**Covid-19 Risk Assessment**

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| Version 4Produced by Property Support Team | Updated 26 June 2020 | Updated link to Safely Using Places of WorshipRemoving Signing in RegisterCleaning section has been moved to separate document to include updates Moved Risk Assessment template to the endAction Plan moved to separate documentAdded new links for signage Updated Information Section to include Test and TraceAdd more links for Further Information |
| Version 5 | Updated 30 June 2020 | Legal requirement to conduct a risk assessmentAdded links for Guidance on Outdoor Play Areas and Gyms, How to Make a Face Mask and Restriction on Capacity, DoH Wash Your Hands Poster |
| Version 6 | Updated 6 July 2020 | Added link to TMCP guidance on Test and Trace Added link for revised Covid-19 Compliance sign |

It is now legal requirement for managing trustees to conduct a risk assessment on Covid-19 before and during use of church building. This includes taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 to those who use the building. This is called a risk assessment and it will help you manage the risk. You need to consider:

* Identifying what activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus.
* Think about who could be at risk.
* Decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed.
* Act to remove the activity or situation, or if this is not possible, control the risk.
* How to track incidents in an accident log book in accordance with the Health & Safety policy for the church/circuit

Full government guidance on Covid-19 can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic). This assessment¹ is based on guidance from [HSE’s Working Safely during the Covid-19 Outbreak](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf).

**Social Distancing**

**Questions to Consider**

1. In our building, where will social distancing be more difficult? You may need to review the government guidance on [restrictions on capacity](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july#general-actions-to-reduce-the-spread-of-infection).
2. What areas are more likely to increase the risk? How can we change these areas so people adhere to safe distancing guidelines? Can we re-organise our building to reduce the likelihood of spreading the virus?
3. Do we need to add or change things in our building to reduce the likelihood of spreading coronavirus?
4. If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive and reversible. Please consult the Conservation Officer about these changes.\*

Think about how to organise the building so that users and visitors can adhere to [safe distancing guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do), where possible:

1. Physically arrange communal areas to keep adhere to safe distancing guidelines.\*
2. Mark areas using tape or floor paint to help adhere to safe distancing guidelines.\*
3. Provide signage to remind people to keep adhere to safe distancing guidelines.\*
4. Using screens to create a physical barrier between people.\*
5. Use more than one exit or entry to reduce numbers in high traffic areas.
6. Maintaining social distancing in communal areas, including stairs and lifts.
7. Leave doors open that can be left open (taking fire safety and security issues into consideration) to reduce the need for people to touch door handles and to assist with the circulation of fresh air.
8. If there is a playground, please refer to the [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms) on outdoor playgrounds and gyms.

 Where you cannot adhere to social distancing guidelines, you should think about:

1. Put in place systems such as ‘one in, one out’ in communal areas, such as toilets, if it is not possible to maintain social distancing.
2. Assigning one person per area or staggering use times to reduce the number of people in an area.
3. Limit access to kitchens and limit contact between those using the kitchen. The government’s guidance on [Food Preparation during Covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19) should be followed.

**Cleaning**

Please refer to the [Cleaning Churches during Covid-19 guidance](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/) for further information on cleaning regimes.

**Good Hygiene**

You need to think about:

1. Ensuring there is handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels and reminding to wash regularly for 20 seconds.
2. Providing handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser at entry and exit points. The government states that people should be able to wash their hands as they arrive and leave.
3. Replace hand dryers with paper towels and bins. Bins should have liners and should be emptied frequently to safely dispose of waste.
4. Providing hand sanitiser in multiple areas in addition to washing facilities.
5. Providing tissues throughout the building.
6. Setting clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets and kitchen facilities to make sure they are kept clean.
7. Using signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique – reminding those in the building to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Signs can be ordered from [CPO](https://www.cpo.org.uk/catalogue.aspx?cat=80329) or other recommendations include:
	1. [NHS Hand-Washing Technique](https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/media/33429304/nhs-hand-wasing-technique.pdf)
	2. [Hand-Washing Technique (child version)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17916/hand-hygiene-poster-2020.pdf)
	3. [DoH Wash Your Hands](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17914/doh-handwash-poster-19-03-2020-3.pdf)
	4. [Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf)
	5. [Cover Coughs and Sneezes (child version)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17915/respiratory-hygiene-poster-2020.pdf)
	6. [Compliance with Covid-19 Guidance (revised)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897765/staying-covid-19-secure-2020.pdf)

**Personal Protective Equipment**

Face Masks and Gloves

* Face coverings and gloves are not a replacement for safe distancing and regular handwashing, which remain the most important actions.
* Public urged not to buy medical grade masks so they can be saved for frontline health and care workers, and instead make their own face coverings at home. Click [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering) to read more.

