

# COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship from 4 July

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This checklist is crafted using the above government guidance. It is intended as a tool to support AoG Churches who must undertake their own planning.

## 2. CHANGES FROM 04 JULY - CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

From 4 July, gatherings of more than 30 people will be permitted but only in certain public places as set out in law. Whilst engaging in an activity in the place of worship or surrounding grounds, all parties should adhere to social distancing guidelines. From 4 July, 2 meters or 1 meter with risk mitigation (where 2 meters is not viable) between households are acceptable. For acts of worship taking place away from the place of worship and surrounding grounds, as defined below, please follow the relevant guidance on the number of people permitted to gather in those spaces.

This guidance applies to places of worship when being used for a religious purpose or in preparation for a religious purpose. Where a place of worship's premises is used by other user groups, only those activities permitted by law should take place. Businesses which cannot yet operate are [listed here](#) (such as indoor fitness, indoor soft play, indoor performances in front of a live audience, etc).

For permitted uses of a place of worship not included in the [government guidance](#), you should refer to the specific guidance linked below:

- [Tourism, retail](#) and [restaurants](#) and [other hospitality industries](#)
- Meetings or small gatherings, as now permitted in other multi-use settings. (To be published shortly)

The following table sets out where it is advisable to limit the number of people within a place of worship due to the potential for increased spread of COVID-19. This checklist assumes everyone is familiar with key definitions of terminology used. A definition table is located in the [government guidance](#).

Activity	Advised gathering limit
Communal worship, including led prayers, devotions or meditations by a Minister of Religion or lay person.	Limits for communal worship should be decided on the basis of the capacity of the place of worship following a risk assessment (see Section ‘Restrictions on Capacity’).  Social distancing should be strictly adhered to ( see Section ‘Social Distancing’).
Marriage ceremonies	Marriage ceremonies should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to. See more detail in the <a href="#">Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.</a>
Funerals	Funerals should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to. See more detail in the <a href="#">COVID-19: guidance for managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic.</a>
Other life cycle ceremonies (definition in Table 2).	Other life cycle ceremonies should have no more than 30 people present, unless the life cycle rite takes place during routine communal worship. Social distancing should be strictly adhered to (See section 5 ‘Social distancing’).

<b>LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING - CHECKS</b>		
1	Has this guidance been read by all Church Trustees?	
2	Has this guidance been read by all Church Leadership?	
3	Has this guidance been read by all key workers not included above (H&S Representative, Activity Leaders etc)?	

### 3. SAFELY OPENING PLACES OF WORSHIP - CHECK YOUR KEY PRINCIPLES

Each individual place of worship is strongly advised to apply this guidance with reference to its own specific circumstances, including its size and type of activities, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated. Venue managers of places of worship will have discretion over when they consider it safe to open and should decide to remain closed if they are not able to safely adhere to the guidelines outlined above.

Many places of worship are also workplaces and should therefore be aware of their responsibilities as employers under existing health and safety law. Places of worship also have a duty of care to volunteers, to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Consideration should be given to how fair and equal access can safely be provided for all users to be able to undertake faith practices within a place of worship, in line with government guidelines and considering requirements under the Equality Act 2010 where these apply. To help decide which actions to take, a COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed by each place of worship. This will be in addition to any risk assessment already in place. Failure to complete a COVID-19 risk assessment could constitute a breach of [Health & Safety legislation](#), as could having a risk assessment with insufficient measures set out. Places of worship are encouraged to make their risk assessments available online where possible.

Venue managers are strongly advised to take action to minimise the potential for spreading of COVID-19 among worshippers, and those working/volunteering within the building and surrounding grounds. You may want to engage worshippers in co-designing an informal community behaviour agreement. Venue managers should take all possible steps to ensure the safety of the public, ensuring that gathering limits where set locally are adhered, and where the advised limit is set in this guidance as 30 people.

Individual venues should consider the cumulative impact of many venues re-opening in a small area. This means working with local authorities, neighbouring businesses and travel operators to assess this risk and applying additional mitigations. These could include:

- Further lowering capacity - even if it is possible to safely seat a number of people inside a venue, it may not be safe for them all to travel to and from, or enter and exit the venue.
- Staggering entry times with other local venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas.
- Arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues.
- Advising visitors to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue.

