

Church Re-opening Risk Assessment post-Coronavirus Lockdown

Introduction

When Government regulation permits your building to re-open, whether fully or for limited use (e.g. private prayer, funeral services, etc.) Elders' Meetings (or the equivalent council in LEPs) must undertake a Risk Assessment and wherever possible identify steps to reduce and mitigate risk.

Fuller guidance on risk assessment can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>, and advice obtained through your Synod office.

For each area of risk that you are able to identify, you must assess the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact it would have if it did occur. Score both items on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being highest) and multiply the two together to get a Risk Score. Then identify steps that can be taken to reduce or remove the risk. Does the mitigation give a significantly lower risk score? If not, what further mitigation must be put into place to bring the Risk Score to an acceptable level? If the risk remains "Catastrophic" or "unacceptable," what can you do to remove that activity or area of risk completely? For example, if the state of the church roof is such that it is likely to collapse on anyone inside the building, and the injuries caused would probably be major or severe (which includes fatal injury), the risk score would be at the catastrophic risk level (coloured red in this grid). Until repairs can be carried out to make the building safe, the mitigation is not to use that part of the building, keep it locked and post clear warning signs not to enter. **"Catastrophic" and "unacceptable" risk levels mean that the church must not proceed with that activity until the risks can be lowered to "Undesirable" or "Acceptable" levels.**

NOTE: The risks listed on the following pages are suggestions. Your local context will mean that some of the risks and the necessary mitigations will be different and so you must adapt this to suit your buildings and circumstances.

Impact	Severe	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Major	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Moderate	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Minor	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Insignificant	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5	
		Remote	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Highly Likely	
		Likelihood					

Key to Risk Level

Catastrophic	
Unacceptable	
Undesirable	
Acceptable	

Church: St. Andrew's URC Ealing

Risks assessed by: Peter Knowles, Elder

Date: 06-Oct-20

Assessment accepted by Elders' Meeting: Barbara Henderson, Secretary (Signature of meeting chair or secretary)

Date: 07-Oct-20

Risk No	Risk	Type*	Inherent risk			Mitigation	Residual risk			Notes
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score	
1	A Build-up of dust and possibly mould whilst building closed	Property	5	1	5	➢ Open doors and windows to allow airflow.	1	1	1	Weekly cleaning of sanctuary inc link corridor and St. Aidan's Hall. Open internal doors to full width when in occupation. Close afterwards for fire safety.
2	A General cleanliness of building	Property	2	1	2	➢ Cleaning of inside of building and review if additional action such as a deep clean required ➢ All fitting and fixtures (including door handles, hand rails and light switches) MUST be wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes and sanitisers	1	1	1	Regular cleaning of reception and toilets.
3	A Potential contamination of water system (legionella)	Property	3	5	15	➢ Water system flushed through: all taps to be run for at least 20 mins after lockdown then at least 5 mins weekly thereafter; all toilets to be flushed at least twice weekly	2	2	4	Weekly, including vestry toilet.
4	A Safety measures against fire are not securely in place	Property	2	5	10	➢ Fire Risk Assessment must be in place and up to date ➢ All fire extinguishers to be checked and ensure functioning and in date All fire signage and exit are clear	1	1	1	Fire Risk Assessment up to date. Fire extinguishers checked April 2020. Signage correct and visible
5	A Alterations to layout in order to maintain current Government social distancing measures mean a clear evacuation route is not obvious or needs to be changed	People	2	3	6	➢ Review evacuation and emergency response procedures to ensure they remain suitable with the altered layout and social distancing in place ➢ Display clear signage and ensure the identified route is free of obstruction and accessible to all	1	1	1	Current emergency routes are clear, adequately signed and remain suitable.
6	A Seating in areas to be used for private prayer, and public worship once permitted, is too close together.	Property	5	3	15	➢ Remove excess chairs and stack safely	1	1	1	Seating removed and safely stacked to ensure 2m distanced seating.
7	A Electrical and heating systems (including emergency lighting) fully functional	Property	1	5	5	➢ Ensure all statutory compliance checks are up to date (gas and electrical safety) ➢ All systems to be checked and signed off	1	1	1	Emergency lighting in good order. PAT testing 20.6.20
8	A Items stored and displayed on surfaces makes cleaning regime difficult	Property	3	1	3	➢ Clear surfaces as much as possible and move items to safe storage	2	2	4	Church is clear but vestry is cluttered and hard to clean
9	A High value items at risk of theft	Property	2	2	4	➢ Secure items that are not needed (such as audio-visual equipment). ➢ Ensure the premises are staffed and supervised whilst open to the public.	2	2	4	Valuables stored in safe. AV equipment not stored separately.
10	B Insufficient staff/volunteers available to supervise the premises for Covid-Secure compliance whilst open	Service delivery	2	2	4	➢ Rotas of volunteers in place ➢ Building only opens if minimum of 2 people in place with NO LONE WORKING	1	1	1	Designated Welcome/ Duty Elder

