Worship including Communion

COVID-19 Risk Assessment and Safe Method of Work

Version 4

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# Approval/authorisation

* 1. This Risk Assessment and Safe Method of Work is approved and authorised for use by the Church Council on 25th March 2021.

# Introduction

* 1. This risk assessment addresses the scope detailed in with respect to the additional or increased risks due to COVID-19. It is based on the template produced by the Methodist Church, the Government Guidance and Issue 3 of this risk assessment and has some modifications and additions. Notably:
     + - The document leads with the safe method of work summaries that detail the information required for each role; and
       - Learning from the experience of the services conducted since the 16th August 2020.
  2. The first issue addressed a limited range of service and the needs to prepare the building for return to use.
  3. The second issue of this risk assessment built on issue 1 with the experience of the first service under this safe method of operation.
  4. The third issue added:
     + - The risk identification for Holy Communion and the safe method of work. This follows the Government guidance on food and drink (“consumables”) is part of an act of worship (these are attached at ). Note has also been taken of the Winchester and Eastleigh Circuit paper on celebrating Holy Communion safely (), however an alternative approach has been taken including both bread and wine, based on members of the church’s experience in providing food and drink at events post COVID-19 and the willingness of the stewards to address the issues associated with handling and cleaning individual cups. Some elements of the Circuit guide are very helpful and have been incorporated.
       - Temporary modifications to routing for events such as water ingress making a route unsafe (the roof leaks from time to time notwithstanding efforts to repair it)
       - The emergence of QR codes to support NHS Test and Trace.
  5. This fourth issue adds:
     + - Updates following the 2021 winter lockdown and updated information on ventilation;
       - Simplification of the process of reducing the distance required for social distancing;
       - The use of the hall as an overflow to the sanctuary.
  6. This document, termed a “risk assessment” as a whole, contains 3 main sections:
     + - Introduction and Scope – explaining in general terms the activities that are to be enabled through approval of this assessment (this is in );
       - Risk and control measure identification – a systematic search for the necessary control measures (this is in );
       - Safe Method of Work – now using the standard HSE term, summarising the control measures applied in a bullet form style for ready reference by the reader (follows this introduction).
  7. The reader who wants to know what they have to do to comply with this risk assessment should identify the parts of the Safe Method of Work that relate to their operations and concentrate on those.

Table 1: Scope

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name & Address of Church  United Church Winchester  Jewry Street,  Winchester | Assessment undertaken by  Robin Cook on behalf of and in consultation with the Church Council (the trustees) |
| Area of Building Assessed:  sanctuary, hall, entrances (front and rear), front foyer, corridors, ramps, stairs, toilets, coffee bar, coffee bar lounge.  Including solo singing and the lighting of candles.  Not including communal singing or refreshments before or after worship. | Maximum number of people attending:  as feasible while maintaining social distancing of 2m between households (subject to modification by minute of the Church Council.) |
| For the activities of:  Communal worship, including prayers, devotions, meditations and Holy Communion led by a Minister of Religion or a lay person. | Date of Initial COVID-19Assessment  15th July 2020  Date of this issue  15th March 2021  Date to be Reviewed:  30th June 2021 |

* 1. Where reference is made to both entrances then this shall apply to the front entrance only when the rear entrance is only available as an emergency exit.
  2. This assessment has been produced to dovetail with the other activities in the building, all of which operate under the Government’s rules for attending a place of work. These activities are each allocated a space in the building, see , and services of worship have limited access as detailed in the table above. All parties necessarily use the entrances, foyers, toilets etc. Disinfecting agreements are in place.

