

The Representative Body of the Church in Wales

Coronavirus - Covid-19: Keeping People Safe

A Toolkit for conducting a Covid-19 Risk Assessment in Places of Worship

Edition 8: Alert Level Zero

9th August 2021

Introduction

This guidance has been produced to help those responsible for managing churches assess their buildings and activities and develop a risk assessment to manage the risks posed by Coronavirus Covid-19.

At Alert Level Zero, from August 7th 2021, there are no legal limits (for Covid reasons) on the number of people who can meet, including in private homes, public places or at events. In addition, all businesses and premises may be open and activities can fully resume.

However, the Welsh Government has kept a small but significant number of legal requirements to help reduce the spread of the virus and help protect the most vulnerable. Businesses, employers and other organisations have a duty to protect their employees and customers while on their premises. There are three legal requirements that remain at Alert Level Zero:

1. Businesses, employers and other organisations, including activity and event organisers, must undertake a coronavirus risk assessment of their premises and activities and take reasonable measures to minimise exposure to, and the spread of, coronavirus based on that risk assessment.
2. Everyone must still self-isolate for 10 days if they test positive for COVID-19. If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive and you are not fully vaccinated you must also self-isolate for 10 days as instructed by the Test Trace Protect system.
3. Adults and children over 12 must wear face-coverings in indoor public places including churches, church halls and community buildings.

It will be noted that social distancing is no longer a legal requirement. However, it is a very useful risk mitigation measure so it is generally recommended that social distancing measures be retained where practical. There are more details in Section 1 Part 2 Point 4 below.

It is a general legal duty to protect all people who come into your building/s, or who could be affected by your activities, from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect your clergy, volunteers, members of the congregation or visitors from coronavirus (as with other hazards). This is called a COVID-19 risk assessment and it will help you manage risk and protect people. Accordingly, you must:

- identify what activity or situation under your control might cause or support or enable transmission of the virus (the hazards)
- think about who could be at risk
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed (the risk)
- act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk by applying reasonable measures

When completing your assessment, make sure you talk to persons working on the premises, including staff or volunteers to explain the measures you are taking. These people can also provide valuable information on how you could control the risks.

This guidance has been adapted from previous versions in the light of a much simpler legal framework. The format of the guidance and the risk assessment proforma has been amended to follow Welsh Government guidance but also to focus much more clearly on the hazards of transmission and potential mitigation measures. Risk assessments you have previously prepared under previous guidance are still useful and relevant, but it is recommended you use this new guidance to review and amend your risk assessment to suit your situation and the new less regulated environment.

PART 1 of this guide is a checklist to help you to consider your situation, prepare for opening and develop your risk assessment (including recommendations on appropriate risk mitigation measures).

PART 2 is a risk assessment template to enable you to record your proposed actions. This should be approved by your Archdeacon (or other nominated person) and shared with your team so all are aware of the arrangements.

Please Note: This guidance is to assist local churches with re-opening their building and reflects but does not substitute Welsh Government legislation and guidance.

PART I: CHECKLIST

Opening at Alert Level Zero

Your church can be open for any activities including for worship, occasional offices, community activities and visitors. However, you must complete a Covid-19 Risk Assessment to decide the reasonable measures you will take to prevent transmission of Covid-19. This may result in you deciding to limit numbers within the building and retain arrangements for social distancing.

The following gives a list of key steps to consider in opening your building. The local trustee body (PCC, MAC, LMAC) responsible for each place of worship has a legal responsibility to do all that it reasonably practicable to prevent people from coming to harm from Covid-19 (or any other hazard).

Key Welsh Government guidance about this Alert Level can be found at:

[Alert level 0: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#)

[Alert level 0: guidance for employers, businesses and organisations \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

How is Coronavirus spread?

It is important to understand how Coronavirus Covid-19 is spread so that you can consider what reasonable measures to include in your risk assessment and implement accordingly.

The most common ways coronavirus is spread are:

- through the air as an aerosol
- through the air by droplets
- by direct contact with an infected person
- by direct contact with a contaminated surface

This helps us understand what kind of places are most risky. These are places where people come into close contact with others, and places where ventilation is poor meaning that stale air is not removed and fresh air is not introduced, giving coronavirus the opportunity to build up.

