

## Alert Level 2

### A Practical Advice Update 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Wales is now at Alert Level 2 and Welsh Government has set out the next steps of relaxing restrictions. Alert Level 2 does mean that a wider range of activities are permitted but restrictions on how these activities are undertaken remain.

Details of what Alert Level 2 means in Wales can be found at:

[Alert level 2 | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

In particular, attention is drawn to:

[Gathering with other people: alert level 2 | GOV.WALES](#)

Places of worship and buildings used for community activities, such as church halls, can now be open. Of relevance to local churches, the following activities are now permitted:

- organised outdoor activities for up to 50 people
- organised indoor activities for up to 30 adults
- opening to visitors but with access carefully planned and controlled to maintain social distancing
- indoor supervised activities for children (NB this does not include activities such as children's birthday parties or wider social gatherings of families and friends beyond the existing arrangements for meeting other people outlined in this guidance)
- wedding receptions and funeral wakes but with a limit of 30 people indoors and 50 outdoors.

NB Organised activities encompass a broad range of activities that can be attended by people of any age but do not include activities such as parties or wider social gatherings of families and friends beyond the arrangements for meeting other people. An organised activity must be organised by a business, public body or a charitable, benevolent, educational or philanthropic institution, a club or political organisation, or the national governing body of a sport or other activity.

All activities must be accompanied by a risk assessment to decide the best 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.

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 2 \(PDF\)](#)

- [Guidance on re-opening of church halls 17 May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidance on Celebrating Holy Communion May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidance on Conducting Baptisms 17 May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidance Marriages and Funerals 17 May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidance on Music and the Playing of Organs 17 May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Guidance on opening churches for visitors 17 May 2021 \(PDF\)](#)

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

### *Opening Churches for Worship*

Whilst places of worship can, by law, be open for worship, funerals and weddings, Welsh Government continues to advise that even at Alert Level 2, that:

*'..wherever possible we still advise that people avoid congregating with people they do not live with. For example, faith leaders may still choose to broadcast (without a congregation) an act of worship whether over the internet or as part of a radio or television broadcast. Weddings and funerals may also be broadcast from places of worship.'*

That is clearly good advice, especially as new variants appear, but the Bishops do feel that, for those churches which can safely do so, a resumption of a limited number of in-person services is now 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 as this is a moment of closer contact. The guidance has been updated to allow for a form of simultaneous administration but generally the advice is still that Communion should be 'in one kind only'.
- 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 2 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.