# General rules for worship gatherings

* 1. The following requirements[[1]](#footnote-1) shall apply to communal worship, including prayers, devotions or meditations led by a Minister of Religion or lay person during the period of risk from COVID-19 in addition to the normal requirements.
     1. Congregational services in the building are limited to one in any one calendar day and should be kept short in duration (i.e., they should be45 minutes or less rather than the traditional hour).
     2. Access shall be limited to the spaces and times arranged with the church office (normally to the Sanctuary, Minister’s and Steward’s Vestries, Gents, Ladies and Accessible Toilets plus access and emergency egress routes between 08:00 and 14:00). All other areas are out of bounds. This includes the kitchens and hence drinks, including water, are not available. All those who may require liquid refreshment during the service, including preachers, are requested to bring their own. The church office shall ensure that the necessary space in time is provided between different user groups.
     3. The ventilation fans for the Sanctuary and for the hall if in use shall be switched on for the period of the service with a period of operation ahead and after the service if convenient.
     4. There shall be no more people in any part of the building at any one time than can be accommodated while maintaining a 2m distance between households.
     5. On arrival, all persons are requested to give their name and contact details to the steward collecting such details and to scan the QR code with the NHS COVID-19 app. Only one name per household is required and a telephone number is sufficient contact detail. This cannot be enforced. Completed sheets will be stored securely, for NHS Test & Trace purposes, for between 21 and 28 days and then destroyed. Attendees should use their own pen if possible; if one of the provided pens is used then it should be wiped before and after use.
     6. All persons shall sanitise their hands on arrival and again during their attendance if they use the toilet areas or touch an un-sanitised surface.
     7. All persons in the church building (including preachers, readers, etc. when not on the dais and at the same time more than 2m from any other person) shall wear face coverings unless they are in an exempt category.[[2]](#footnote-2)
     8. The following are prohibited:
        + Singing, except soloists separated from all other people present by a Perspex screen (Preachers, etc. should move to a congregational seat for the period of singing) – Preachers shall remind the congregation not to sing when hymns are played over the sound system;
        + The playing of wind instruments that involve the player blowing into the instrument;
        + Refreshments before or after the service.
     9. When candles are to be used in a service, consideration should first be given to not using candles (remove the risk) and secondly, if proceeding, all hand sanitiser gel shall be thoroughly wiped off the hands before lighting or holding the hands near to a lit candle at any point before, during or after the service (it is flammable).
     10. Hymn books and bibles should be available but shall be returned to a table or large box by an exit for quarantining after the service. Toys shall be similarly quarantined.
     11. Cash and envelope offerings will be collected on a plate at the rear of the sanctuary. Bags and plates shall not be passed round. Cash and envelopes shall be quarantined for 72 hours.
     12. The toilet facilities shall be available but shall operate on the basis of one person in each toilet area at once (carers excepted). Sanitary wipes, for wiping the seat before use, and a designated bin shall be provided. Queuing for the accessible toilet shall be in the Coffee Bar area.
     13. If a passageway, stairs or ramp is being used in both direction then the more able user shall move out of the way of the less able even if this means reversing course to the start of the passageway, stairs or ramp (note that the rear door foyer is available to users of the ramp for this purpose).
     14. If someone is taken ill during the service, they shall be taken to the Coffee Bar area while a drink of water, transport to home or to hospital is organised.
     15. The normal requirement for fire aisles is removed as the seating is no longer in effective rows and replaced by a requirement that there shall be clear access to the fire exits and that these shall be kept clear of obstructions.
     16. The distance for social distancing and other safety provisions may be altered by the Church Council and formally recorded as errata. The Church Council shall then be responsible for deciding when errata are to be incorporated in a new issue.
     17. Special one-off services, e.g. a wedding, may also be addressed by an addendum.

# Additional notes for Holy Communion

* 1. General:
     + - It is preferred, if the number of recipients is small, that the minister prepares and distributes the elements without assistance. However, stewards may assist; preferably keeping the number as low as sensible given the time taken to distribute the elements.
       - The selection of minister and communion stewards shall be such that people who are exempt from wearing a face covering shall not undertake these roles.
       - Communion shall be distributed to the congregation in their seats.
       - Both the bread and the wine shall be distributed in individual glasses. Glasses will be used for the bread as well as the wine. The minister may use a chalice for their own wine.
       - The minister may choose:
         * Whether bread and wine are distributed separately or at the same time;
         * Whether to eat and drink on receipt of the bread and/or the wine or together as a congregation.
       - If insufficient time has been allowed to prepare the elements in a hygienic fashion then communion shall be delayed or cancelled; hygiene shall not be compromised.
  2. The Peace:
     + - People shall be encouraged to nod to each other.
       - People may stand but not move away from their chair.
       - The shaking of hands shall not take place.
       - Elbow bumps are strongly discouraged due to the movement required.
  3. Preparation:
     + - The minister, communion stewards and any others assisting with the elements shall sanitised their hands thoroughly (using sanitiser or hot soapy water) before their activity with the elements.
       - Hand sanitiser shall be available in area where the elements are prepared during preparation and on or near to the communion table during the service.
       - If there is any doubt about the cleanliness of any glasses, plates, knives, chopping boards etc. in use then they shall be washed in hot soapy water before use and dried, if there is no time to drain/air dry, with a freshly laundered tea towel.
       - Those preparing the elements shall:
         * Avoid touching the elements but use tongs, knives, forks, spoons etc.
         * Cut the bread so that it will drop out of the glass easily.
         * Use tongs etc. (preferred) or wear gloves to load the bread into glasses and glasses into trays.
         * Wear a face covering during the preparation.
         * Place the trays on the communion table prior to the start of the service and cover with a solid cover.
  4. On the dais:
     + - If there are stewards on the dais then they should be at least 2m away from the minister and each other while the minister is not wearing a face covering. They may approach to a distance that enables a communion tray to be passed from one to another provided both parties are wearing face coverings.
       - While preparing the elements, the minister shall also take care not to speak, sing or chant across uncovered consumables other than those which they will consume themselves.
       - When minister or a steward takes a tray for distribution, they shall be wearing new disposable nitrile gloves, as provided for first aid, in preparation for the distribution.
  5. Distribution of the elements
     + - If the recipient has a problem removing and re-fixing their face covering then they can remove their face covering before taking the glass. However, this should be by exception and not the norm.
       - The ministers and stewards distributing bread and wine shall remain at least 2m from each other.
       - Where a recipient has difficulty in taking a glass from the tray, the minister or steward may assist and shall be wearing gloves in order to prevent skin to skin contact in so doing.
       - The gloves to be worn are new disposable nitrile.
  6. Collection of glasses and cleaning
     + - Glasses shall be collected immediately after use by stewards using baskets, bowls or similar receptacles; drop glass in without touching others.
       - The remaining elements shall be gathered and binned, following the building’s COVID-19 waste requirements.
       - Those clearing away shall avoid touching the glasses directly.
       - Stewards and any persons assisting in clearing and washing up glasses shall maintain social distancing during the process.
       - The glasses and other utensils shall be washed in hot soapy water.
       - All those clearing up are encouraged to wash their hands with clean hot water and soap and sanitise immediately afterwards.