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11	A Items may be handled by more than one person, increasing the risk of cross contamination	People	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Remove/secure hymnbooks, Bibles, pens, prayer request books, etc. Produce single-use/disposable printed resources ➢ Hand sanitisers in place at entrance for use when entering and leaving the building 	2	2	4	Hymnbooks and Bibles removed. On-screen projection instead. Offertory plate not passed around. Precautions taken over Communion include not speaking over the open elements and gloved contact with bread. Hand sanitiser at entrance.
12	A Issues with outside of building	Property	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Check guttering/ downpipes/gullies ➢ Check overgrown shrubs or trees across walkways ➢ Check for any loose fence panels as appropriate 	1	1	1	No visible problems. The building is well maintained and quinquennial survey will promote good long term maintenance.
13	A Flow of people within the church causes congestion or makes social distancing impossible	People	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Investigate and implement processes to ensure flow of people in church adheres to government guidelines currently applicable (e.g. one way system signage) 	2	2	4	Link corridor IN St. Aidan's Hall OUT. Signage and signage also at gents' urinals for single occupancy
14	A Excess rubbish builds up at the premises	People	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ All rubbish to be taken away by church attendees where appropriate ➢ Bins regularly emptied by nominated person 	1	1	1	No build-up of refuse. Cleaning contractor removes full bins.
15	A Safeguarding information missing or out of date	Legal	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ensure safeguarding poster and statement of policy, including contact details for local safeguarding co-ordinator are displayed prominently 	1	1	1	Up-to-date signage in link corridor

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Social Distancing										
16	A Too many people gather in the building.	People	1	3	3	➤ Control numbers entering the church which will be agreed by the Elders prior to church opening	1	1	1	Congregation can be accurately estimated and will be seated 2m apart. Additional safe seating can be provided in St. Aidain's Hall.
17	A Those using the building don't respect distancing guidance.	People	3	3	9	➤ Display clear signage at the entrance and throughout the space about maintaining distancing during their visit	2	2	4	Advisory signboards for reception and link corridor. Floor tape in sanctuary as reminder of 2m distancing
18	A People attend who have symptoms of coronavirus	Legal	2	4	8	➤ Clear signage reminding people of the symptoms of Covid-19 and of the importance of self-isolation. Require face coverings to be worn.	1	4	4	Remind people of this by way of letter and Covid notice by way of reminder. Face coverings are worn except where individual is exempt.
19	A Congestion at choke points prevent distancing being respected	People	4	3	12	➤ Re-laying out of church to reduce pinch points ➤ Ensure all relevant signage and floor marking in place	2	3	6	Worship leader to remind congregation at end of service of one way flow. Pinchpoint in corridor to toilets where people will need to give way indicated with floor signage.
20	A A person known to be on the sex offenders' register attends	People	1	4	4	➤ Brief stewards that known offenders are not to be admitted as they cannot be supervised during private prayer	1	1	1	Not currently applicable. Elders to discuss if this situation changes.

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Cleaning										
21	A Nominated company or rota of volunteers not in place to ensure regular cleaning	Service delivery	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delay opening until employed cleaners or volunteers are in place. Follow current Government guidance on cleaning in a non-healthcare setting ➤ Confirm responsibilities for cleaning, ordering supplies, etc. 	1	1	1	Cleaning regime must be in place prior to and maintained throughout opening
22	B Cleaning staff/volunteers unable to comply with safe working practice for cleaning	People	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Update method statements, including COSHH assessments to reflect change in practices 	1	1	1	Method statement received from cleaning contractor.
23	A Materials not available to properly clean surfaces	Service delivery	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delay opening until materials are available. 	1	1	1	Cleaning regime in place.
24	A Contamination from high-touch areas such as door handles and switches	Property	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement a practice of cleaning high-touch areas before the building is opened ➤ Clean at regular intervals during the period of opening and when the building is closed for the day. ➤ Where consistent with fire safety and security, use wedges/hooks to hold doors open and ensure doors are closed when the building closes to maintain fire safety. 	1	3	3	Cleaning regime in place.
25	A Contamination from surfaces in toilets	Property	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clean at regular intervals during the period of opening and when the building is closed for the day. 	1	3	3	Cleaning regime in place.