So, the following places are particularly risky:

- indoor places where ventilation is poor
- indoor places where people are together for a long time

- any place, particularly indoors, where people have close contact with others
- any place, particularly indoors, where people are breathing heavily close to others or over extended periods, such as through strenuous exercise, loud singing, chanting, or shouting, coughing or sneezing (this is because an infected person can spread droplets over a larger area).

Where a premises or activity has any of the above characteristics, particular attention should be paid to these risks when considering the reasonable measures that should be taken.

What is Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment is a process for discerning and managing hazardous issues in buildings and workplaces. It is a general requirement in law for all church activities and buildings under Health and Safety legislation. Covid-19 Coronavirus as a clear hazard that has the potential to cause harm should be managed through the same process.

The risk assessment process must

- identify what activity or situation under your control might cause or support or enable transmission of the virus
- think about who could be at risk
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- act to remove the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk by applying reasonable measures

Thus, the risk assessment process seeks to identify potential hazards and then considers the consequences and likelihood of them causing harm. In the case of coronavirus, the roll out of the vaccination programme does now mean that the consequences of contracting the disease are generally much lower than at the start of the pandemic. However, there remain vulnerable people in our society and caution is still advisable.

The likelihood of people picking up coronavirus is harder to assess. This will be influenced by national factors (e.g national restrictions and public behaviour) and local issues (e.g the arrangements in specific premises, vaccination rates in groups etc). In assessing, the likelihood of transmission in your local church, it is reasonable to consider the circumstances of your congregation including vaccination rates and the situation in your local community. Much will depend on local context, numbers of people attending, local population demographics etc.

The nature of your building and how it is used will be the most fundamental issues as set out in the section above on how Coronavirus is spread.

SECTION I: OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

This section seeks to pose some key overall questions for you to consider in opening your church as a starting point to your detailed risk assessment.

	Question	Notes
1.	Do you wish to open the church at the current time?	<p>You are encouraged to re-open your building fully but only after you have carefully prepared your risk assessment and had this approved by your Archdeacon or other nominated person.</p> <p>Covid-19 has not been eradicated and it is a disease that is likely to be with us for some time. Whilst over 80% of the adult Welsh population has been vaccinated, there remain people who cannot be vaccinated for health reasons and people who have chosen not to be vaccinated. Furthermore, even with vaccination some people can still become ill or even die from the virus. You should still take great care in how we open our churches and halls in the weeks ahead.</p> <p>Take your time to think carefully about this and do not be pressured to open until you and your church Council are ready.</p> <p>On-line services/live streaming are a means of people interacting with our services safely – these should continue, where possible, to help those who remain vulnerable or nervous.</p>
2.	What opening arrangements will you adopt?	How you open will depend upon your risk assessment. By working through this process, you should be able to discern your appropriate opening arrangements.
3.	Are there sufficient and suitable people to open the church safely?	<p>In developing your risk assessment, you will need to be sure you have sufficient people to ensure risk mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Whilst two-metre social distancing is no longer a legal requirement, it remains a very useful measure to limit transmission. It will certainly be appropriate where people have not had two vaccinations. If your risk assessment, includes for the retention of social distancing between persons and household groups, you will need to consider how stewards can monitor that.</p>