# Additional notes for leaders of Sunday Worship at the United Church Winchester, during Covid-19.

* 1. Thank you for coming to lead our Sunday Worship this week. We are delighted to be able to begin to return to worship in the Church building although many of the Church family are still joining the service by the Church website and Youtube.
  2. The following should be read in conjunction with the United Church’s ‘General rules for worship gatherings’ and, if appropriate, the ‘Additional notes for Holy Communion’ that are also part of the Safe Method of Work in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment:
     1. Please bring your own water: the kitchens are closed. (Water can be provided if necessary.)
     2. The two church parking bays at the back of the Church are, unfortunately, out of action. However, a steward will meet you at the back door with a parking permit for Bay 20 (see next item). Please note that Winchester car parks are no longer free on Sundays.
     3. Entering at the rear of the church: A Steward will be at the back door to welcome you. NB If they are delayed, please ring the door-bell to be let in.
     4. Please use the hand sanitiser provided as you enter the building and again, or preferably wash your hands in hot soapy water, regularly while in the building. You’ll find:
        + automatic hand sanitiser dispensers and hand sanitiser gel (in the front and rear foyers, in the Sanctuary, and outside the toilets)
        + anti-bacterial liquid hand soap in the toilets.
     5. Please complete the sign-in sheet, available in the front foyer, with your name and contact details and scan the QR code.
     6. The wearing of a face covering is mandatory in places of worship unless the individual falls within one of the legally exempt categories. Please bring your own. Guidance and spare coverings are provided in the front and rear foyers. Preachers, Ministers and assistants leading the service are allowed to remove their masks while taking/contributing to the service from the dais. Please store your face covering on your person (e.g. in a pocket) so that multiple face coverings are not placed on the lectern one after another.
     7. If there are multiple users of lecterns in the service then multiple lecterns will be provided. Please arrange to use only one lectern. Only one person in the team may touch each lectern, please arrange who. By default, the one person is the preacher.
     8. If asking members of the congregation (particularly children) to assist with the service then they shall be enabled to maintain social distancing unless you are sure that they are part of the same household – i.e., you either know them or they are sitting in a close group or they are asked.
     9. Using the toilets: The toilet facilities (ladies, gents and accessible) are available but are operating on the basis of one person in each toilet area at a time (carers excepted).
        + Please comply with 2metres social distancing if queueing to enter the toilet and use the hand sanitiser provided outside the toilet.
        + Sanitary anti-bacterial wipes, for wiping the seat before use, and a designated pedal-bin are provided.
     10. Pedal-bins are available throughout the building for the disposal of used anti-bacterial wipes/paper towels/facial tissues. The bin liners will be sealed and disposed of in the refuse bins after the service. *(NB in event of report of Covid-19 in UCW, bin liners will be stored for 72 hours before disposing of in the refuse bins).*
     11. The number of individuals attending Sunday Worship is limited to meet social distancing guidance and chairs in the Sanctuary are spaced (2 metres apart). Please let the steward know if you are intending to bring another, or more, people with you.
     12. A one-way priority system is in operation in the building, please see the attached diagram.
     13. Before and after the service: Stewards will wipe the door handles, hand-rails, and lecterns and other church furniture which may be touched during the service, and when leaving the building with sanitiser.
     14. Ventilation: Stewards shall turn the ventilation on before the service.
     15. Internal doors will be fixed open before the service using automatic closures to improve ventilation and reduce the number of people touching the door handles.
     16. Social Distancing signage is in place.
     17. When you leave the building please sign out and use the hand sanitiser.