<b>KEY PRINCIPLE CHECKS</b>		
1	Have responsibilities as employers under existing Health & Safety Law & the church's policy been satisfied?	
2	Has the church's volunteer management policy been adhered to? (eg working practices to avoid risk to their health & safety)	
3	Has consideration been given to how fair and equal access can be provided for all users to access services? (eg frequency of services, booking systems etc)	
4	Has a COVID-19 risk assessment been completed by each place of worship you use as a Church?	
5	Has the risk assessment been made available? (places of worship are encouraged to make their risk assessments available online where possible)	
6	Has any form of informal 'community behaviour agreement' been co-designed with worshippers?	
7	Have steps been taken to ensure that gathering limits are adhered to? (see page 2)	
8	Has venue capacity been considered? (eg seating, safe travel to/from, queuing, entering and exiting the venue, toilets)	
9	Has consideration of entry times been considered? (avoiding queues in surrounding areas)	
10	Has consideration been given to travel options & advice? (eg one way travel routes, advice to avoid forms of transport or avoid crowded areas when in transit)	

Venue managers of places of worship will have discretion over when they consider it safe to open and should decide to remain closed if they are not able to safely adhere to the guidelines outlined above.

It is advised that the full checklist be reviewed before answering the question below.

1	Are you satisfied that you can safely adhere to the guidelines this checklist, and consider it safe to open?	
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## 4. ADAPTING PRACTICES TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION - ADAPTATION CHECKS

Religious leaders should adopt the guidance below and seek to include additional changes that could be made to their religious rituals that usually involve close contact and shared items between individuals. Places of worship and faith communities should adapt religious services, especially where ceremonies would otherwise have taken place over a number of hours or days, to ensure the safety of those present and minimise spread of infection. It is advised that the ceremonies and services should be concluded in the shortest reasonable time. Once completed, participants should be encouraged to move on promptly, to minimise the risk of contact and spread of infection. If appropriate, you should reconfigure spaces to enable worshippers to be seated rather than standing which reduces the risk of contact. It is recommended that, where possible, places of worship continue to stream worship or other events to avoid large gatherings and to continue to reach those individuals who are self-isolating or particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. More specific guidance is as follows.

### Shared items

1	Have you set up barriers and/or clear signage? Individuals should be prevented from touching objects that are handled communally.	
2.	Is it clear to people that Individuals should avoid touching property belonging to others and any items, should be placed and collected ONLY by their owner while adhering to social distancing principles?	
3.	Have you removed reusable and communal resources such as service sheets, religious texts or devotional material?. Single use alternatives should be provided as long as they are removed and disposed of by the worshipper.	
4.	Have you communicated that Items owned by an individual to aid worship such as a Bible or Notebook, can be brought in but should be removed again by the worshipper?	
5.	Have you considered providing a selection of clean books/Bibles for individuals to use in circumstances where worshippers cannot bring their own? Clean books should be quarantined for 48 hours since their previous use and should be quarantined for 48 hours again after use. Items which cannot be easily cleaned should also be subject to the 48 hour quarantine after use.	

Please also refer to specific cleaning advice later in this document.

## Food and Drink

1	Have you considered if food or drink ('consumables') is essential to the act of worship? Food or drink can be used, however the sharing of food should be avoided, as should the use of communal vessels.	
2.	Have you considered how to handle consumables as a part of a faith practice? Those giving and receiving food items should wash their hands thoroughly before and after consumption, or wear gloves.	
3.	Has the person distributing the elements been told that they should release it, into the hand only, in such a way to avoid any contact between them and those receiving it, or wear gloves? (If accidental contact does occur, both people should cleanse their hands immediately.)	
4.	Have other mitigations been considered, for example, foodstuffs should be prewrapped, and a system should be in place to prevent individuals from coming into contact with consumables and any dishes and/ or cutlery other than their own (for example the use of shared bowls).	
5.	Is everyone aware that speaking, singing and chanting should NOT happen across uncovered consumables (other than consumables to be used by the celebrant alone). Consumables must be securely covered, and prior to the receptacle being opened, should be cleaned, hands must be washed or gloves worn.	
	Have arrangements been put in place for hospitality spaces? Hospitality spaces within a place of worship, such as cafes, are permitted to open but should be limited to table-service, social distancing should be observed, and with minimal staff and customer contact in line with <a href="#">hospitality guidance</a> .	