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26	A Someone with Coronavirus is found to have visited the building	People	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Display signage asking those with the known symptoms to return home immediately ➢ Ask those coming into the building for any purpose to leave name and contact details in order to comply with NHS Test and Trace procedures ➢ Ensure as a minimum that all surfaces are washed with warm soapy water or household disinfectant ➢ Double bag waste and store it securely for 72 hours before placing it in bins. 	2	3	6	Reminder to congregation in welcome back letter not to attend if suffering symptoms. Welcomer to ask visitors to sign in and provide their addresses. QR code reader available. If incident reported: advise Centre Management and cleaning contractor.
27	A People may carry Coronavirus into the building on their hands	People	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ provide hand sanitiser. 	2	1	2	Provided at entrance. Welcomer to remind everyone to use this (or wash hands in toilets).
28	A Toilet facilities cannot be cleaned adequately between users	Property	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Cleaning regime to be in place to ensure toilet facilities safe to use. 	1	1	1	single group occupancy on Sundays.
29	A Increased risk of airborne transmission of disease	People	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Limit the duration of opening times and ventilate the building during and between opening times where possible 	1	3	3	Open windows on Mount Park Road side

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30	A Someone starts to feel unwell/develops coronavirus symptoms whilst on the premises	People	1	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Isolate the person in a separate room whilst arrangements are made for them to be taken home or into medical care. ➤ Church and isolation room require deep cleaning with soapy water and/or household disinfectant ➤ Cleaning cloths and PPE to be double-bagged and stored securely for 72 hours before placing in outside bins. ➤ Anyone supervising/caring for the person who is unwell should return home, shower and change clothes ASAP. 	1	2	2	Send person with symptoms to counselling room. Do not sit with them. Follow other steps in mitigation column (and advise cleaning contractor and Centre Management of incident). Advice note on what to do for Welcomer/Duty Elder based on these notes.

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Additional risks associated with opening for public worship											
31	A	Premises are not Covid-Secure prior to opening	Property	2	4	8	➤ Ensure the space is properly prepared for re-opening, the cleaning regime is in place and preparations for hand-washing, hygiene, distancing and signage are all in place	1	1	1	Re-opening took place after Covid-Secure measures put in place (see the risks for building preparation, cleaning and social distancing above for greater detail)
32	A	Increased risk of coronavirus spread through communal singing (once this is permitted by local legislation: <u>whilst prohibited in law, churches must NOT include singing in worship</u>)	People	3	3	9	➤ Consider worship without communal singing ➤ Issue instructions on singing quietly in worship ➤ Require facemasks to be worn during worship to reduce risk of transmission	1	1	1	No communal singing. Singing by small choir (1 or 2 people) would be from organ or pulpit area.
33	A	Risk of virus transmission from shared resources (Bibles & other books, offertory plate, etc.)	People	2	4	8	➤ Remove all items that may be handled by more than one person ➤ Place offertory baskets/plates at the back of church, being mindful of security, or move to contactless or online giving ➤ Where cash handling cannot be avoided, wear gloves when handling it and wash hands thoroughly afterwards	1	1	1	No shared resources. Hymn books and Bibles removed. Offertory plate not passed around.
36	A	Risk of virus transmission through serving/receiving Holy Communion	People	3	2	6	Ø If Communion is offered, it must be done without physical contact with the elements placed into the communicant's hand only, the President must not speak or sing over uncovered elements, hands must be washed/sanitised before serving, and appropriate care taken by those cleaning the Communion vessels and cloths after use.	1	1	1	Communion conducted according to the notes under Mitigation.

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37	A Risk of transmission through administering Baptism	People	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that relevant Government guidance is followed ➤ For infant baptism use the minimum amount of water possible and ensure that the parent/carer holds the infant ➤ If there are baptismal candidates from more than one household, change the water between candidates and ensure appropriate distancing is maintained between the households and others involved in the baptism ➤ Consider offering an alternative rite (e.g. dedication or thanksgiving) until the pandemic has passed. 	1	1	1	Mitigations to be noted for use if a Baptism is arranged.
36	A Visiting worship leaders are not aware of COVID-19 secure arrangements	People	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Send out information about precautions with the usual information about leading worship for your church ➤ Ensure details on the order of service/format for worship is updated 	1	1	1	Worship leaders to be informed in advance.
37	A Equipment may be touched by more than one person before and during worship (e.g. photocopier, computer, audio-visual equipment, etc.)	Property	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emphasise the importance of good hand hygiene for everyone throughout their time in the building. ➤ Provide cleaning materials to wipe down equipment surfaces between use 	2	3	6	Wiper supplies in church office.