

Coronavirus Risk Assessment for Opening Baptist Churches

The Baptist Union of Great Britain has developed this risk assessment template working with health and safety consultants from Ellis Whittam to assist churches as they plan for re-opening their premises. Prior to completing this document, it is recommended that churches read our leaflets [Coronavirus: Guidance For Reopening Church Buildings](#) and [Coronavirus: Guidance on church worship](#) and review the [government guidance for Places of Worship in England](#) or [the Guidance for Places of Worship in Wales](#). The Health & Safety Executive publish [guidance on risk assessment](#) and specific [guidance on risk assessment during the Coronavirus pandemic](#) which will help churches to produce a risk assessment.

In England there is no longer a requirement to have a specific Coronavirus risk assessment, but the risks should still be assessed as part of your duty of care to the public under Health and Safety legislation. In England no specific measures to limit the spread of Coronavirus are required in law. However, churches still have a responsibility to protect their staff, congregations, communities, and other users of their buildings. We recommend that it is both sensible and appropriate for churches to continue to take some measures to limit the spread of Covid-19, but it is now down to each church to determine what these measures should be based on the trade-off between the negative impact of any measures and the benefits in terms of risk reduction.

In Wales the creation of a specific coronavirus risk assessment is currently a legal requirement. The risk assessment must satisfy the requirements of regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These regulations include specific requirement to review the risk assessment if circumstances change significantly and to specifically consider the risks to those under 18. In Wales there is an additional requirement in law that in formulating the risk assessment there is consultation with those working on the premises (which includes paid staff or volunteers).

This template is designed to allow Trustees of a Baptist Church to consider the specific risks relating to Coronavirus in opening their premises. It should be considered as a supplement to a general risk assessment of the premises. This template contains some generic risks, and potential control measures but you may wish to add some risks or control measures of your own that are specific to your church building and church circumstances. Space has been left in the template for this, but feel free to add additional pages if you believe this to be necessary. You may also find some of the risks and control measures to not be suitable for your circumstances. If that is the case, we would recommend you make notes as to why these are not suitable as this will allow you to explain your position if it is questioned in future.

This document should be subject to regular review. You should certainly review it after the first few times your church gathers and after any change in government regulations or guidance to ensure that the assessment of risks remains appropriate, and the control measures are functioning as intended.

We also recommend that churches conduct a [general risk assessments relating to staff and volunteers returning to work at church buildings](#) using the template provided on our website and an [individual risk assessment relating to each volunteer](#), also using this template provided on our website.

Date of issue: 29 July 2021

Risk Assessment Matrix

The following tables give a framework for assessing the risks identified, with some guidance to assist you with what a score might mean. The scoring formula used deliberately places additional emphasis on risks with the most severe consequences but are not very likely (by adding 2 x severity to the score) over those that are likely but have limited consequence. This aligns with the most recent best practice in assessment and management of risks. Please note that this framework is a generic one for evaluating risks and not specific to Coronavirus.

During the pandemic it is likely that the virus risk before controls are implemented will be scored as 5 (high probability) and 5 (high severity) as the likelihood of a case being observed within 12 months is significant and the consequences are potentially death of an individual or multiple individuals. This goes to emphasise the importance of taking control measures seriously in order to reduce the likelihood and severity of the risk as far as possible.

It is unlikely that the severity score will reduce until such time as there are effective treatments or a vaccine. The control measures you put in place will mostly impact upon the likelihood of occurrence, but you may conclude their impact is sufficient to reduce it below a rating of 5. This does not mean your control measures are not of value because the scoring bands are fairly broad. For example, reducing the likely rate of occurrence from once a week to once every 50 weeks would be a factor of 50 improvement in likelihood but still have a score of 5.