**Information and Guidance**

**Questions to consider:**

1. What information do those who use the building need to make sure they understand how to keep safe during the outbreak?
2. Who else do we need to share information and guidance with and what is the best way to do it?
3. How will people know when information and guidance is updated?

Making sure you pass on the correct information and guidance to those using the building is an important part of reducing risk.

1. Consider how to support Test and Trace should there be a confirmed case of Covid-19 in the building. The Government has requested that churches in England assist the [NHS Test and Trace service](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-nhs-test-and-trace-service) by keeping an accurate temporary record of visitors to church premises for 21 days. Please refer to TMCP’s [Guidance on Test and Trace](https://www.tmcp.org.uk/news-hub/new-test-and-trace-record-available) for further information and templates.
2. Decide what people need to know so they can use the building safely.
3. Decide the best way to pass on information and guidance to those using the building.
4. Setting clear guidance and line of responsibility for the use of kitchen and toilet facilities to make sure they are kept clean.
5. People often need to hear messages more than once and in different ways to remember. Think about ways to reinforce the message.
6. Think about how to interact with those who do not regularly use the building such as visitors or delivery drivers. Plan how to share relevant information on how to socially distance, where they wash their hands and the arrangements for using communal areas.

Updating information and guidance

1. Be prepared by thinking about what measures can be put in place to update people in the event of adapting the current guidance.
2. Decide if the current ways of sharing information and guidance are enough to update people or if you need to do more.
3. As information is key to reducing risk, decide how you are going to make sure that everyone who needs the information gets it.

Ensure that all those who use the building know what the [current guidelines](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing) are about self-isolation if they or someone in their home has symptoms. Full guidance on testing can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested) and here is the [link](https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test) to apply for a test.

1. Agree how to inform the Test and Trace service should someone test positive for Covid-19 when in the building.
2. Agree how you will look after someone who falls ill in the building. Do you need to isolate them until they can go home? Where will that be? What do you need to do to clean afterwards?
3. Decide what support needs to be in place for the person who is self-isolating.

**Further resources:**

* HSE guidance on Covid-19 including risk assessments, social distancing and cleaning & hygiene - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner>
* General government guidance on keeping workplace settings safe open [www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)
* Safe Use of Places of Worship - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic>
* Government Guidance for places of worship section 5 – Restrictions on Capacity;<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>
* Coronavirus outbreak FAQ’s: what you can and cant do after 4 July –<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do-after-4-july>
* Guidance for Managing Playgrounds and Outdoor gyms - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>
* Historic England’s Guide to Cleaning Historic Surfaces - <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/historic-places/cleaning-historic-surfaces/>
* Scottish Government guidance <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-1-business-and-physical-distancing-guidance/>
* Welsh Government guidance <https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>
* Government guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing)
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-coverings-mandatory-in-shops-supermarkets-shopping-centres-and-enclosed-transport-hubs-from-friday>
* [National lockdown: Stay at Home - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home) 4 January 2021
* [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 (Summary) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary) 22 February 2021

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| **Name & Address of Church** | **Eaglescliffe Trinity Methodist Church****2-4 Witham Ave., Eaglescliffe. TS16, 0AD.** | **Assessment under taken by Dr P W Dodd and H Hall (Stewards)** |
| **Area of Building Assessed** | **All public areas** | **Date of Assessment 11 March 2021****Date to be Review 11 May 2021** |
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| **Hazards/Risks***Think about the areas where contact takes place* | **Persons Affected***Think of anyone who comes in contact* | **Likelihood**1 = Seldom2= Frequently3= Certain or near certain | **Severity**1 = Low (minor injury)2 = Medium (serious injury)3 = High (fatality) | **Risk Rating**1-2 = low 3-4 = medium 6-9 = high priority | **Additional Covid-19 Controls – Reducing Risk** *Think of which prevention strategy that could be used in each scenario to reduce the spread of Covid-19\*If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive & reversible, please contact the Conservation Officer for further guidance.*  | **Action Plan***What needs to be done and by whom?* |
| Informing people of the church being open | Regular church attendees | 1 | 1 | 1 | Contact is by telephone and internet informing people of basics |  |