		<p>There are clearly much lower risks from fully vaccinated persons mixing than when unvaccinated people are mixing. It is worth trying to establish if any of your team are not fully vaccinated as they will be more vulnerable to contracting the virus.</p> <p>It will be necessary for people to open/close the building, direct people and undertake cleaning etc. Lone working should normally be avoided. The risks for any lone workers should be assessed and mitigated.</p> <p>You will need to check that none of your team are in a vulnerable group or are self-isolating. Please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No one should feel obliged to return to a place of worship, even if they have a volunteering role that they would normally fulfil.• PCCs/MACs should assess the vulnerability of volunteers/staff to Covid-19 using the Government's advice at: Covid 19 Extremely Vulnerable People• Those in the Extremely Vulnerable Group are advised not to consider employment or volunteering outside their homes.• Those in other 'at-risk' groups should discuss their situation with the MAC to decide the type of work or voluntary activity they are able to perform. If the vulnerable person (e.g someone over 70) feels they are in good health, have been fully vaccinated and would wish to volunteer, it is reasonable to accept their service but careful thought should be given to appropriate duties, PPE etc. These might include roles that have less direct contact with people. <p>The Government has provided a workforce assessment tool which will help you to consider the vulnerability of staff and volunteers. It is available at: https://gov.wales/covid-19-workforce-risk-assessment-tool Click on Other Workplace Settings.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>You should put in place arrangements to confirm that each person involved in the opening of the church confirms they are (a) symptom free and (b) not subject to UK or Welsh Government advice to self-isolate.</p> <p>It is vital that all your team are fully trained and briefed on your management arrangements. Working through this checklist with them and sharing the risk assessment will be key.</p>
4.	Have you reviewed Test, Trace and Protect	<p>The Welsh Government Test, Trace, Protect strategy sets out the approach to tackling coronavirus, testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.</p> <p>All persons entering places of worship should be asked to complete a record of attendance which records their name, contact telephone number and date and time of visit but people cannot be required to do so. In the case of access to church halls or churches for permitted community activity and by general visitors, it is a requirement that attendees are recorded before being admitted. These records must be handled in accordance with GDPR to protect the individuals' privacy. These records should be kept for 21 days after the event and then destroyed.</p> <p>A consent form can be found at Test, Trace and Protect - The Church in Wales</p> <p>You should also provide a revised privacy notice and templates can be found at the same link. There is a version if you collect this information in advance online rather than 'at the door'. The 'online' privacy notice should be made available on your website, and the 'at the door' privacy notice should be available for inspection (perhaps on the table where people are completing forms and on the church noticeboard)</p> <p>The new NHS COVID-19 app is intended to help in this process but is not mandatory. The system involves the creation of a site specific QR code which allows people visiting to use the App. NHS COVID-19 app: guidance for businesses and organisations </p>

		<p>GOV.WALES This system does not replace the physical recording of attendance set out above.</p> <p>It is recommended that all public church premises (including churches, halls, offices etc) should display such a QR code.</p> <p>Further Welsh Government guidance can be found here on how to maintain records and on compliance with GDPR.</p> <p>Further information is available here: Test, trace, protect: coronavirus Sub-topic GOV.WALES</p>
5.	Should we consider lateral flow testing?	Welsh Government is encouraging all those who cannot work from home to access lateral flow self-test kits as they are rolled out across Wales. See Get rapid lateral flow COVID-19 tests if you do not have symptoms GOV.WALES
6.	Have you aired the building?	If the building hasn't been visited often it is likely to be stuffy and musty. Arrange to open doors, vents etc and give the building a thorough airing. Ventilation and changing the air are key parts of Coronavirus risk management in opening your church.
7.	Have you checked for general cleanliness or other maintenance issues?	<p>If your building has been closed for a long time, it may have built up dust and other debris including animal waste. Whilst clearly the risk of Covid-19 virus being on surfaces is very remote because the building has been closed, you should arrange for a thorough clean of surfaces etc. Check the grounds are tidy and safe.</p> <p>We are seeing a number of buildings that have suffered for lack of use over the last year or so including damp and condensation problems. This may have been caused by a lack of ventilation or blocked rainwater goods. Take a good look around the building and take appropriate action. https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/Maintenancebooker may be able to help you find a reliable contractor.</p> <p>With ventilation a key issue, it is worth checking that as many doors and windows can be opened as possible. There are often vents in windows that have long been painted over – take advice on how to free these again. Ventilation will be good for the health of the building too.</p>

