# Coronavirus Risk Assessment for Catholic Churches

This template risk assessment is intended to help you document the risk control measures you have introduced within the church to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). It is not a Church Continuity Plan.

You must modify this risk assessment to ensure it reflects your activities and the specific risks and controls you have in place.

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| Location/Dept: | Date Assessed:  | Assessed by: |
| Task/Activity:Catholic Church activities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic  |  | Reference Number: |
|  | Risk rating before implementing control measures |  | Risk rating after implementing control measures |  |
| Activity/Task | Hazard/Risk | Person at Risk | Likelihood (1-5) | Severity (1-5) | Risk/Priority | Control Measures in Place | Likelihood (1-5) | Severity (1-5) | Risk/Priority | Additional Control Measures Required |
| Catholic Church activities | Contact with persons suffering from coronavirus | PriestContractorsParishionersMournersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place and communicated to all priests and parishioners, including what symptoms to look out for and what action to take. EAP to be displayed in visible areas around the church.All members of staff instructed to follow government guidance on self-isolating and adhere to advice given.The church will display a QR code at the entrance. Visitors will have the option to provide their name and contact details or scan into the premise using the NHS Test and Trace app. Where eligible, priests, employees and volunteers are strongly recommended to take part in the government’s testing programme for COVID-19. If the test results reveal that the individual has contracted COVID-19, action will be taken as prescribed in the Emergency Action Plan and a decision will be made on when they can return to work.The church is taking part in the government testing program and will test asymptomatic employees twice weekly. A separate risk assessment has been completed for the testing area / workers will receive home testing kits and will be expected to inform the church of their results. Employees and Priests will be given time away from the workplace to receive a COVID vaccine when they have been invited to attend. Where eligible, employees are strongly recommended to take part in the government’s vaccination programme for COVID-19 to prevent the spread of the virus and help to protect everyone.  Employees that have been vaccinated must continue to follow COVID-19 control measures until further notice from the government is provided.WorkNest’s Return to Work Form to be completed when a priest returns from self-isolating or has been diagnosed with COVID-19.If it becomes law to check the COVID status of those coming into the premises, we will follow the government instructions regarding NHS COVID Passes and other accepted proof.Wherever possible, we will minimise the time workers spend in the office and will request that they work from home whenever possible. Priests encouraged to download NHS COVID-19 app on personal phones and follow instructions received when it is available. Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with bodily fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected.If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents, according to current recommended legislation and practice.Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the person has come into contact with must be cleaned, including:* All surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids; and
* All potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones, etc.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible.<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19> |
| Church activities | Contact with persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus – foreign travel | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Priests, employees and volunteers who are suspected to have coronavirus are to quarantine themselves in accordance with the government guidance.Priests, employees and volunteers instructed to follow government guidance on foreign travel.Other persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus have been instructed by the government guidance to quarantine themselves. |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Church activities | Contact with persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Historic England has also produced [guidance on cleaning historic surfaces](https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/historic-places/cleaning-historic-surfaces/), which might not be suitable for cleaning using standard cleaning products.Undertake WorkNest’s COVID-19 Daily Cleaning Checklist.‘Staying COVID-19 Secure’ poster to be displayed at entrance. Undertake WorkNest’s COVID-19 Daily Management Checklist.Undertake WorkNest’s COVID-19 Daily Cleaning Checklist.Priests, employees and volunteers who fall into the vulnerable, clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories will be assessed and provisions made accordingly. The church will aim to maintain two-metre social distancing wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the distance can be reduced to one metre as long as other controls are in place (one metre +), including while arriving at and departing from work, while in work, and when travelling between sites.In an emergency, for example an accident or fire, people do not have to maintain social distancing if it would be unsafe.People involved in the provision of assistance to others will pay attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.Where social distancing cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, it will be considered whether that activity needs to continue for the church to operate and, if so, we will take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff. Further mitigating actions include:* Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning;
* Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible;
* Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other;
* Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible; and
* Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so each person works with only a few others).