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|  | Circuit members | 1 | 1 | 1 | Internet communications. Ask people to make contact so that we can talk through basics. There has been a low level of Circuit interest. |  |
|  | Members of the public | 2 | 1 | 2 | There can be no certainty that people will go on line or make contact before attending so the information available needs to be seen before entering. There are posters on the way in. |  |
| Reminding people of advice to stay away to some groups | Those over 70 years old and with certain health conditions. | 2 | 3 | 6 | Communications of Government advice needs to include certain groups who should stay away from public worship. Covered by action 1. Vaccines have apparently been offered to all this age group which reduces the risk to them by a factor of ¾ on current research. |  |
| Transport to church | Walking and travelling by own car | 1 | 3 | 3 | Walking in the open carries a risk which is acceptable providing social distance is carried out. |  |
|  | Accepting lifts | 2 | 3 | 6 | This is an unacceptable risk and lifts for non household or bubble members are to be discouraged. | 1 In publicity, continue to advise that giving and receiving lifts outside of households or bubbles is unwise. |
| Preparing the church building | Doors will be left open. Social distancing will be set out by blocking of pews. Books will be left in pews. Information tables. ready. Hand sanitiser at entrance and exit. | 2 | 1 | 2 | The Church will have been left without human occupation for 3 days before worship. The time delay leads to a reasonable assessment that if virus were ever present, the virus levels will have fallen to acceptable levels. |  |
|  | Stewarding to record names of attendees.  | 2 | 2 | 4 | Depending on numbers expected, this is either done outside if a lot or inside for less. |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Stewarding will stop at the start of the service since people are used to attending before the start. |  |
| Hand sanitiser | Although push button, the action of using sanitizer should destroy any virus present | 1 | 3 | 3 | Use of hand sanitiser follows the Covid 19 guidance. |  |
| Entering church and finding a pew | This should be a straight through activity.  | 1 | 3 | 3 | There will be no steward inside or books to collect. The church is visible and spaces seen. |  |
| Sitting | Sitting at a spacing that is set by social distancing or greater. | 1 | 3 | 3 | Social distancing sets acceptable spaces to minimise transmission. Alternate pews are roped off so that front to back distance is a minimum of 1.7 metres with the ability to sit on the pew to create gaps of 2.6metres front to back.15 pews are available. Most will take 4 people from the same household or bubble though this reduces the front to back distance back down to 1.7 metres. Hence a limit of 30 people, as per the Government general guidance is to be strictly observed unless the school room is opened at a later date and not included in this assessment. | Capacity limit. 15 single people or if households or bubbles attend and they sit in the same pews, a total of 30 people. |
| Reading, praying, humming | People take part in worship with social distancing. | 1 | 3 | 3 | Doors will be left open to have ventilation. The majority of worship will be sitting. However occasional standing is acceptable to allow the worship of God and movement of position. |  |
| Singing | Not allowed by law unless carried out by one person or designated group from front. | 1 | 3 | 3 | Singing by one person or a small dedicated group is acceptable provided that the singer(s) stands 3m distance between singer and congregation.  |  |
| Voice and sound control | Loud music or excessively loud speaking is not allowed. | 1 | 3 | 3 | The PA system controls the overall sound and is accessible by the organist. The preacher needs to be contentious of excessive voice projection. | 2 Preachers need to be reminded of Covid 19 voice control. |
| Offering | Discouraged by guidance and will not be taken. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Someone feeling unwell | Guidance to go straight home | 1 | 3 | 3 | Guidance shown on the way in. It is unlikely that someone will start to feel unwell during the service but there is a risk. It is impossible to mitigate against poor social behaviour by remaining whilst unwell.  |  |
| Someone needing the toilet | Person goes to the toilet, goes out the back door and back in the front. | 1 | 3 | 3 | Guidance shown on the way in. This would be an unusual occurrence during a service but good hygiene plus the hand sanitiser on the way back in gives minimal increase in risk. |  |
| Preparation for leaving | Preacher/Steward will inform people of the need to socially distance on leaving via rear door and to go home as soon as possible. | 1 | 2 | 2 | New restrictions on 4 January 2021 permit only two people to meet from different households in a public space. Please use the telephone later to have a conversation. We should go home as soon as possible after the permitted service. Currently, the Government plan to relax this on 29 March back to the group of 6 or 2 households meeting outside with social distancing.  | 3 Give instruction for the need for social distancing on leaving and to go home, staying on church premises no longer than necessary. |
| Leaving church | Preacher stands on plinth and nods to people leaving, encouraging social distancing. | 1 | 3 | 3 | People have been made aware on the way in, taken part in a Covid 19 secure service of worship and are aware of social distancing. |  |
| Hand sanitiser and hand washing facilities | These are advised and available. | 1 | 2 | 2 |  |  |
| Gathering outside | This must not happen but are planned to be relaxed on March 29. | 1 | 3 | 3 | Stewarding will be provided to enforce this and if it becomes a problem, future services need to be questioned. |  |
| Someone comes in disregarding the guidance | A steward is present and the person would be non compliant.  | 1 | 3 | 3 | This would be an unusual occurrence. Generally, the advice of stewards is followed. If there is a probably, steward could move other people to another spot to maintain social distancing or ultimately call the police.  |  |
| Recording who attends. | In most cases, the attendees will be known to the steward. In cases where this is not the case, dedicated pens will be used to record details and the paper and pen placed in the mail box. | 2 | 2 | 4 | Provided the procedure is followed, there is minimal risk. If the user does not place the pen in the mailbox, the steward can use another pen to flick the used pen off the table unto the floor behind and place the flicker into the mailbox. |  |
| Someone attending falls ill and unable to help themselves leave to go home. | The service would stop while the patient was attended to by the steward. An ambulance would normally be called. Closest people may be asked to move further away. | 1 | 3 | 3 | This does happen on a once in 10 year frequency. Normal care would be shown to the patient until help arrived. Face masks are available for this specific emergency use. |  |
| Someone attempts to disrupt the service | The service would stop while the steward attempted to deal with the gate crasher. The police could be called, if there was sufficient danger. | 1 | 3 | 3 | This has not happened in this church over the last 26 years. Covered by action 8. |  |
| Too many people come so that the limit of 30 is exceeded. | Steward would ask people not to come in. There are sufficient usual attendees that a small excess could be accommodated by volunteers leaving. | 1 | 2 | 2 | Due to so few churches opening this is a possibility but has not been experienced so far. Most Christians would be understanding and not insist on coming in.If a group were to do so, volunteers could be asked to leave to make room and failing this headroom, the service would be abandoned or held outside. A booking system could then be introduced. |  |
| Worship of God is overshadowed by precautions | As Trustees, we need to follow Government guidance as well as try and worship God. | 3 | 1 | 3 | As Methodists, the worship of God can take place anywhere and at any time. This re-opening of a routine in the new normal is another opportunity to live in community in God. We will worship. |  |
| Someone insists on singing. | One person or dedicated group of up to 6 people is/are permitted to sing from the front.  | 1 | 3 | 3 | The singer(s) from the front would stop singing. The preacher or steward needs to emphasise that communal singing is not allowed at the next suitable point.  |  |
| Someone makes a complaint about the Covid 19 procedures | Steward would thank the person, understand the issue and try a local remedy, if possible. | 1 | 2 | 2 | Steward can make a note and the complaint should be addressed within the week, with feedback to the complainant.  |  |
| Facecoverings | The Government has extended the mandatory wearing of face coverings to places of worship. People are complying with this. The preacher does not need to wear face coverings at the front, if they choose not to because some people are hard of hearing. Someone refuses to wear face coverings but are not one of the exceptions. | 1 | 2 | 2 | Steward and/or preacher could request the person to put on a face covering. The non- compliance of an attendee is covered above. |  |
| Coffee, tea and biscuits | This is not permitted with the new rules to only be together for worship, not socialising. | 1 | 3 | 3 |  |  |