# Additional notes for stewards

* + 1. All stewards shall:
       - Wash their hands with soap and warm water and/or apply hand sanitiser before welcoming people and thereafter if they touch any item that has not been sanitised with their hands – elbow bumps should be avoided in general but may be undertaken where physically welcoming someone is of significant benefit.
       - Wear a face covering (those who are exempt from face coverings should not be acting as stewards);
       - Be familiar with the General rules for conducting and attending worship, above.
    2. The lead steward shall:
       - Ensure that at least 1 litre of bottled water (potable) and a clean disposable cup is available for use should the need arise.
       - Check that the church is ready for the congregation to enter:
         * The chairs in the sanctuary are sensibly spaced and grouped for the forthcoming service, see for guidance;
         * Ensure that the collection plates are in place by the entrances the at the rear of the sanctuary;
         * If the back door is not to be used, then it shall be locked and the electronic lock switched off (switch on skirting board inside the inner door). It can still be used for emergency egress by using the turnbuckle on the door or re-energising the lock. Alternatively, a door steward shall be at the door and the door ready for use as an entrance, see below;
         * Ensure that the doors in the corridor and into the sanctuary are latched open;
         * Ensure that the ventilation fans are switched on.
       - Ensure that the stewards are in place and then declare the building ready for the congregation to enter;
       - Assist the other stewards as appropriate.
    3. Entrance door stewards shall:
       - Keep the entry door closed until the building is declared ready by the lead steward – admit attendees once the lead steward declares the building ready;
       - Welcome those attending;
       - If attendees are not wearing a face covering, ask them if they can wear one – if they don’t have their own, offer them one (provided) – if they refuse, do not ask why but let them carry on without – reasons for exemption are sensitive personal information;
       - Inquire politely and pastorally as to the attendee’s health. If the attendee exhibits or describes symptoms[[3]](#footnote-3) of COVID-19 in themselves in the last 10 days or in any of their household in the last 14 days then it should be suggested that they should be self-isolating and not attending the service;
       - Note the attendees name and phone number. Only one name and phone number per group is needed. Explain that this is only for contact tracing should there be a case of COVID-19 identified subsequently and this information will be held for 21 days and will be destroyed within the 5 days after that.
       - Ask if they have read and understood the letter on COVID-19 pre-cautions and give a quick resumé if not - this should concentrate on social distancing, the one at once rule for the lavatories and the one way system;
       - Ask them to use the hand sanitiser provided;
       - Encourage them to scan the church’s QR code with the NHS track and trace app. Note that no-one should be made to feel inferior for not having an appropriate smartphone or for not being happy to download and use the app.
       - Ask them to go to the sanctuary following the marked one-way route, keeping their distance from other people.
       - Monitor the use of the ramp past the church office and assist anyone coming down the ramp (the priority direction) by asking people at the lower end to wait;
       - Ensure that the numbers admitted are less than the number of chairs provided in the Sanctuary and Hall, if it is in use (the lead steward shall arrange for the available space to be monitored);
       - Once everyone has arrived, close and lock the door and join the congregation in the sanctuary (If there are spare chairs in the Sanctuary) then use the doorbell as normal.
    4. Sanctuary stewards shall:
       - Allow people to choose their seat, but only those in the same household may sit on adjacent seats. Seats may be moved to form larger groups provided the distance to the next social bubble is not compromised;
       - Help people to observe the rules – face coverings (preacher/readers may uncover their face whilst speaking), one-way priorities, maintaining social distance, etc.;
       - At the end of the service, guide people towards the appropriate exit;
       - If someone is taken ill during the service, take them to the Coffee Bar area. If just generally unwell offer water and monitor them; arrange transport home or to hospital if necessary. If Covid-19 symptoms are displayed, contact the NHS by dialling 111.
  1. After a service:
     1. The Sanctuary (including lecterns), Entrances, Foyers, Corridors, Ramps and Stairs (particular handrails and surfaces that may be leaned on) shall be disinfected – this may be the same day or on the morning after each service but shall be before other users of the building arrive.
     2. All waste materials shall be bagged and removed to the refuse bins. In case of a suspected COVID-19 infection, these bags should not be added into the general waste bins until after a period of 72 hours.
     3. If it is reported to the church that an attendee has become suspected of being unwell with COVID-19 after attending, all the spaces they have used shall be quarantined for 72 hours or until a negative test is obtained. This may be the whole building. In addition, the Administration Coordinator shall cooperate with NHS Track and Trace and arrange for relevant people to be informed by email or letter as requested by NHS Track and Trace.
     4. Any hymn books, service booklets, bibles or similar or toys in the toy corner, used during the service shall be quarantined for at least 72 hours.
     5. Any microphones and other elements of the sound system used during the service shall be sanitised after use (preferably by 72 hours quarantine). This will be addressed by the sound system operators.
     6. The list of attendees shall be retained by the Church Office for a minimum of 21 days and delete all copies no more than 5 days after that (GDPR requirement). During the period of its existence, the list shall be supplied to any agency authorised by the Government to assist in its track and trace system.

