilation and availability of face masks for voluntary use.	Risk of virus circulating in the building.	During and after service keep open main door if weather conditions allow.	Churchwardens	

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Surface transmission of Covid-19	Provide hand sanitiser in the absence of hand washing facilities.	Risk of touching infected surface	Identify where it is possible to reduce people's contact with surfaces	PCC	
	Provide PPE for those preparing refreshments	Set up of refreshments results in surface spread	Ensure frequent use of hand sanitisers by those preparing or serving refreshments	PCC/refreshments rota group	
	Good hygiene and cleaning of the building.	Contaminated surfaces	See advice on cleaning church buildings .	PCC/cleaning rota group	
	Careful handling of drink and food provisions.	Risk of contamination through touching 'consumables' (e.g., sugar, biscuits)	Consider use of well-spaced refreshments, packages biscuits & additional hand sanitising.	PCC/refreshments rota group	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any refreshment items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on).	Increased, unnecessary exposure of refreshment materials to congregation.	Review guidance notices. Users to leave cups in dedicated container for washing after 72 hours.	PCC/refreshments rota group	
	Careful disposal of consumables once used.	Exposure to infection for those serving refreshments.	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g., polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	PCC/refreshments rota group	
Risk of virus transmission by touching an infected person	Hand sanitising, social distancing and provision of face masks.	Unknown vaccination or testing status amongst congregation.	At start of services, reminder of personal responsibility to use as appropriate social distance, hand sanitising and/or face masks	Minister	

What is the general risk?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What is the specific risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to ensure this action is carried out?	Done
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Wider spread of infection with subsequent use of church	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance available here.	Churchwardens/cleaning rota group	
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.		Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	Churchwardens/cleaning rota group	