

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

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. Inconvenience to ongoing operations
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1-15	Low	Whenever viable to do so
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BAPTIST CHURCH

This Risk Assessment has been completed making a number of assumptions and observations about our situation in Poole as a town and our church as a community.

1. At present the number of infections in our area has now returned to below the National Average at 13 per 100,000 (9/4/21)
2. We would only be proposing to open for Sunday worship at this initial stage and this would mean that more than 72 hours would elapse between uses.
3. All of those in the over 50 age group have now had at least one dose of the Coronavirus vaccine.
4. Social distancing measurements of 2 metres will mean that we can only accommodate around 30 depending on the numbers of 'bubbles' with multiple members (couples, families etc). This will be managed by asking those wishing to attend to pre-book a place. In the event of demand exceeding capacity priority will be given for the following week to those unsuccessful in securing a space.
5. 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	Via Newsletter initial communication about reopening
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. Ask vulnerable not to attend in person	Y	SR	This may now be relaxed as most of those who are ‘vulnerable’ were first to receive the vaccine. Shielding system has now come to an end
5. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	Y	JEM & JMM	Sanitiser stations in place in four locations
6. Action Plan in place in case and communicated to leaders as in event of Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y	JMM	Detailing additional cleaning & contacting attendees
7. Undertake the Ellis Whittam’s ‘Pre-Event Checklist’ (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches).	Y	One of the Trustees	To be completed each week
8. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Y	JMM	Now in place
9. 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 2 metres
10. 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		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. Suitable social distancing policy in place (2m or “1m plus mitigations”)	Y	Enhanced Stewarding team	All attendees to wait at 2 metre distance outside the hall. Church seating is set out and marked for 2 metres distancing.
2. No physical contact between persons from different households/bubbles	Y	Stewards	Seating set out as above
3. All attendees required to wear a face covering	Y	“	Via Newsletter initial communication about reopening. Reminder given at door on arrival
4. One-way system of flow through building to avoid pinch points	Y	JEM & JMM	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 & JMM	Hall, kitchen & lounge doors marked as NO ENTRY
6. Seating arrangements adapted for social distancing	Y	JEM & JMM	Seating marked with green ticks and red crosses to denote where to sit for 2 metre social distancing
7. Capacity monitored and entry stopped when capacity reached	Y	JEM & JMM Stewarding Team	Can use hall with doors open and plastic chairs if unexpected visitors
8. No singing during services	Y		
9. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y	JMM	All posters in place in corridors and toilets

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
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	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.
11. Visitors instructed not to gather in groups, except with members of their own household, inside or outside the building.	Y	SR	Mentioned in initial communication and then re-emphasised at the end of each service
12. All individuals who fall into the vulnerable, clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories will be assessed and provisions made accordingly.	N	Trustees	All of those who are considered to be clinically vulnerable have now received at least one dose of their COVID vaccine. This leaves a very small number of people in our church unvaccinated.
13. All attendees asked to keep their personal possessions including coats and walking aids with them in church using spaces between socially distanced seats	Y	SR	Written instructions in initial communications about reopening and emphasised by Stewarding team
14.			
15.			

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 and collection not counted for 72 hours after service.	Y	Treasurer/ Banking officer	Offering container made available near exit This will be put into the safe after the service & counted later in the week.
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. Building not used again for 72 hours or building thoroughly deep cleaned between uses	Y	N/A	
6. 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
7. 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
8. Microphones and other equipment kept to a single individual	Y	SR	Use only stand microphone to avoid touching
9. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and Cleaning Checklist (Appendix 3	Y	One of the trustees	To be completed weekly

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
of Guidance on Re-opening churches)			
10. Keep Register of attendees & seating location for Track, Trace & Isolate	Y	JMM	Seating plan sheet in place and register is marked with seat numbers that individual attendees are seated in.
11. QR code displayed for use with the COVID app	Y	JMM	
12.			

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 officer 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	
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	SR	Suggest that anyone who has a condition that usually has a coughing side effect bring a plastic bag to contain their tissues and take it home
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		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. Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.	Y	SR	As far as possible
2. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and maintain social distancing throughout.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
3. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	Y	SR & Trustees	“ “
4. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Y	SR & Trustees	
5. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.	Y	SR & Trustees	
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.	Y		Church only in use at present
7. Implement cleaning procedures for goods and items entering the premises.	Y		Isolate these for 72 hours to minimise infections, sanitise if practical.
8.			
9.			
10.			

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments
7/4/21	J Matterface	To be reviewed in the light of updated Government & Baptist Together advice. Also to be reviewed after first week of reopening.