# Long term actions required that should be checked before each service and repeated if appropriate

* + 1. The sanctuary, vestry, entrances and foyers shall be thoroughly cleaned before the first service after an interval of more than four weeks.
    2. The building shall be thoroughly aired before the first service and all areas regularly ventilated thereafter.
    3. Signs shall be provided at all entrances:
       - Requesting that all those who are not exempt wear face coverings. Such signs should include a blue circle with a white pictogram of a face covering and the list of exemptions, black on white is acceptable for the list.
       - Requesting all persons to maintain a minimum distance of 2m from anyone not within their household or extended household while in the building.
       - Requesting all persons to use the hand sanitiser provided, their own hand sanitiser or to wash their hands thoroughly in hot soapy water.
       - Requesting all visitors to sign in for track and trace purposes.
       - Both entrances shall be marked with tape on the floor to illustrate how far 2m actually is.
    4. A table shall be set up at front entrance (placed so as not to impede fire exits) with:
       - Clipboard and attendance sheets;
       - Pens (although all are encouraged to use their own);
       - Hand sanitiser gel (minimum 400ml in total)
       - Tissues (minimum 45 in total);
       - Disposable face coverings (minimum 30 in total);
       - Pedal bins;
       - GDPR notices (21 + 5 days and use, as above).
    5. If the back entrance is in use then the same list of items shall be available on the ledge.
    6. Toilet seat wipes and bins shall be available in the toilets.
    7. One-way priority signs shall be in place for general movement around the building.
       - Priorities before a service:
         * The front entrance ramp and stairs – from the entrance to the sanctuary.
         * The rear ramp – up
         * The stairs down to the ladies’ toilets – down
       - Priorities after a service:
         * The front entrance ramp and stairs – from the sanctuary to the entrance.
         * The rear ramp – down
         * The stairs down to the ladies’ toilets – up
       - Policies for when the priorities cannot be observed (e.g.. by those who cannot manage stairs and hence need the ramp, those using wheelchairs or walking frames):
       - The stairs and ramps are generally too narrow to permit passing with any distance between the parties. However, the period of close approach is short.
       - The person who is more able to do so shall return to a point where the two parties can reasonably pass (taking into account the distance into the area of reduced width). This may mean returning the start of the stairs or ramp (or the rear door foyer for the rear ramp).
       - Where the extra effort is equivalent then the priority shall be to the up direction or towards the toilet to be visited if that is urgent.
    8. Relevant tests and actions have taken place to ensure that there is no Legionella in the water system (this was completed in July 2020).
    9. Following the Legionella test, all drinking water taps shall be flushed at least weekly (Regular flushing has taken place ever since July 2020).
    10. The spare chairs in the Sanctuary shall be stacked leaving an appropriate number of chairs for worshippers.
    11. Hymn books and bibles shall be removed from chairs.
    12. Perspex, or similar, screens shall be available if solo singing is scheduled.
    13. The Administration Coordinator shall write to all members who may attend an act of worship by email or letter, as appropriate to the recipient, to inform them of these arrangements for protecting against the spread of COVID-19.
    14. The church shall display an NHS track and trace QR code at each entrance.

