

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.

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
	Severity: 5
	Overall Risk: 35
Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood: 3
	Severity: 5
	Overall Risk: 25

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Ask everyone symptomatic not to attend	Y	CJB/JD	To be included in all communication on re-opening. Appendix 4 Privacy Statement adopted and followed when recording contact details for Track/Trace purposes.
2. All attendees asked to follow government guidance on self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/returning from foreign travel.	Y	CJB/JD	To be included in all communication on re-opening
3. Verbal symptom checks on entry	Y	CJB/KB	Action Plan for Welcomer: Laminated symptom/physical distance poster displayed and all attendees to be asked on arrival.
4. Ask those who vulnerable to consider whether to attend in person	Y	CJB	Communication – Decision to attend is for the individual, because the risk is to them and they do not present any higher risk for other attendees.
5. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	Y	Welcomer	Sanitiser available at all entry points. All attendees will be expected to sanitise their hands on arrival.
6. Action Plan in place in case and communicated to leaders as in event of Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y	CJB/Trustees	Appendix 5 Emergency Action Plan adopted and will be put into action in the event that someone entering the church displays symptoms of Coronavirus.
7. Undertake the Ellis Whittam’s ‘Pre-Event Checklist’ (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	JD/MC	Checklist to be used in conjunction with the most up-to-date government guidance, prior to the event/day/service starting.
8. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Y	JD	Posters displayed in foyer.

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
9. All contractors to complete the 'Contractor Checklist' (Appendix 6 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	JD	Appendix 6 – Contractor Checklist to be available and completed prior to contractor starting work on church premises.

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	3
	Severity	5			Severity	5
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	25

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. One-way system of flow through building to avoid pinch points where necessary	Y	Caretaker	Continue to use a marked one-way system with dedicated exits and entrances. Room at the rear will be cleared for circulation
2. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y	JD	To include signage making it known that streaming is happening in 11am service for data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding purposes
3. Ventilation maximised to disperse virus particles.	Y	Welcomer	As many windows and doors as is practicable will be opened for the duration of the services
4. Singing	Y	Service Leader	Congregational singing will be permitted but participants (apart from those on stage) will need to wear face-coverings. Singers in the worship group will be positioned so that they are singing indirectly from the congregation.
5. Face Coverings	Y		All persons aged 11+ will be expected to wear face-coverings (unless medically exempt) for the duration of their visit to the church service. Those speaking or singing from the stage will not be expected to wear a face-covering whilst 'performing'. A supply of face-coverings to be made available from the Welcome Desk.

6. Social Distancing	Y	CJB/JD	Communication – All forms of physical contact will continue to be discouraged. Visitors encouraged not to gather in groups, inside or outside the building.
7. Seating Arrangements and Capacity	Y	Welcomer/ Caretaker	Chairs will be arranged so that there is more space than previously between individuals. However, these will not be 1m+ distanced. Once the available seating is full at any given service, the venue will be listed as 'full' which might result in us turning people away.
8. Times of Fellowship	Y	Trustees	Two services will be held on Sunday mornings – 9.15am and 11.00am
9. Communion	Y	CJB/KB	At this time we will not serve Communion or hold a gathered Communion service. Communion will continue to be offered on-line.
10. Youth & Children's Ministry	Y	CJB/JMcG	During the summer holiday period, youth and children's ministry will be held exclusively outdoors or in the Christian Centre if the weather is poor. Such ministry will be offered during the 11am service only.

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	3
	Severity	5			Severity	5
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	25

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	Welcomer	All doors to remain open when people are arriving or leaving. Shut or opened by welcomer as necessary or appropriate.
2. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	Caretaker	
3. No passing of collection plate/bag and collection not counted for 72 hours after service.	Y	Finance	All encouraged to give electronically or by Standing Order/Direct Debit. Single collection box to be made available at exit for cash donations. Appropriate care to be taken by Finance Team when counting the cash offerings.
4. Refreshments	Y	Trustees	Continue not to serve food and drink items prior to, during or after the service
5. Building thoroughly cleaned between uses	Y	Caretaker	Hard contact surfaces will be sanitised, as required, between surfaces. The church will be deep-cleaned between Sundays.
6. No distribution of bibles or other books – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	Y	JD	Communication – encouraged to bring own Bibles and take them home after the service.
7. Microphones and other equipment kept to a single individual	Y	Duty Technician	Sanitised hands and equipment
8. 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	JD	Customised Pre-Event Checklist and Cleaning Checklist to be completed prior to any event/service taking place.

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
9. Keep Register of attendees	Y	JD/Welcomer	Register to be taken on entry, to be retained and disposed of securely after 21 days (Paper copies and electronic records) Privacy Statement (Appendix 4) has been included as an addendum to our Privacy Policy and is available on the church website.

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	3
	Severity	5			Severity	5
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	25

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate disinfectant.	Y	Caretaker	The toilets will be deep-cleaned prior to services
2. Toilets supplied with soap/hand sanitiser and disposable paper towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel).	Y	Caretaker	Disposable hand towels available and hand sanitiser outside toilet area
3. Implement regime for regular waste disposal from toilets.	Y	Caretaker	Foot operated bins installed in toilet facilities
4. Setup appropriate policies for use of toilets (e.g. limited numbers at one time, children accompanied)	Y	JD/User	Well ventilated. Limited numbers at one time. Children under 11 to be accompanied to the toilet by their parent/carer in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
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)	Y	JD/Caretaker	Customised checklists available for pre-event and cleaning checks to take place prior to an event/service

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	3
	Severity	5		Severity	5
	Overall Risk	35		Overall Risk	25

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone asked to take waste home with them if possible	Y	CJB/Service Leader	Communication
2. All waste to be handled appropriately, observing good hygiene practices.	Y	Caretaker	Communication – Where possible, disposable gloves to be worn
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	Y	Caretaker	Training undertaken
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE (see cleaning guidance for details).	Y	Caretaker	Where possible, wear disposable or washing up gloves and aprons
5. All bins lined with disposable liners	Y	Caretaker	Disposable liners are fitted to all bins
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided	Y		Lidded bins operated by foot pedal have been provided
7. Keep records of who has carried out cleaning and the tasks completed	Y	JD/Caretaker	Cleaning Checklist to be completed and held securely for 21 days.
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	Caretaker	Process already in use

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	3
	Severity	5			Severity	5
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	25

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.	Y	CJB	
2. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and maintain social distancing throughout.	Y	CJB	
3. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Y	CJB	
4. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Y	CJB/JD	
5. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms when practical.	Y	CJB	
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	Y	CJB/JD	Door Signage
7. Implement cleaning procedures for goods and items entering the premises.	Y	JD/MC	

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments

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