

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](#).

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 risk assessment 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: 16 July 2020

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 system deliberately places additional emphasis on risks with the most severe consequences but are not very likely 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 Coronavirus pandemic it is likely that most risks, 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

The logo for 'LONGFLEET BAPTIST CHURCH' features a colorful, stylized illustration of a church building with a steeple, followed by the text 'LONGFLEET' in a blue, sans-serif font. Below this, the text 'BAPTIST CHURCH' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

This Risk Assessment has been completed taking into account that the Government has lifted all legal COVID restrictions in England with effect from 19 July 2021.

The Baptist Union has issued a set of guidelines for churches to consider when relaxing the restrictions they had put in place and these urged a cautious approach, particularly in the light of increasing numbers of infections in England.

1. At present the number of infections in our area has now returned to around the National Average at 348 per 100,000 (13/7/21)
2. We are currently only meeting for Sunday worship and for Church Members meetings but hope to reopen for groups and other premises users in the autumn subject to the prevailing rate of infections and Government advice at that time.
3. Almost all our congregation have had both doses of the Coronavirus vaccine.
4. The diaconate have decided to move slowly to lift restrictions, and this means that we keep seating socially distanced at 1 metre apart and this will enable us to accommodate all who would like to attend without pre-booking. However, NHS England recommend keeping a register of attendees and so church members and congregation are asked to let us know if they are coming, to help us to compile a list to tick on the day.
5. All attendees are asked to wear face covering and to sanitise their hands on arrival and to keep socially distanced while on the premises.

6. We have a reliable team of people who have volunteered to help with Sunday stewarding and who have been given clear instructions on their roles. We also have a large enough team of people who are willing to help with cleaning the Church Sanctuary towards the end of each week in preparation for each Sunday. Some after service cleaning will take place by those on the stewarding team.

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	Likelihood	5
	Severity	5			Severity	2
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	14

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Ask everyone symptomatic not to attend	Y	SR	This has already been done repeatedly
2. All attendees asked to follow government guidance on self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/returning from foreign travel.	Y	SR	“ “
3. Verbal symptom checks on entry	Y	JEM	Door steward to ask
4. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	Y	JEM	Sanitiser stations in place in four locations
5. Action Plan in place and communicated to leaders in the event of a Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y	JMM	Detailing additional cleaning & contacting attendees
6. Undertake the Ellis Whittam’s ‘Pre-Event Checklist’ (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	One of the Trustees	Although not probably legally required it is ideal to keep this in place. To be completed each week
7. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Y	JMM	Now in place
8. Social distancing measures to be maintained where possible, including the arrival and departure of the venue.	Y	JEM	Seating now marked to allow social distancing of 1 metre. Floor signage remains in place.
9. All contractors to complete the ‘Contractor Checklist’ (Appendix 6 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	JEM	For any contractors doing work inside building

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
	Severity 5
	Overall Risk 35
Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood 5
	Severity 2
	Overall Risk 14

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Suitable social distancing policy in place 1m plus mitigations.	Y	Enhanced Stewarding team	All attendees to be asked to keep apart while entering and leaving the building. Seating is now distanced at 1 metre.
2. No physical contact between persons from different households/bubbles	Y	Stewards	Seating set out as above. Handshakes & hugs discouraged.
3. All attendees required to wear a face covering	Y	“	Initial communication given via newsletter about reopening. Reminder given at door on arrival
4. One-way system of flow through building to avoid pinch points	Y	JEM	Floor marked to show route through entrance porch into church and then out via back door.
5. Areas marked out of bounds where appropriate	Y	JEM	Hall, kitchen & lounge doors marked as NO ENTRY. Keep this until autumn 2021
6. Seating arrangements adapted for social distancing	Y	JEM	Seating marked with green ticks and red crosses to denote where to sit for 1 metre social distancing
7. Singing in services to be behind masks and at lower volume	Y	SR	We will continue to use YouTube music to provide support to the volume of singing.
8. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y	JMM	All posters in place in corridors and toilets
9. 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	JEM	Front door to be used for entrance and rear door for exit. Rear door has a doorbell to allow any wheelchair users to summon assistance.
10. Visitors instructed not to gather in groups, except with members of their own household, inside the building.	Y	SR	Congregation to continue to gather in the rear garden after the service but to keep the doorway, ramp and alleyway clear.