## 

Figure 1: Plan of the church building showing one way priority system, areas that are out of use during services and an example chair layout that accommodates over 50 chairs in pairs

1. : Risk and control measure identification
   1. This Appendix provides the detail of the assessment that was conducted to define the Safety Method of Work that forms the main body of this document. It was based on the template and guidance provided by the Methodist Church in the summer of 2021 with:
      * + The three risk ranking columns removed as these do not add to the identification process (all risks are addressed in the risk reduction column);
        + Some format changes to ease readability (in particular, text is difficult to read in landscape unless the font size is significantly increased);
   2. This table has three columns (the Persons Affected column has been removed as the entry was universal – those present):
      * + Hazards/Risks: lists the areas and issues being considered on this line;
        + Additional COVID-19 Controls – Reducing Risk: listing the additional control measures required to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19;
        + Changes since the last assessment: This has been changed since the actions are in the previous column to address the changes.
   3. In all cases the key risk is that one or more person(s) contract COVID-19 as a result of receiving the virus within the premises. The hazards/risks listed below all relate to this key risk. The risk and risk control identification are added as a second table.
   4. Note has been taken of the *Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Methodist Circuit Advice on COVID-19 safety* written by John Evans and circulated to all churches in the WER circuit following the Circuit Meeting of March 4th. This specifically notes that:
      * + The circumstances have changed since the initial drafting of risk assessments for worship in two ways:
          - The prevalent strain is more transmissive than the one dominant up to the autumn.
          - We know more about the effectiveness of different measures
        + The measures to clean surfaces and avoid passing items from person to person have been effective.
        + To address the increased transmission rates of the new variants requires a further improvement in reducing the concentration of virus in indoor spaces in order to maintain the same level of infection.
   5. These are addressed in the assessment below.
   6. Note that in all cases it is assumed that there is a person present whose breathe contains the virus or can transmit the virus by touch.