Likelihood / Probability
5. Likely to occur at least once in any 12-month period
4. Likely to occur at least once in a 3-year period
3. Likely to occur at least once in a 10-year period
2. Likely to occur at least once in a 50-year period
1. Unlikely in a 50-year period

Severity / Significance / Consequence
5. Expected to result in church closure or significant harm to multiple individuals, death of an individual
4. Material threat to continued existence of church, or significant harm to single individual
3. Substantial adaptation required to ongoing operations
2. Minor adaptation required to ongoing operations
1. Inconvenience to ongoing operations

RISK / PRIORITY INDICATOR MATRIX						
LIKELIHOOD / PROBABILITY	5	7	14	21	28	35
	4	6	12	18	24	30
	3	5	10	15	20	25
	2	4	8	12	16	20
	1	3	6	9	12	15
	1	2	3	4	5	
SEVERITY / SIGNIFICANCE / CONSEQUENCE						

Score = (Severity x Likelihood) + (2 x Severity)
 (this formula places additional emphasis on high severity issues)

Summary		Recommended timeframe for implementing any identified control measures
20+	High	Immediate / within days
15-19	Medium	Within weeks
1-15	Low	Whenever viable to do so

Risk: Coronavirus entering the premises and potentially infecting users of the building			
Persons at risk Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners			
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5	Risk Rating after control measures
	Severity	5	
	Overall Risk	35	
	Likelihood	5	
	Severity	4	
	Overall Risk	28	

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Ask everyone symptomatic not to attend	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
2. All attendees asked to follow government guidance on self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/returning from foreign travel.	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
3. Ask those leading activities and worship at church (who therefore are not wearing face coverings) to carry out a LFT before attending.	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
4. Ask those responsible for managing the tech, serving refreshments and for welcoming people to church to carry out a LFT before attending.	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
5. Encourage entire fellowship to church to carry out a LFT before attending.	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
6. Verbal symptom checks on entry	N		
7. Ask those who vulnerable to consider whether to attend in person	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
8. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	Y	Welcome team / Individuals	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
9. Action Plan in place in case and communicated to leaders as in event of Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y	JR	Email to leaders, MG, ED & MN of 02.12.21

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
10. Undertake the Ellis Whittam's 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	N		Unnecessary: we are not recording details of attendees; there is no requirement for social distancing. Our cleaning procedures (including fogging) are well established; the welcoming team and the staff team are well aware of the need to ventilate spaces. 'BBC Protocol for using the premises safely' to be revised thoroughly.
11. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Y	JR	
12. All contractors to complete the 'Contractor Checklist' (Appendix 6 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	N		This checklist pre-dates the vaccination programme and focuses on a) Information (has the contractor established our COVID policy before arrival?); b) PPE; and c) Welfare (eg 'Have employees been instructed not to eat/drink/smoke/touch face without first washing their hands?'). I do not consider this necessary any longer, given the effectiveness of the national vaccination programme.

Risk:		Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual direct from infected person [Version for England]			
Persons at risk		Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners			
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5	Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	5
	Severity	5		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35		Overall Risk	28

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. One-way system of flow through building to avoid pinch points where necessary	N	Trustees	
2. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y	JR	
3. Ventilation maximised to disperse virus particles.	Y	Welcome team / Staff team Activity leaders	It is really cold at the moment! We will tell people to wrap up warm.
4. Worshippers may sing but must wear face coverings whilst doing so	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
5. Face coverings should be worn on the premises	Y	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
6. Social distancing is no longer a requirement, but sensitivity must be shown to members of the fellowship who may choose to maintain it.	N	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
7. Seating is no longer spaced out; people are not restricted to sitting in household bubbles.	N	Trustees	Letter to fellowship of 30.11.21
8. For the time being, we will continue to use individual communion portions.	Y	Staff team Welcome Team	

Risk:		Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via a contaminated surface/item (excluding toilet facilities)				
Persons at risk		Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners				
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	5
	Severity	5			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	28

