

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 leaflet [Coronavirus: Guidance For Reopening Church Buildings](#) and review the [government guidance and regulations relating to churches re-opening in England](#) or [the Guidance for Places of Worship in Wales](#).

The creation of such a specific coronavirus risk assessment is a legal requirement in both England and Wales. 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. The Health & Safety Executive publish [guidance on risk assessment](#) which will help churches to comply with these regulations. 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). We recommend that churches in England do this as well as it represents good practice.

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 risk 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.

It is also important to say that this document should be a living document 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 appropriate and 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: 04 February 2021 (updated to reflect legal requirements in Wales)

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
	Severity 5
	Overall Risk 35
Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood 2
	Severity 4
	Overall Risk 12

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Ask anyone symptomatic not to attend	Y	AD	Post the RA on the WBC Website & on the notice board at the foot of the main stairs with posters on external notice board & glass inner door
2. All attendees asked to follow government guidance on self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/returning from foreign travel.	Y	AD	Post the RA on the WBC Website & on the notice board at the foot of the main stairs.
3. Verbal symptom checks on entry	N	-	Rely on points 1 & 2
4. Ask those who vulnerable to consider whether to attend in person	Y	AD	
5. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	Y	Welcomer	check availability
6. Action Plan in place in case and communicated to leaders as in event of Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y	MC / AD	Contact NHS 111 and report Track & Trace - be prepared to close the church building.
7. Undertake the Ellis Whittam's 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	DD / EVENT ORGANISER	
8. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Y	MC	
9. Social distancing measures to be maintained where possible, including the arrival and departure of the venue.	Y	ALL	

10. All contractors to complete the 'Contractor Checklist' (Appendix 6 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	MC	
11. For church service and other meetings Duty Deacon or organiser to open church, check measures in place & open windows & internal doors to aid ventilation.	Y	DD / Meeting organiser	
12. Keep Register of attendees	Y	AD	RETAINED FOR 21 DAYS
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Risk:	Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual direct from infected person				
Persons at risk	Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners				
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5	Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	2
	Severity	5		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35		Overall Risk	12

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Suitable social distancing policy in place (2m or “1m plus mitigations”)	Y	DD / organiser	No legal requirement but individuals may still be nervous about too close social distancing
2. No physical contact between persons from different households/bubbles	Y	DD / organiser	Post the RA on the WBC Website & on the notice board at the foot of the main stairs
3. All attendees required to wear a face covering	Y	DD / organiser	Individuals choice, but is advised
4. One-way system of flow through building to avoid pinch points	Y	DD / organiser	As relevant to type of meeting
5. Areas marked out of bounds where appropriate	-	-	n/a
6. Seating arrangements adapted for social distancing	Y	MC / organiser	As relevant to type of meeting
7. Capacity monitored and entry stopped when capacity reached	Y	DD / organiser	
8. No congregational singing during services	Y	All	Allowed
9. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y	MC	
10. Any changes to entrances, exits and queues will take into account reasonable adjustments to accommodate those who need them, such as worshippers with physical disabilities.	Y	DD	

11. Attendees to be advised to limit gathering in groups inside and to make use of the garden /outside of building.	Y	DD / organiser	
12. All individuals who fall into the vulnerable, clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories will be assessed and provisions made accordingly.	Y	AD	Post the RA on the WBC Website & on the notice board at the foot of the main stairs with current government and BU advice and the risk assessment so they can decide their own suitability to attend
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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	2
	Severity	5		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35		Overall Risk	12

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	DD	FRONT DOOR TO BE CLOSED 5 MINUTES AFTER START OF SERVICE
2. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	ALL	ONLY WHERE NECESSARY
3. No passing of collection plate/bag and collection not counted for 72 hours after service.	Y	DD	Depending on the size of the congregation a bowl at exit or bag(s) handled only by steward(s). Treasurer and DD to hand sanitise after counting.
4. Building not used again for 72 hours or building thoroughly deep cleaned between uses	Y	MC	STANDARD CLEANING BEFORE NEXT USE
5. No distribution of bibles or other books – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	Y	DD	
6. Microphones and other equipment kept to a single individual	Y	S/DESK	
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)	Y	DD	
8. Keep Register of attendees	Y	AD	RETAINED FOR 21 DAYS
9. No serving of food and drink items prior to, during or after the service. Communion served – see comments *	Y	AD /DD	FOOD AND DRINK SERVED WITH RELEVANT PRECAUTIONS