| Hazards /Risks and where | COVID-19 Control Measures – Reducing Risk | Risk changes to be assessed |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces (general issues to all areas) | Social distancing between different households or acceptable social bubbles shall be maintained in the church. The distance is set at 2m. There are suggestions that this could be lowered but this option is not taken up by the church at present. The sanctuary appears large enough to be able to accommodate the number of members that particularly need to attend in person with this distance. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m |
| The numbers in the building shall be limited to conform with social distancing on the premises. Service attendees shall sit in socially distanced chairs. However, the maximum number has been removed to allow a more flexible approach as the system of putting chairs in pairs has been effective. This will enable a slightly larger number to be accommodated. Spare chairs shall continue to be stacked in order to discourage the addition of further chairs as people arrive. identifies a potential chair layout in the sanctuary.  This removes the requirements for the fire aisles as the seating is no longer in effective rows. The replacement requirement is that there shall be clear access to the fire exits and that these are kept clear. |
| The Administration Coordinator shall arrange for all members to be advised by email or letter of the arrangements for services and for the control of numbers including any booking system being employed. |
| All attendees will be asked to give the steward at the entrance their contact telephone number (one number per group). This list shall be retained for a minimum of 21 days (or revised period as defined by the government) and all copies deleted no more than 5 days after that. During the period of its existence, the list shall be supplied to any agency authorised by the Government to assist in its track and trace system.  NB. retaining this information could be a GDPR issue and hence there shall be an explanatory notice at the entrance.  A QR code for the premises shall be displayed at each entrance and people shall be encouraged to scan it with the NHS track and trace app. |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces (general issues to all areas)  (Cont. …) | Initially, the different organisations that use the building were allocated different parts of the building, see . Separating the organisations and sanitising for other users is the subject of a separate risk assessment. Areas in common use, entrances etc. are subject to frequent cleaning and ventilation at the end of each session. Hence, all those attending services are limited to the rooms and spaces specified in the scope of this assessment and the times agreed with the Church Office. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m  Increased sharing of spaces. |
| Airborne transmission (general issues to all areas) | Social distancing signage shall be provided in both entrances and tape shall be placed to mark 2 metre distances at front and rear entrances (when in use). Stewards shall remind those arriving keep to these distances. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m.  Usage of disposable face coverings has been found to be low.  Issues have been found with applying a one-way system. |
| All persons in the church building shall wear face coverings unless they are in an exempt category. |
| Disposable face coverings shall be provided. A table shall be provided at the front entrance, placed so as not to impede fire exits, from which the face coverings shall be available. The minimum number of disposable face coverings (total for the two entrances) shall be 30. |
| Attempts to provide a one-way flow of people have been found to present difficulties although the congregation has been good at following the defined directions. Many routes do not lend themselves to being one-way, especially the ramp from the front entrance to the coffee bar, the stairs from the coffee bar to the sanctuary and the ramp at the rear of the church (of these only the first provides sight of the other end of the route). Hence, a number of priorities are set together with policies for when people meet in opposite directions.  Priorities before a service:  The front entrance ramp and stairs – from the entrance to the sanctuary.  The rear ramp – up  The stairs down to the ladies’ toilets – down  Priorities after a service:  The front entrance ramp and stairs – from the sanctuary to the entrance.  The rear ramp – down  The stairs down to the ladies’ toilets – up  Policies for when the priorities cannot be observed (e.g.. by those who cannot manage stairs and hence need the ramp, those using wheelchairs or walking frames):   * The stairs and ramps are generally too narrow to permit passing with any distance between the parties. However, the period of close approach is short. * The person who is more able to do so shall return to a point where the two parties can reasonably pass (taking into account the distance into the area of reduced width). This may mean returning the start of the stairs or ramp (or the rear door foyer for the rear ramp). * Where the extra effort is equivalent then the priority shall be to the up direction or towards the toilet to be visited if that is urgent.   Signs shall be provided to this effect. |
|  | The building shall be thoroughly aired before the first service and all areas regularly ventilated thereafter. |  |
| Transmission via surfaces (general issues to all areas) | All attendees shall be asked to use hand sanitiser on arrival and at any other relevant times.  Hand sanitiser gel, tissues, and pedal bins shall be provided at each entrance. A table shall be provided at the front entrance, placed so as not to impede fire exits. The minimum quantity of hand sanitiser gel (total for the two entrances) shall be 400ml based on 45 people using it three times each with 3ml per use (that is the recommended amount).  Tissues shall be provided. The minimum number of tissues (total for the two entrances) shall be 30 each. | Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
| The sanctuary, vestry, entrances and foyers shall be thoroughly cleaned before the first service (July 2020). |
| Necessary tests and actions take place to ensure there is no Legionella in the water system (this was completed in July 2020)  Weekly flushing of all taps thereafter. |
| The sanctuary, entrances and foyers shall be disinfected after each service or other use. |
|  | All waste materials will be bagged and removed to the refuse bins. If the church is advised of suspected COVID-19 infection, these bags should not be added into the general waste bins until after a period of 72 hours. |  |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces in the Sanctuary, the Hall if in use and access routes | Social distancing shall be maintained by those conducting a service.  The touching of a lectern by more than one person shall be avoided.  Where other people are assisting with a service then they shall not touch or place material on the primary preacher’s lectern.  Extra lecterns or equivalent shall be brought into use as required. Three lecterns on the dais is possible but cramped (the dais is 6m wide). A reader’s lectern off the dais to the East side has been effective.  Preachers and others assisting in the delivery of the service may remove their face covering while on the dais provided they remain 2m from any other person. | Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required.  Arrangements on the dais other than that originally considered are required. |
| Airborne transmission in the Sanctuary, the Hall if in use and access routes | Stewards welcoming worshipers shall wear face coverings (anyone exempt from wearing a face covering should not be acting as a steward). | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m |
|  | Appropriate signs shall be displayed requesting that face coverings are worn by all those who are not exempt. |  |
|  | Government guidance requires that the time at risk be kept short by prohibiting refreshments before or after the service. |  |
|  | The length of the service should be less than 45 minutes. |  |
|  | Singing is prohibited apart from solo singing separated from all other people by a Perspex, or similar, screen.  Preachers should remind the congregation not to sing when hymns are played over the sound system  The playing of musical instruments that involve the player blowing is prohibited (this has been described as a “wind instrument” but some authorities regard an organ to be a “wind instrument” and there is no necessity to prohibit the playing of the organ, rather a strong wish not to prohibit it). |  |
|  | The current fans shall be used during services to provide forced air ventilation. Internal doors shall be latched open using the latches that automatically release when the fire alarm sounds.  It may be necessary to inform stewards of how to operate the fans. | Advice on the importance of ventilation |
|  | There shall be a maximum of one congregational service per day. | Advice that five hours should be provided between uses. |
| Transmission via surfaces in the Sanctuary, the Hall if in use and access routes | Offertory bags and plates will not be handed round the congregation. A plate will be left for cash and envelopes on a table at the back of the church.  Cash and envelopes will be quarantined for 72 hours. | Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
|  | Hymn books and bibles shall be removed from chairs. They will remain available but placed in a large box provided by the sanctuary exit and quarantined for 72 hours. |  |
|  | If musical instruments are used they will be disinfected since previous use (or brought from home). |  |
|  | Any toys touched shall be sanitised. |  |
|  | Any microphones and other elements of the sound system used during the service shall be sanitised after use |  |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces in the toilets | Toilets shall operate on a one person only basis in each set of toilets. Assisting Carers are permitted and are additional to this limit. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
| Queuing for the accessible toilet will take place in the coffee bar and not the narrow corridor. |
| Wipes shall be available to wipe toilet seats and there shall be a designated bin |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces in the kitchens | None of the kitchens shall be available.  All those who may require liquid refreshment during the service, including preachers, are requested to bring their own.  The stewards shall ensure that at least 1 litre of potable bottled water is available in case of emergencies. | Increased transmission rate of new variants |
| Visit by a person suspected of being affected is notified | If the church is notified that a visitor is suspected being infected with COVID-19, the space they have visited should be either quarantined for 72 hours or deep cleaned. This requirement is satisfied if it is found that the visitor did not have COVID-19 (a negative test has been obtained). | Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
| The Administration Coordinator shall cooperate with NHS Track and Trace and arrange for relevant people to be informed by email or letter as requested by NHS Track and Trace. |  |
| Illness arising during service | If someone is taken ill during the service, they will be taken to the Coffee Bar area by a steward. If just generally unwell offer water and monitor person; arrange transport home if necessary. If Covid-19 symptoms displayed, contact the NHS by dialling 111. |  |
| Hazards from safety measures | The hand sanitiser is over 60% alcohol and is inflammable. Hence any residual gel needs to be wiped off before naked flames (e.g. candles) are lit or approached | No change |
| Reduced number of access routes | While due endeavours are made to maintain the water tightness of the roof, it is proving difficult to achieve. Hence, the stairs from the sanctuary to the ladies’ toilets are not always available. In this case the ramp has to be used in both directions, see entry on social distancing and ramp | No change |

