

## **Moving from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3**

### **A Practical Advice Update**

Wales remains at Alert Level 4 but Welsh Government has set out the next anticipated steps of relaxing restrictions towards Alert Level 3.

From 26 April, the following activities are permitted:

- organised outdoor activities for up to 30 people
- outdoor wedding receptions for up to 30 people
- outdoor hospitality can open
- outdoor visitor attractions can open

Organized outdoor activities includes worship. The key point is that such activities are organised i.e planned and controlled by a recognisable body such as the PCC/MAC/LMAC. Such activities should be accompanied by a risk assessment to decide the right risk mitigation measures for the activity. Social distancing of two metres must be observed at all times for such activities. Welsh Government guidance should be consulted for specific limitations on permitted activities.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the following activities will be possible:

- The resumption of indoor supervised activities for children
- Indoor organised activities for up to 15 adults (such as exercise classes and swimming lessons)
- And the re-opening of community centres.

Welsh Government guidance is available at:

- [Guidance on reopening places of worship: coronavirus | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Safe use of multi-purpose community centres \(COVID-19\) | GOV.WALES](#)

The following Church in Wales guidance on undertaking activities safely is available:

- [Opening Churches Guidance Alert Level 4 moving to 3](#)
- [Guidance on Celebrating Holy Communion 26 April 2021](#)
- [Guidance on Conducting Baptisms 26 April 2021](#)
- [Guidance Marriages and Funerals 26 April 2021](#)
- [Guidance on Music and the Playing of Organs 26 April 2021](#)

These documents are updated regularly as Welsh Government guidance is published so do regularly revisit the pages. Welsh Government guidance is available at:

[Guidance on reopening places of worship: coronavirus | GOV.WALES](#)

Buildings will be able to open for limited community use from 3 May. Welsh Government guidance is available at:

[Safe use of multi-purpose community centres \(COVID-19\) | GOV.WALES](#)

This guidance has not yet been updated to reflect the changes at 3 May but does give a general steer on key considerations in opening for community use. Church in Wales guidance on opening Church Halls will be published as soon as clearer guidance is available.

#### *Opening Churches for Worship*

Whilst places of worship can, by law, be open for worship, funerals and weddings, Welsh Government continues to advise, during Alert Level 4, that:

*'those who are responsible for places of worship should consider whether there are alternative ways of holding worship services'.*

That is clearly sensible advice but the Bishops do feel that, for those churches which can safely do so, a resumption of a limited number of in-person services may now be more appropriate. Accordingly, those responsible for churches who intend holding services in person, you must:

- Rigorously review and update your risk assessments and consequence risk management measures to ensure that recommended arrangements can be sustained.
- Adjust your arrangements in the light of experience and the observed behaviour of attendees, when open for worship, and make adjustments to prevent lapses. It is vital, despite vaccinations, that social distancing is maintained, face coverings are worn and that hygiene and cleaning standards are fully observed.
- Pay particular attention to arrangements for people to leave your building after services. The end of a service is a particular time when social distancing can be breached. Generally, controlled exit row-by-row is advised. Clergy should generally avoid standing by entrances or exits to meet and greet people as this can create bottlenecks and bunching.
- Strictly observe guidance on the administration of Holy Communion (still in one kind only) as this is a moment of closer contact.
- Submit your updated risk assessment to your Archdeacon for approval
- Remember that as an open church you are an exemplar of good behaviour.
- Follow Government and Provincial guidance and do not take chances.

For those churches which cannot safely hold in-person services with the necessary precautions in place, organised outdoor worship may provide a useful first step in bringing back in-person worship.

#### *Vaccination*

We celebrate the fact that well over 1.6 million vaccination first doses have been administered in Wales. It is important to remember that although vaccination greatly reduces the risk of severe COVID-19, Public Health Wales is still learning about how the vaccine affects transmission of the virus and someone could still pass it on even after being vaccinated.

However, even if someone has received their two vaccine doses, they should still follow the same steps to keep themselves and Wales safe; wearing a mask, keeping a 2m distance, washing their hands regularly and keeping rooms as well ventilated as possible.

Even where a whole congregation has been vaccinated, there should be no relaxation of risk mitigation measures. Vaccination is not a cure but is likely to significantly reduce the impact of the virus on those vaccinated.