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Doors kept open where possible to reduce contact with door handles (may not be appropriate for fire safety or to maintain suitable temperature)	Y	Activity leaders	
2. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	Activity Leaders / Cleaners	
3. No passing of collection plate/bag and collection not counted for 48 hours after service.	Y	Welcome Team	The offering box is placed on a table inside the chapel. Welcome Team wear disposable gloves to empty contents and place in wall safe at the end of the gathering.
4. Building thoroughly cleaned between uses	Y	Staff team	Fogging machine will be used where necessary.
5. No distribution of bibles or other books – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	Y	JR	
6. Microphones and other equipment kept to a single individual	Y	Tech team	
7. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and where appropriate Cleaning Checklist for suspected Coronavirus contamination (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	N		See comments at Point 9 on page 3.
8. Keep Register of attendees	N	Trustees	

Risk:		Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via toilet facilities				
Persons at risk		Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners				
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	5
	Severity	5			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	28

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	JR	
2. Toilets supplied with soap/hand sanitiser and disposable paper towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel).	Y	JR	
3. Implement regime for regular waste disposal from toilets.	Y	JR	
4. Setup appropriate policies for use of toilets (e.g. limited numbers at one time, children accompanied)	N	Trustees	We have decided to allow two people to use the toilets in the Manna House if they need to. Wipes are still in place if people would like to use them.
5. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and where appropriate Cleaning Checklist for suspected Coronavirus contamination (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	N		See comments at Point 9 on page 3.
6.			
7.			
8.			

Risk:		Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via contaminated waste				
Persons at risk		Cleaners and anyone else handling waste				
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	5
	Severity	5			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	28

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone asked to take waste home with them if possible	N		We judge this to be unnecessary given effectiveness of vaccination programme.
2. All waste to handled appropriately, observing good hygiene practices.	Y	Cleaning staff	Disposable gloves are available.
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	Y	Cleaning staff	
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE (see cleaning guidance for details).	Y	Cleaning staff	
5. All bins lined with disposable liners	Y	Cleaning staff	
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided	N	JR	Impractical.
7. Keep records of who has carried out cleaning and the tasks completed	Y	JR	Rotas are in place.
8. Where a known/suspected case of coronavirus has been present all waste to be double bagged prior to disposal and kept for 72 hours prior to disposal in general waste.	Y	JR	

Risk: Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via working in the church building			
Persons at risk Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners			
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5	Risk Rating after control measures
	Severity	5	
	Overall Risk	35	
	Likelihood	5	
	Severity	4	
	Overall Risk	28	

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.	N	Staff team	
2. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and maintain social distancing throughout.	N	Staff team Activity Leaders	
3. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Y	Staff team Activity Leaders	
4. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Y	JR	
5. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms when practical.	Y	JR	
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	N	JR	We are managing without this.
7. Implement cleaning procedures for goods and items entering the premises.	N/A	JR	
8.			
9.			
10.			

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments
8 th September 2021	Joanna Reeves	Cases in Rother are 291/100k at the moment. Local schools have returned with fewer restrictions in place – it is likely that we will see an increase in cases in the coming weeks. However, Trustees judge that it is time to relax restrictions further, given the lower risk of serious disease for those who are vaccinated.
30 th November 2021	Joanna Reeves	Cases in Rother are currently 533/100k; in neighbouring areas they are higher: Hastings 724; Eastbourne 736, Wealden 611; Tunbridge Wells 608. The arrival of the new Omicron variant requires us to adopt a more cautious approach: anyone deemed to be a close contact of a person with Omicron must isolate for ten days regardless of vaccination status. In the run up to Christmas, when many are so keen to be able to mix with family and friends, it is important that we respond appropriately. Trustees have therefore decided to ask all adults attending activities at the church to wear face coverings from 5 th December. I am meeting with Tim Fudge and Caroline Dyer to discuss implications for activities organised for children and young people on Thursday 2 nd December.

I have read the risk assessment and understand and accept its contents form part of my job role. I will keep myself informed of any changes

Staff Member Name (Print)	Signature	Date