8.	Have you checked water systems?	These must be thoroughly flushed through before use to reduce the risk of legionella. See Legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm
9.	Have you checked electrical and heating systems?	These should be switched on and checked. If feasible, it would be a good time to get a suitably qualified contractor to undertake annual checks and servicing.
10.	Have you checked your fire risk assessment?	Review your fire procedures in the light of your proposed opening. Make sure fire extinguishers are serviced and in date. There is useful guidance at Church: Fire Risk Assessment Risk Management Ecclesiastical
11.	How many people can attend a service/visit the church?	There are no legal limits but your risk assessment may help you to conclude that you should limit numbers to reduce covid transmission risks. Basing numbers on 2 metre distancing between persons and groups is a useful starting point. If you would generally expect relatively small numbers to an activity, why not maintain social distancing as a safe precaution?
12.	What are your heating and ventilation arrangements?	<u>Ensuring good ventilation of your building before, during and after use are vitally important risk control measures.</u> Where practicable, non-fire doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation. Heating can generally be used but alongside ventilation so it might be appropriate to ask worshippers to dress appropriately. Types of heating that present a Covid-19 risk are those that take air from one occupied space in a building and move it into another occupied space, i.e. from one room to another. If your heating or ventilation system has this feature it must be turned off so that air is not moved from one space to another. The system can be used with the feature turned off. It is extremely unlikely that a traditional church building will have such a system, but if in doubt ask the company that services your heating. They will know what, if any, adaptation is needed to operate in a Covid-secure way.
13.	What about face coverings?	It is a legal requirement that people wear face coverings in public places. This included churches, church and community halls. There are exceptions to the requirement to wear a face covering for medical reasons, and it is permitted to remove the covering “to communicate with another person who has difficulty communicating (in relation to speech, language or otherwise)”.

		<p>Further guidance for the public is available at:</p> <p>Face coverings: guidance for public GOV.WALES</p> <p>and for premises managers at:</p> <p>Face coverings: guidance on measures to be taken by employers and managers of premises GOV.WALES</p> <p>Worship leaders need not wear a face covering where it is impractical to do so but they should consider a range of other mitigations to provide a barrier to transmission including increasing distancing, screens, visors and additional hygiene measures.</p> <p>All attendees at a wedding must wear face coverings but it is reasonable for the couple themselves to remove their coverings for a kiss, for taking vows, walking down the aisle and taking photos indoors as long as other measures are in place to protect people attending the ceremony from the risk of contracting coronavirus.</p> <p>The public should be reminded of the requirement to wear a face covering and a standard sign can be found on the Church in Wales website.</p>
14.	Do you intend celebrating Holy Communion?	<p>The safest option is for Holy Communion to be administered still be in one kind only (bread) although sharing of the common cup is legally possible. Those giving and receiving should wash/sanitise their hands before and after exchange and avoid contact between the parties where possible. The person administering the bread should release it into the hand only in such a way as to minimise any contact or wear gloves. If contact occurs, hand cleansing should be undertaken immediately. Detailed guidance on administering Holy Communion is available on the Church in Wales website including a detailed but optional scheme for simultaneous administration.</p>
15.	Do you anticipate conducting Baptisms?	<p>It is recommended that only small volumes of water should be used and that full immersion should be avoided. Where practical others present should move out of range of any potential splashing and there should be no general sprinkling of water. Physical distancing should be observed where possible.</p>

		Where an infant is involved, a parent/guardian or members of the infant's regular or extended household should hold the infant. All individuals involved should thoroughly wash their hands before and after the baptism. Detailed guidance is available on the Church in Wales website
16.	Have you considered outdoor spaces?	Holding activities outdoors is an excellent risk management measure. Fresh air reduces the risk of transmission significantly. Although clearly weather dependent, people feel safer in outdoor spaces. An open sided marquee may be a useful facility.
17.	Will you be ringing bells?	<p>Bell ringing is permissible and is to be encouraged. Nothing announces the full return of church life than the sound of bells. The challenge with bellringing is that the bell ringers can often be in an enclosed area, sometimes with limited access particularly if the ringing area is upstairs in a tower.</p> <p>Consider the ventilation of the ringing space ensuring that all available doors and windows are open, provision of hand sanitising and careful cleaning of hard surfaces including hand rails. Bellringing arrangements should comply with guidance available from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers at https://cccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/</p> <p>There are likely to be much less risks for fully-vaccinated ringers being together. If a ringer is not fully vaccinated, we would advise the maintenance of social distancing.</p>
18.	What about wider community activities?	There is no limit on the range of activities that can be held in your church so community activities, festivals and concerts can resume.
19.	Can we open for visitors?	Yes. Your risk assessment should help you consider whether stewards should be in place to limit risk of transmission.
20.	Occasional Offices	Weddings, funerals and baptisms can held without restrictions and do not now need to be by invitation only. It is suggested that these events require specific planning and it is recommended that they have a separate risk assessment. Separate guidance is available on the Church in Wales website for these activities.