Priests and church employees/volunteers will consider advertising set days or times when the church is open for individual prayer solely for those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, e.g. those over 70 or clinically vulnerable.Additional parking and facilities such as bike racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible will be provided.The church will aim to reduce congestion, for example by having more entry points to the church.The church will provide storage for clothes and bags.The church will use markings and introduce one-way flow at entry and exit points.The church will provide handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry and exit points and will not use touch-based security devices such as keypads.The church will provide alternatives for entry/exit points where appropriate, for example deactivating turnstiles requiring pass checks in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance.The church will service or adjust ventilation systems, for example so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels.Where systems serve multiple buildings, or we are unsure, advice will be sought from the heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.The church will open windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible.We will introduce one-way flow in and out of the premises with appropriate floor markings or signage, with restrictions on accessing non-essential areas.Multiple entry points will be opened, and clear signposting or assistance could be offered to guide worshippers and avoid congestion.We will stagger arrival and departure times to reduce the flow at exits and entrances as well as reduce any impacts on public transport. Consider using screens, barriers or alternative rooms and spaces to separate worshippers.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. |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Individual worship | Contact with packages or items handled by persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Individual prayer within a place of worship is defined as a person or household entering the church to pray on their own and not as part of a group, led prayer or communal act.Collective or communal prayer and regular scheduled services are not permitted at this time as set out in Regulations. This includes a Minister of Religion or lay person leading devotions or prayer of any sort.Individuals instructed to avoid touching property belonging to others such as shoes. Books and reusable and communal resources (e.g. service sheets and devotional material) will be removed from use. Single-use alternatives will be provided and will be removed by the worshipper. Items owned by the individual to aid worship will be brought in but will be requested to be removed again.Where singing, chanting or musical instrument performances take place as part of the act of worship, we will:* Think carefully about the need for singing or performance. We will take account of the wider health context and the participants, particularly if vulnerable individuals are involved.
* Where music plays a big part in worship, and recordings are available, consider using these as an alternative to live singing or performing.
* If we do plan to proceed, limit the number of performers as far as possible.
* Ensure spoken responses during worship are not in a raised voice.
* Ensure any instrument played during worship is cleaned thoroughly before and after use.
* Ensure any performers (for example, a church choir) are positioned in a way that avoids face-to-face performance as far as possible.
* Improve ventilation whenever possible, recognising that good ventilation plays a crucial role in reducing transmission.
* Always ensure there is a gap of at least two metres between any performers and the first row of worshippers. Further mitigations like screens or other barriers between performers and worshippers may also be considered.
* Based on public health advice, if worship takes place inside, the congregation should not participate in any activity that can create aerosols, including singing, shouting and chanting. This follows the advice generally for the Performing Arts.
* If worship takes place outdoors, the congregation may join in with singing, and should follow the principles set out in Performing Arts guidance. This includes ensuring that congregation members follow social distancing.

Any pre-requisite washing/ablution rituals will not be done at the place of worship and shared washing areas should be closed.Where possible, priests will discourage cash giving and will continue to encourage online giving and resources where possible minimising contact around transactions. Regular cleaning and hygiene will be maintained, and gloves worn to handle cash offerings where giving continues. |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Working in the office area of the church | Contact with packages or items handled by persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Anyone who can work from home will be asked to do so. The church will look to reduce contact with others by: * Reviewing layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other;
* Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep to social distancing;
* Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, arranging for people to work side-by-side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face;
* Only where it is not possible to move workstations further apart, using screens to separate people from each other;
* Managing occupancy levels to enable social distancing; and
* Avoiding the use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible (for example, call centres or training facilities), cleaning and sanitising workstations between different occupants, including shared equipment.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Catholic Church activities | Disposal of waste that may be contaminated by a coronavirus sufferer/member of the public, i.e. public waste bins, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc. | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | All waste that has been in contact with the relevant person, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied and disposed of as hazardous waste in line with normal infection prevention control policies and procedures. |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Working in the church | Contact with persons suffering from coronavirus – meetings | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | The church will look to reduce contact with others by: * Using remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings;
* Allowing only absolutely necessary participants to attend meetings and maintaining adequate separation throughout;
* Avoiding transmission during meetings, for example by avoiding sharing pens and other objects;
* Providing hand sanitiser in meeting rooms;
* Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible; and
* For areas where regular meetings take place, using floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Working in the church | Contact with persons suffering from coronavirus – parishioners and contractors | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | The church will look to improve hygiene between others by: * Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, as well as the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available;
* Providing regular reminders and signage to maintain personal hygiene standards;
* Providing hand sanitiser in multiple locations in addition to washrooms;
* Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible;
* Introducing enhancing cleaning for busy areas;
* Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection;
* Where possible, providing paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities; and
* Introducing enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Working in the church | Contact with persons suffering from coronavirus – contact with objects that come into the church and vehicles at the worksite | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | The church will introduce: * Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site;
* Cleaning procedures for vehicles;
* Greater handwashing and handwashing facilities for workers handling goods and merchandise and provide hand sanitiser where this is not practical;
* Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home; and
* Restrictions on non-church deliveries, for example personal deliveries to workers.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Catholic Church activities | Contact with persons suffering from coronavirus – wearing of PPE | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Existing PPE worn in a work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks should continue to be worn.All visitors, including contractors and members of the public, will be encouraged to wear a face covering when entering the premises unless medically exempt or exempt under the regulations. Social distancing and personal hygiene measures will be followed by priests and employees who are around anyone that is not wearing a face covering.Wherever it is required by law that face coverings are worn, we will request that all persons wear these, unless medically exempt. Priests using face coverings will be encouraged to:* Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
* When wearing a face covering, avoid touching their face or face covering, as it could contaminate them with germs from their hands.
* Change their face covering if it becomes damp or if they have touched it.
* Continue to wash their hands regularly.
* Change and wash face coverings daily.
* If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer’s instructions. If it is not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
* Practise social distancing wherever possible.
 |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible.[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-churches-about-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19) |
| Catholic Church activities | Contracting and spreading of infection | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | Basic infection controls should be followed as recommended by the government:* Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.
* Put used tissues in the bin straightaway.
* Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
* Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
* Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces.
* Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