			<p>* Brief proximity with a person distributing communion is permitted. Any bread and wine the celebrant lifts symbolically or speaks over should be kept separate.</p> <p>The server distributing bread and wine should wash their hands immediately prior to distribution and wear gloves and a face covering.</p> <p>Pre-prepared pieces of bread are to be dropped into the hands of the person receiving. Individual wine cup lifted from the tray by the person receiving. Server to collect & dispose of used cups immediately after service.</p>
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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
	Severity 5
	Overall Risk 35
Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood 2
	Severity 4
	Overall Risk 12

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	Individuals	Frequent hand hygiene is the best defence.
2. Toilets supplied with disposal hand towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel), hand sanitiser.	Y	DD/MC	DD on the day Prior to MC to brief cleaner (Maureen)
3. 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)	Y	DD/MC	DD on the day Prior to: MC to brief cleaner (Maureen) & or any additional volunteer cleaners
4. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.	Y	Deacons/Members	poster outside each WC
5. Introducing enhanced cleaning of toilet facilities, provision of more waste facilities, more frequent rubbish collections.	N	MC	As hands sanitised on entry & most doors pegged open, minimal risk of contagion using toilets. Full hand washing available in loos. Individuals can always use a squirt of soap on loo roll to wipe seats if believe necessary.
6. Ask people to spray clean toilet after use	N	Deacons/Members	See above
7. Children under 11 to be accompanied to the toilet	Y	Parents/Carers	poster outside each WC
8. Limit to 1 person per toilet unit (even if it has multiple cubicles), posters etc.	Y	ALL	

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	2
	Severity	5		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35		Overall Risk	12

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone asked to take waste home with them if possible	Y	All/DD	
2. All waste to handled appropriately, observing good hygiene practices.	Y	All	
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	Y	DD/Cleaner	JR to brief Deacons & Cleaner
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE (see cleaning guidance for details).	Y	DD/Cleaner	JR to brief Deacons & Cleaner. Gloves to be available,
5. All bins lined with disposable liners	Y	DD/Cleaner	JR to brief Deacons & Cleaner. Small bins to have liners, to go into larger bin with liner before going into wheelie bin.
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided	N	MC	Do not currently have these in the loos, therefore lids removed to offer wide neck (no need to touch) & liner
7. Keep records of who has carried out cleaning and the tasks completed	Y	MC	brief Cleaner, and any additional volunteers
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	MC	
9.			

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	Likelihood	2
	Severity	5			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	12

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.	Y		Zoom/electronic wherever possible
2. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and maintain social distancing throughout.	Y		Zoom/electronic wherever possible
3. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Y		Zoom/electronic wherever possible
4. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Y		Zoom/electronic wherever possible
5. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.	Y		Zoom/electronic wherever possible
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	Y		If becomes necessary
7. Implement cleaning procedures for goods and items entering the premises.	Y		Where provenance is in doubt supplies brought in to be quarantined for 48 hours or appropriately cleaned.
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Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments
30 Jul 20	Jonathan Rendall	First Issue of Risk Assessment (RA)
05 Sep 20	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 1 – incorporating Govt Advice 14 Aug & BU advice 27 Aug 20
27 Sep 20	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 2 – incorporating Govt Advice 24 Sep & BU advice 25 Sep 20
9 Nov 20	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 3 – incorporating Govt Advice 6 Nov & BU advice 5 Nov 20
03 Dec 20	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 4 – incorporating Govt Advice 1 Dec 20 & BU advice 1 Dec 20
31 Dec 20	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 5 – incorporating Govt Advice 22 Dec 20 & BU advice 20 Dec 20
TBC Mar 21	Jonathan Rendall	Amendment 6 – incorporating Govt Advice 4 Jan 21 & BU advice 10 Mar 21
25 May 2021	Mark Cole	Amendment 7 – Updating ‘Person Responsible’ due to new Diaconate
16 June 2021	Mark Cole	Amendment 8 - social distancing rules (page 7)
19/07/2021	Mark Cole	Amendment 9 – relaxation of legal requirements