SECTION 2: REASONABLE MEASURES

This section sets out a list of reasonable measures that could be implemented to manage risk of transmission and inform your risk assessment.

In developing your risk assessment, it is worth reading Welsh Government's advice on relevant considerations to deciding whether measures are reasonable:

Those subject to the legal obligation to take reasonable measures have discretion in deciding what measures to take. However, those measures must “mitigate the risk of exposure to coronavirus that arises where persons gather” on their premises, and determining what measures are “reasonable” to take is an objective test. This means that what is reasonable depends on what a reasonable person faced with a similar situation would do.

Subject to that, when considering what measures are reasonable consideration may be given, among other things, to the following factors:

- *Cost – is the cost of the measure proportionate to the extent to which risk is reduced by the measure?*
- *The nature of the work – are the measures practical, or would they undermine the delivery of the service or undertaking of the business so much that they would be unsustainable?*
- *Can measures be put in place without compromising health and safety in other respects not related to the spread of coronavirus? If measures would increase the health and safety risk, for example in the case of operating machinery, these would most likely not be reasonable measures.*
- *The nature and capacity of those in a workplace – where a service or business is responsible for looking after or working with vulnerable people, it may not be reasonable to institute rigid physical distancing.*
- *Measures should command staff and workforce confidence that proper consideration has been given to the level of risk that they face.*

Whilst this uses the terminology of the workplace, it applies equally to churches and church halls and voluntary activity.

The following table looks at nine potential hazard areas and explores potential reasonable measures that could be taken to reduce or mitigate them in a church context. Not every measure will be applicable everywhere so you need to consider your situation carefully. These same hazard areas are then reproduced in the Risk Assessment proforma in Part 2.

	Hazard	Potential Reasonable Measure
1.	Clergy, volunteers, congregation or visitors introducing Covid 19 into the building	<p>The key to managing the risk of this hazard causing harm is to prevent people who have been exposed to the virus attending the building.</p> <p>People should follow the self-isolation guidance and not come to the church if they are symptomatic, have tested positive for Covid 19 or have been identified by TTP as a close contact</p> <p>Use standard signage (available from the Church in Wales website) to remind people before entering the building that they should not enter if symptomatic.</p> <p>Urge organisers of weddings and funerals to remind their guests not to attend if they are symptomatic.</p> <p>Encourage clergy, staff and volunteers to undertake regular lateral flow testing by obtaining test kits from https://gov.wales/get-rapid-lateral-flow-covid-19-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms</p> <p>Encourage clergy, staff, volunteers and regular attendees to consider having the double vaccination, if they are fit to do so.</p>
2.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus by not washing hands or not washing them adequately	<p>Ensuring people regularly wash or sanitise their hands is a key measure and simple to implement. It is easy for people to forget so place facilities in prominent positions and remind people with signage etc</p> <p>Follow HSE guidance on cleaning, hygiene and hand sanitiser at: Cleaning, hygiene and handwashing to reduce coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission (hse.gov.uk)</p> <p>A possible supplier of hand sanitiser is:</p> <p>https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/index.php/categories/covid-19-supplies</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>Contracting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment, shared items etc</p>	<p>Cleaning helps minimise the spread of Coronavirus Covid-19 so frequent cleaning of all surfaces especially those most frequently touched is important.</p> <p>Government guidance is available at COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>The guidance describes the cleaning required, the appropriate disposal of materials, the cleaning of equipment and hard surfaces and the PPE that should be worn.</p> <p>Cleaning should take place after each occasion the church is opened. Focus should be on hard surfaces where people might make contact particularly door handles. Soft furnishings are harder to clean so their use should be reviewed especially if they likely to be touched.</p> <p>Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. A possible supplier is:</p> <p>https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/index.php/categories/covid-19-supplies</p> <p>Welsh Government recommends the following guidance on the cleaning of historic surfaces and materials at:</p> <p>COVID-19: Cleaning and Disinfecting Historic Surfaces Historic England</p> <p><u>Votive candles:</u> These are a potential area of shared contact, a place of potential gathering and alcohol-based gels and naked flames do not mix. It seems sensible to avoid their use at the current time unless you can devise measures to avoid the obvious risks. Battery operated candles may be an option.</p> <p><u>Devotional and other shared objects:</u> Again, these are items of shared contact so you may like to consider removing these or placing them out of reach. It may be possible to have surface cleaners and disposable towels available so objects can be cleaned (as for supermarket trolleys) although this will depend on the nature of the object.</p>
-----------	---	--