Persons worried about symptoms should use the NHS 111, only call if they cannot get help online, and NOT go to their GP or other healthcare centre. |  | 5 |  | Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. |
| Catholic Church activities | Contact with parishioners/contactors to site | PriestContractorsParishionersEmployeesVolunteers | 5 | 5 | 25 | All contractors expected to complete the Contractor Checklist found on the WorkNest Coronavirus Advice Hub.Contractors only allowed on site if the work cannot be completed at another time.Contractors instructed to keep two metres away from all other persons at all times.Contractors provided with handwashing facilities. Contractors supervised at all times.  |  | 5 |  |  |
| Visiting parishioners in the community or at hospital | Contact with persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus | PriestMembers of the public | 5 | 5 | 25 | Priests advised to follow strict instructions of medical staff at all times whilst on hospital sites.Any materials taken to the hospital MUST be left there before leaving the hospital, e.g. prayer sheet, anointing oil on cotton wool.Priests to conform to hygiene standards at all times.Other persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus have been instructed by the government guidance to self-isolate.Maintain social distancing at all times and wash hands regularly or use hand gel. |  | 5 |  |  |
| Act of committal at crematoriums and cemeteriesWeddings | Contact with persons who may have been exposed to coronavirus | PriestMembers of the public | 5 | 5 | 25 | Clear documented procedure on funeral arrangements to limit the spread of the virus.Selected priests are to carry out act of committal (priests in high-risk/vulnerable groups are subject to shielding/self-isolation guidance).Observe hygiene practices, especially following contact with surfaces in crematoriums, e.g. wooden lecterns, benches, doors, etc.Observe social distancing procedures whilst at gravesides or in crematoriums as directed by crematorium and cemetery staff. |  | 5 |  |  |

## Risk/Priority Indicator Key

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| Likelihood |  | RISK / PRIORITY INDICATOR MATRIX |
| 1. Improbable / very unlikely |  | LIKELIHOOD | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| 2. Unlikely |  | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| 3. Even chance / may happen |  | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| 4. Likely |  | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| 5. Almost certain / imminent |  | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Severity (Consequence) |  | SEVERITY (CONSEQUENCE) |
| 1. Negligible (delay only) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Slight (minor injury / damage / interruption) |  | Summary | Suggested Timeframe |
| 3. Moderate (lost time injury, illness, damage, lost care provider) |  | 12-25 | High | As soon as possible |
| 4. High (major injury / damage, lost time care provider interruption, disablement) |  | 6-11 | Medium | Within the next three to six months |
| 5. Very High (fatality / care provider closure) |  | 1-5 | Low | Whenever viable to do so |

## Review Record

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| Date of Review |  | Confirmed by |  | Comments |
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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.

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| Employee Name (Print) |  | Employee Signature |  | Date |
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