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
11. All attendees asked to keep their personal possessions including coats and walking aids with them in church using spaces between socially distanced seats	Y	JMM	This should still be kept in place as there are adequate spare 'seats' to allow people to keep their belongings including walking aid alongside them.
12. Ventilation inside the building by opening windows and doors to allow as much fresh air as possible	y	JEM	
13.			

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	2
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	14

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	JEM & Stewards	Fire doors will be propped open, but stewards instructed to close in event of emergency
2. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Y	JEM & Stewards	Door handles, handrails etc to be cleaned before and after service & on weekly cleaning
3. No passing of collection plate/bag.	Y	Banking officer	Offering container made available near exit
4. Toilets supplied with disposal hand towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel), hand sanitiser. Limit to 1 person per toilet unit (even if it has multiple cubicles), posters etc.	Y	JEM & JMM	One ladies cubicle is blocked off. Cleaning wipes provided for anyone to clean seat, flush handle & cubicle door. Pedal bin provided in each toilet
5. No serving of food and drink items prior to, during or after the service.	Y	JEM	Attendees advised to bring own water if needed, though a small quantity of bottled water is available for emergencies
6. No distribution of bibles or other books – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	Y	JEM	Vestibule cupboards taped off
7. Microphones and other equipment kept to a single individual	Y	SR	Use both radio mikes if more than one person is taking part or one radio mike and one stand mike
8. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and Cleaning Checklist (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	Y	One of the trustees	To be completed weekly
9. Keep Register of attendees for Track, Trace & Isolate	Y	JMM & stewards	Keep a register of those attending each week but not recording seating locations or time of arrival

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
10. QR code displayed for use with the COVID app	Y	JMM	In place in three locations by entrances
11.			

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	2
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	14

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Y	JMM	Paid cleaner has a written cleaning schedule which is signed each week. These are kept for 21 days in the COVID records in the church office. Enhanced cleaning materials including protective clothing has been provided.
2. Toilets supplied with disposal hand towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel), hand sanitiser. Limit to 1 person per toilet unit (even if it has multiple cubicles), posters etc.	Y	JMM	One ladies' cubicle has been cordoned out of use. Antibacterial handwash is in each toilet area. Antibacterial wipes are also provided for use to clean down between users.
3. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and Cleaning Checklist (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	Y	One of the Trustees/ Paid cleaner	Continue to do this as it forms a good record of what cleaning has been done both by paid cleaner and volunteers
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	JMM	“ “
5. Introducing enhanced cleaning of toilet facilities, provision of more waste facilities, more frequent rubbish collections.	Y	JMM	“ “
6. Ask people to clean toilet after use with wipes	Y	JMM	“ “
7. Children under 11 to be accompanied to the toilet	Y		Only one child under 11 in this category

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	3
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	21

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone asked to take waste home with them if possible	Y	JMM	
2. All waste to be assumed contaminated and handled appropriately	N		Only to apply if anyone has COVID symptoms while in the building or has a positive test result and we are advised by track & trace (as per Government guidance on Non-Healthcare settings)
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	N		“ “
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE (see cleaning guidance for details).	N		“ “
5. All bins lined with disposable liners and all waste double bagged prior to disposal and kept for 72 hours prior to disposal in general waste.	N		“ “
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided	Y	JMM	As in previous section
7. Keep records of who has carried out cleaning and the tasks completed	Y	JMM	A cleaning schedule has been produced and each week the volunteer doing the cleaning signs each part of this. These are kept for 21 days in the COVID records in the office
8.			

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	5
	Severity	5			Severity	2
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	14

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and maintain social distancing throughout.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
2. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
3. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
4. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
5. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
6.			
7.			
8.			

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments
22/7/21	J Matterface	To be reviewed in the light of any change in Government advice or Baptist Union guidance. To be reviewed again in September 2021