		<p><u>Service and hymn books:</u> These are difficult objects to clean before and after use so it is still recommended you use single-use sheets of paper located after the hand sanitising area. If you have projection facilities, this could be a good alternative. People might be encouraged to bring their own service books available from: https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/publications/order-books-online/ You might consider lending service books to regular attendees so they can bring their own each time.</p> <p><u>Collections:</u> If cash payments are made, they should be handled wearing gloves and regular cleaning and hygiene maintained.</p> <p>Use online giving (Gift Direct) where possible. See: Online Giving by Gift Direct - The Church in Wales</p> <p>Consider contactless card readers. See Parish Buying - Giving & Payments</p>
4.	Contracting or spreading the virus by close contact	<p>The virus is spread most easily when infected people come into close contact with others. That is why until 7th August 2021, social distancing was a legal requirement.</p> <p>The legal requirement to maintain social distancing between persons or households has been withdrawn but that does not mean it is not an excellent risk control measure. It should still be considered in any risk management regime.</p> <p>There are clearly lower risks between people who have been fully vaccinated particularly where hand washing and premises cleaning regimes are robust.</p> <p>It is generally recommended that social distancing measures be retained where practical. Why sit people close to each other if it is not necessary?</p> <p>Some activities in church such as the administration of communion and baptisms require closer contact so particular care is needed during these activities. Specific guidance is</p>

		available on the Church in Wales website on these activities. You should review these and set out your arrangements in your risk assessment.
5.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus in commonly used or high traffic areas including pinch points	<p>It is recommended that you think about the way people move around your church to reduce the occasions when people are forced to come into close contact. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate entrances and exits • Marked one-way systems • Closure of constricted areas • Marked waiting areas where people can pass safely • Careful management of access to restricted areas e.g tower tours, ringing chambers etc <p><u>Serving Food and Drink:</u> You can serve food and drink but need to consider how this can be done safely. Here are some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those serving refreshments should be distanced from those receiving • Manage queues to avoid crowding • Encourage people to sit in small groups to share fellowship rather than standing and mingling • It is not necessary to only use disposable cups etc but you should carefully consider how crockery will be washed. A dishwasher will wash at high temperatures so is a good way of cleaning. Those gathering cups etc should wear suitable gloves. • Refreshments might more easily be organised outdoors where refreshments can be served 'take-away' style with people collecting from appropriately distanced stations. • Face coverings do not need to be worn when food and drink is consumed, but should be worn when people move around the building or are engaged in other activities after the service.

		<p>If your parish operates a community café or similar these can be fully open but there is separate guidance from Welsh Government for hospitality venues on how to do this safely. Face coverings are not required in these settings.</p>
6.	<p>Poorly ventilated spaces leading to risks of coronavirus spreading</p>	<p>As set out in Section 1, improving ventilation is a particularly important measure. Carrying out activities outdoors will provide natural ventilation. Natural ventilation indoors might be provided by opening doors and windows where this does not contravene fire safety requirements. Improvements in mechanical ventilation will also help minimise risks if done effectively.</p> <p>Ventilation can work in combination with other measures such as restricting or reducing duration of activities and enhanced use of face coverings in settings with higher risk of aerosol transmission.</p> <p>It is important to identify and deal with areas that are not well ventilated. The more people occupying an area that is poorly ventilated, and the longer they remain in it, the greater the risk of spread of coronavirus.</p> <p>You should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective fresh air ventilation, working alongside face coverings, distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes • restricting or reducing duration of services • adjusting the seating arrangements to be nearer open doors and windows • making sure mechanical ventilation systems (if installed) are maintained in line with manufacturers' instructions • portable fans might be used to improve the circulation of air from outside and avoid pockets of stagnant air forming but ensuring that air is not blown from one person (or groups of people) to another person (or group of people) • ensuring that as many doors and windows can be opened as possible. There are often vents in windows that have long been painted over – take advice on how to free these again. Ventilation will be good for the health of the building too.