## Singing, Chanting and the use of Musical Instruments

1	<p>Is everyone aware that people should avoid singing, shouting, raising voices and/or playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting?</p> <p>This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplets.</p>	
2.	<p>Is everyone aware that speech/spoken responses during worship should also NOT be in a raised voice.</p>	
3.	<p>Is everyone aware that activities such as singing, chanting, shouting and/or playing of instruments that are blown into should be specifically avoided in worship or devotions and in rehearsal?</p> <p>This is because there is a possible additional risk of infection in environments where individuals are singing or chanting as a group, and this applies even if social distancing is being observed or face coverings are used.</p>	
4.	<p>Have arrangements been made so that only one individual may sing or chant.</p> <p>Where essential to an act of worship, one individual only should be permitted to sing or chant, and the use of plexi-glass screens should be considered to protect worshippers from them, as this will further prevent transmission and the screen can be easily cleaned.</p>	
5.	<p>Has use of recordings, where available, are used as an alternative to live singing?</p>	
6.	<p>Is everyone aware of the advice only to play musical instruments that are not blown into.</p>	

The government and the medical and scientific communities are urgently engaged in research around transmission risk and how such activities can best be managed safely, and further guidance will follow when available.

## Weddings and other Life Cycle events

It is strongly advised that only essential aspects of the ceremonies take place at this time.

1.	Is everyone aware that no food or drink should be consumed as a part of the event unless required for the purposes of solemnisation?	
2.	Is everyone clear on participant numbers. As stated in Table 1, weddings should have no more than 30 people present. Other life cycle ceremonies should also have no more than 30 people present, unless the event is part of a routine communal worship service. Worshippers should maintain social distancing.	
3.	Is everyone aware that large wedding receptions or parties should not take place after life cycle events. See <a href="#">restaurants</a> and <a href="#">other hospitality industries</a> guidance for further information.	

## Use of Water

1	Is everyone aware that, in terms of Baptism it is advised that full immersion should be avoided. Others present should move out of range of any potential splashing.	
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## Cash Donations

1	Has consideration been made to avoid or minimise cash donations? Where possible you should discourage cash donations and continue to use online or contactless giving and resources.	
2	Have alternative arrangements for cash donations been made? Eg: cash could be collected in a receptacle that is set in one place and handled by one individual, as opposed to being passed around. Regular cleaning and hygiene should be maintained, and gloves worn to handle cash offerings where giving continues.	



## Young People and Children attending places of worship

1	<p>Have arrangements been made to manage young people and children in places of worship?</p> <p>Young children should be supervised by the parent or guardian. They should wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use hand sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered. Places of worship can help remind children and young people, and their parents and guardians, of the important actions they should take during the COVID-19 outbreak to help prevent the spread of the virus.</p> <p>Posters on general hand hygiene can be found on the <a href="#">eBug website</a>.</p>	
2	<p>Have measures been put in place for places of worship and activities for their young people and children?</p> <p>Any shared facilities for children, such as play corners, soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean, should be removed and/or put out of use.</p>	
3	<p>Have churches considered how to deal with outdoor play areas?</p> <p>Outdoor playgrounds are permitted to open where venue managers risk assess that it is safe to do so, see relevant <a href="#">guidance</a>.</p> <p>Particular attention should be paid to cleaning frequently touched surfaces by children and those that are at child height.</p> <p>Principles in general guidance from the Department for Education should also be followed for any separate children's activities being organised by the place of worship alongside or within a service.</p> <p>For formal childcare and educational settings refer to the relevant <a href="#">guidance</a></p>	

## 6. GENERAL ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION - GENERAL ACTION CHECKS

People should act in a safe and responsible way in order to reduce the spread of infection in our communities. The opening up of public places following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by the NHS Test and Trace service. In line with other government guidance for other venues including in the retail and hospitality sector, **you should assist this service by keeping an accurate temporary record of visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your place of worship, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed for contact tracing and the investigation of local outbreaks.** This may be an additional reason for places of worship to consider a booking system for visitors, in addition to limiting numbers in order to adhere to with social distancing guidelines.

1	Do you have an accurate (temporary) recording system which records and retains visitor names for 21 days?	
2	Have you implemented a booking system for visitors (which helps with limiting gathering numbers)?	

### Restrictions on Capacity

Limits for communal worship should be decided locally on the basis of the capacity of the place of worship following a risk assessment. The number of people permitted to enter the place of worship at any one time should be limited, so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres, or 1 meter with risk mitigation (where 2 meters is not viable) between households.

1	Have you considered the size and circumstance (including ventilation) of the premises?	
2	Have you determined the maximum number of people that can be accommodated whilst also facilitating social distancing? (this may therefore be lower than the maximum 30 people who can attend life-cycle events such as weddings). The safe number of people should be decided by the venue manager in consultation with the trustees.	
3	Have you taken into account the total floorspace as well as likely pinch points and busy areas (such as entrances, exits) and introduced (where possible) alternative or one-way routes?	

