

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

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2020	1	The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	2	The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group

***THIS IS A PLANNING DOCUMENT ONLY. IT WILL BE UPDATED AND CONTENT MAY CHANGE ONCE GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON REOPENING PLACES OF WORSHIP HAS BEEN PUBLISHED. We are awaiting clarification from government on the extent and nature of what 'supervised individual prayer' means and what exactly will be required. We will update this document as further information becomes available.***

On 7<sup>th</sup> June the government announced that places of worship may open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines from 15<sup>th</sup> June. The government 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 small services such as weddings and funerals with limited numbers are allowed and then for different forms of public worship.

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**

<b>Church:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>Review date:</b>
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<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Controls required</b>	<b>Additional information</b>	<b>Action by whom?</b>	<b>Completed – date and name</b>
<b>Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming</b>  <a href="#">General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.</a>	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified.			
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> .		
	Buildings have been aired before use.			
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.			
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a>		
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.			
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.			
<b>Preparation of the Church for individual prayer</b>	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 <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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.			
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation.			
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.			
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed.			
	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.			
	Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.		
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions (link to be added when guidance is live).		
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.			
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.			

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	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.			
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>		
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.		
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them.			
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for cleaning.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.			
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.			
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.		

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	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.			
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.			
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.			
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	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.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>		