7.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus during activities which spread droplets over a larger area e.g singing and certain musical instruments	<p>Raised voices, including singing remains identified as a particular risk factor, so this activity needs to be managed carefully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly, face coverings will be worn by law within the building as a public space and congregations must remain masked to sing indoors. For those who find this uncomfortable, a number of places now sell face coverings designed for singers, with an internal frame to keep the fabric a few centimetres away from the mouth. • The maintenance of social distancing between persons and groups is an effective way of reducing risk of transmission through singing especially where congregations include people who have not been fully vaccinated • Consider the prevalence of cases in your community. Whilst there are official statistics (see Local Authority Table (coronaviruscymru.wales)), these cover a whole local authority and so may be an inaccurate reflection of the situation in your local area. Try to gauge the prevalence of infection in your community – if you are hearing of people self-isolating it may indicate higher risk levels. If you have a known, regular congregation you can be more confident of potential prevalence (and vaccination rates) than if your congregation is more random. • Consider gathering outside to sing perhaps at the start and end of the service • Limiting the number of hymns sung by congregations will reduce risk • Recorded music presents no risk of transmission • Choirs are a regular group of known singers. Testing and vaccination recording will be easier to monitor in this group and may help to manage risk of transmission. Previous government guidance suggested organised or choir singing should be facilitated by establishing fixed groups of up to six people who can remain consistent and rehearse and perform together. This seems a reasonable precaution to retain. • You might consider barriers to transmission between each group of six in rehearsal and performance and ensure physical distance between the choir and wider the congregation • All musical instruments can be played but clearly for wind and brass instruments there is a greater potential for spreading droplets further. Maintaining physical distance for such players is a reasonable precaution.
----	---	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfaces of keyboards, pianos, organ consoles, music stands etc should be cleaned regularly. • Avoid sharing musical scores and books where possible
8.	People who remain at home suffering from isolation	<p>This is not a hazard so much about transmission of the virus but more one of the impact of social isolation on individuals. It is a hazard that flows from the impact of the virus in society.</p> <p>Put in place measures to reduce isolation for people e.g by live streaming services, making regular contact, newsletters and website updates.</p>
9.	People who are returning after a long period of absence being anxious or nervous	<p>Some people will be nervous of returning to church after such a long absence especially if they are more vulnerable.</p> <p>Publicise your opening arrangements, offer contacts to discuss any concerns, reach out to people to reassure them that church is a Covid safe environment.</p> <p>Publicise your risk assessment</p> <p>Continue with live streaming and on-line services, if possible. There will be people for whom this form of worship is very effective so don't lose them in a rush to return to physical church.</p>

PART 2: RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Having worked through the checklist, complete the risk assessment proforma below. This should be approved and dated by an authorised representative of the PCC/MAC/LMAC. The completed form should be approved by your Archdeacon.

	Name of Church:	Address:		Date:	
	Hazard Area	Detailed risk management arrangements <i>Set out below the detailed arrangements you will implement to manage the risk of each hazard. Use the potential reasonable precautions in Part 1 Section 2 to help you to decide.</i>		Action by?	Completed
1.	Clergy, volunteers, congregation or visitors introducing Covid 19 into the building				
2.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus by not washing hands or not washing them adequately				
3.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment, shared items etc				
4.	Contracting or spreading the virus by close contact				
5.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus in commonly used or high traffic areas including pinch points				
6.	Poorly ventilated spaces leading to risks of coronavirus spreading				
7.	Contracting or spreading coronavirus during activities which spread droplets over a larger area e.g singing and certain musical instruments				
8.	People who remain at home suffering from isolation				
9.	People who are returning after a long period of absence being anxious or nervous				

Compiled By:	Approved by: Incumbent/Area Dean: Archdeacon:	Date:
---------------------	--	--------------