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

**Version Control**

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| Issue Date | Version Number | Issued by |
| 22nd May 2020 | 1 | The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group |
| 8th June 2020 | 2 | The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group |
| 12th 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](about:blank) 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](about:blank).

**Risk assessment template**

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| **Church:**  **St George’s Church Swallowbeck, Lincoln** | **Assessor’s name:**  **Kath Pickering (Curate)** | **Date completed:**  **23.04.2021** | **Next Review date: 23.10.21** |

| **Area of Focus** | **Controls required** | **Additional information** | **Action by whom?** | **Completed – date and name** |
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| **Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming**  [General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.](about:blank) | One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible. | Access via office entrance and prayer room | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | St George’s Lone Working Policy dated 09.12.19 | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Buildings have been aired before use. |  | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Check for animal waste and general cleanliness. |  | Cleaners/KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Ensure water systems are flushed through before use. | See [Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies](about:blank) | Cleaners/KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. | Heating system currently not working. | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Holy water stoups and the font are empty. |  | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| **Preparation of the Church for individual prayer and services (including funerals, weddings, Christenings, etc)** | Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. |  | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Screen to be fitted at mixing desk to protect Tech Team members due to close proximity. | Purspex screen available when needed.  Tech team to wear face coverings. | KP | 20.04.21  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| 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. | Main door for entry and exit only is ok for numbers expected – use of ‘one-way’ system. | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. | Will be done prior to each service. | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user. | All items relocated in Vestry | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items | Areas cordoned off. Items removed to Vestry | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance | Cushions and kneelers removed from church. Individual seating now in place | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas | Children’s area and resources removed | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| 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. | Carried out prior to every service | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. | Most chairs removed, a few remain  suitably spaced minimum 2m distancing | KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | Yellow/black tape used to identify flow of movement of congregation/clergy, etc | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed. | Temporary cordon in place. Inner door to toilet/kitchen area should be locked if church open to public for private prayer. | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. | Hand cleaning stations in place at strategic locations | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult [advice on gaining temporary permissions](about:blank). | Not necessary  KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. | Notices in situ | KP | 22.04.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| If the church has been used in the last 48 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**](about:blank)**.** | Cleaners / KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | In place and checked regularly | Cleaners / KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available. | In place and checked regularly | Cleaners / KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. |  | Cleaners | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| **Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)**  Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](about:blank)**.** | If the church building has been closed for 48hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces. |  | Cleaner / KP | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| If 48hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. | None in a ‘vulnerable’ group. | KP | 24.06.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. | Cleaners aware and have organised appropriately. | KP | 24.06.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). | Gloves provided | KP | 24.06.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. | All cleaning products provided | N/A | 24.06.20  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | KP & Church Wardens will do so on closing church following all services/use. | KP / Church Wardens | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal | KP & Church Wardens will do so on closing church following all services/use. | KP / Church Wardens | Ongoing  Reviewed 23.04.21 KP |
| **Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms** | Close the church building for 48 hours or until cleaned/disinfected with no public access permitted. | Access to church must be with adequate PPE.  Cleaning to be arranged if/when informed that someone has been in church and reported as infectious with Covid-19. | KP / Church Wardens / Cleaners | Will be when necessary  Reviewed 23/04/21 KP |
| If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. | Access to church must be with adequate PPE.  Cleaning to be arranged if/when informed that someone has been in church and reported as infectious with Covid-19.  [**Public Health England guidance** available here.](about:blank) | KP / Church Wardens / Cleaners | Will be when necessary  Reviewed 23/04/21 KP |
| 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**](about:blank)**.** | Cleaners | Will be when necessary  Reviewed 23/04/21 KP |