**Covid-19 Risk Assessment**

**Face Coverings**

The science on face coverings is only slightly in favour of face coverings in enclosed spaces. Eaglescliffe, is an enclosed space, but it is spacious. The doors are held open to encourage a through draft. Social distancing has been determined by the above risk assessment and it does not need to use extra mitigations of the 1 m plus variety that other venues may use. Meanwhile, the risks of using hands to adjust face coverings is a constant risk that does not occur if they are not worn. One mask has already had to be disposed of, having fallen to the floor and this is a risk for the steward to remove. The face coverings only provide a delay in transmission of the virus and an attenuation of the peak flow and therefore the distance travelled by droplets. By the time people come to church wearing their face covering and if they were infected, there is likely to be no benefit. In fact, the face covering could have been retaining virus to go into church. The face covering would be saturated. If they start to cough and splutter, these could be subdued but given that the covering might be saturated, the quantity released might be still the same if not more. The individual takes in expelled virus increasing their viral load. The key factor is that anyone coughing and spluttering should go home and self isolate. The Government made face coverings in places of worship mandatory with some exceptions for disability and health on 27 August 2020. To date, there has been excellent compliance, a much better result than the population at large. This seems to have been adopted well.

Dr P W Dodd 08 January 2021.

Reviewed 11 March 2021 by PWD.