## Addition items for Holy Communion

| Hazards /Risks | Additional COVID-19 Controls – Reducing Risk | Risk changes to be assessed |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces | This is simple if only the minister is present on the dais or in the vicinity of the communion table. However, if one or more stewards are present then they shall be at least 2m away from the minister. This assumes that the minister will not be wearing a face covering during the process. When the minister passes bread and/or wine to a steward, they shall be two arm lengths apart which is less than 2m and hence face coverings shall be worn by both parties.  The minister shall also take care not to speak, sing or chant across uncovered consumables other than those which they will consume themselves. Government guidance also suggests that consumables should be securely covered. In order to minimise handling, the communion trays shall be placed on the communion table once prepared and covered with a solid cover that will not move in a draft. Transparent plastic cake covers are recommended. Theses covers shall be left on the table when the tray is taken for distribution. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m  Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
|  | The shaking of hands shall not take place.  People may stand but not move away from their chair.  People shall be encouraged to nod to each other.  Elbow bumps involve moving around and are likely to result in the compromising of social distancing. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces | Communion shall be distributed to the congregation in their seats.  Both the bread and the wine will be distributed in individual glasses.  The minister of steward will offer the tray at arm’s length (bearing in mind the weight and the ability of the receiver to reach out) to the person receiving who will take a glass Both parties shall wear a face covering (unless exempt from doing so – those who are exempt may not act as steward or minister).  The ministers and stewards distributing bread and wine shall remain at least 2m from each other.  Where a recipient has difficulty in taking a glass from the tray, the minister or steward may assist and shall be wearing gloves (new disposable nitrile gloves are required for each service) in order to prevent skin to skin contact in so doing. | Increased transmission rate of new variants  Advice on social distancing of less than 2m  Advice that no specific improvement in surface hygiene is required. |
| Airborne transmission and transmission via surfaces | Those clearing up shall maintain social distancing. This includes while washing up. |  |
| Transmission via surfaces | If there is any doubt about the cleanliness of any glasses, plates, knives etc. in use then they shall be washed in hot soapy water before use.:  Those preparing the elements shall: avoid touching the elements but use tongs, knives, forks, spoons etc.; use tongs etc. (preferred) or wear gloves to load the bread into glasses and glasses into trays; wear a face covering during the preparation.  Hand sanitiser shall be available.  Time pressure shall not be allowed to compromise hygiene. Cancellation of the service or late running is preferable to poor hygiene. |  |
| Transmission via surfaces | Those clearing away shall avoid touching the glasses directly.  In order to save people having to keep hold of glasses with the normal glass holder on the row in front missing, glasses shall be collected immediately after use by stewards using baskets; drop glass in without touching others.  The glasses and other utensils shall be washed in hot soapy water. |  |

1. As with all legal requirements, this is information is current at the time of writing. Any legal changes shall be adhered to, overriding this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The wearing of face coverings in places of worship is law from the 8th August 2020. The Government has produced a list of those who are not required to wear a face covering unless they wish to:

   young children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons);

   not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability;

   if putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress;

   if you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate;

   to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others;

   to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and you do not have a face covering with you;

   to eat or drink if reasonably necessary;

   in order to take medication;

   if a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. New dry cough, temperature, loss of taste and smell. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)