## Social distancing

All managers and all visitors to a place of worship should follow the guidelines on social distancing

	<p>Are you adhering to social distancing of at least 2 metres or 1 meter with risk mitigation (where 2 meters is not viable) between households? For frequently used places, are you marking areas using floor tape or paint to help people maintain social distance?</p>	
	<p>Have you considered and set out the additional mitigations you will introduce in your risk assessment? These could include, for instance, avoiding any face-to-face seating by changing layouts, reducing the number of people in enclosed spaces, improving ventilation, using protective screens and face coverings, and closing non-essential social spaces, as outlined throughout the <a href="#">government guidance</a>.</p>	
	<p>Have you implemented a queue management process? It is important that the flow of groups in and out of the premises can be carefully controlled in a socially distanced way, reducing the risk of congestion or contact. Considerations should be made for how to manage those waiting outside a place of worship, including the introduction of socially distanced queuing systems.</p>	

All practices should be carried out such that adherence to social distancing can be maintained between individuals from different households. This is to reduce the transmission of the virus. There should only be a closer distance when absolutely essential to enable a faith practice to be carried out (for example contact with the faith leader). Time spent in contact should be kept to an absolute minimum.

## Other mitigations to support social distancing

Have you implemented processes and practices such as:

1	Those leading the worship reminding congregants of the importance of social distancing and hygiene.	
2	Introducing a one-way flow in and out of the premises with appropriate floor markings or signage, with restrictions on accessing non-essential areas. At the end of worship, this could include worshippers leaving one row at a time, in order to prevent crowding at entry or exit points.	
3	Multiple entry points opened, and clear signposting or assistance offered to guide worshippers and to avoid congestion.	
4	Staggering arrival and departure times to reduce the flow at exits and entrances as well as reduce any impacts on public transport. Introducing a booking system to help facilitate this. Ensure prioritisation is given to people who may have a specific need or requirement.	
5	“Sing screens”, barriers or alternative rooms and spaces to separate worshippers.	
6	All changes to entrances, exits and queues should take into account reasonable adjustments to accommodate those who need them, such as worshippers with physical disabilities.	
7	Introducing a booking system to help with managing numbers, particularly for services where demand will be high.	
8	Venue managers advertising set days or times when places of worship are open ONLY for those particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, such as those over 70 or clinically vulnerable	
9	Leading worship in different spaces of the place of worship to limit the number of people in any one location - while avoiding risk of crowding at entry/exit points.	
10	Extra attention to cleaning and hygiene to reduce the risk of transmission where social distancing cannot be maintained. Consider how well ventilated the venue is and improve this where possible, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate.	

11	Following (and publicising) the guidance on hand hygiene:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or the crook of your sleeved arm (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue away hygienically immediately afterwards. Then wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available.</li> </ul>	

The above advice on social distancing also applies when travelling to and from a place of worship. Decisions to reopen car parks are to be made locally and practical measures such as changing the car park layout to help people socially distance should be considered. Guidance on social distancing relevant to transport, parking and the public realm can be found in the latest [guidance for passengers who need to travel during the coronavirus outbreak](#). This is being regularly reviewed and updated.

1	Have worshippers been advised to ensure they follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from a place of worship?	
2	Has the car park layout been changed to help people socially distance?	
3	Has extra car park stewarding been considered?	

### People who are symptomatic

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend the place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household. Remote participation should be considered, for example by live streaming. This applies equally to individuals who work at the place of worship.

1	Have church workers and worshippers been advised that, if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend the place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household?	
2	Has opportunity for remote worship participation been considered and/or made available (eg live streaming, YouTube etc)?	

### Individuals who are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household

Where individuals are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test & Trace, they should participate remotely. See [stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19](#). Guidance is different for funerals, see guidance on [managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic](#).

### Hygiene

1	When entering and leaving a place of worship - has everyone been asked to wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or to use hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available?.	
2	Are there signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase hand washing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into the crook of your sleeved arm if a tissue is not available.	
3	Has hand sanitiser been provided in multiple locations in addition to in toilet facilities?	

A Public Health England poster can be downloaded [here](#).

### Toilets

Toilets inside or linked to places of worship should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

1	Have you got Covid-19 related H&S and hygiene posters and signs on display?	
2	Are you using social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and have you adopted a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks).	
3	Have you made hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical?	
4	Have you ensured suitable handwashing facilities include running water* and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand dryers) are available. Communal towels should be removed and replaced with single use paper towels.	
	<i>*Have you checked your water is safe (ie legionnaire tested or other safety method)</i>	
5	Have you set out clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage? Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider the use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.	
6	Are you keeping facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate and it is safe to do so?	
7	Have you placed special care for the cleaning of portable toilets and the use of any larger toilet blocks (eg restricted access, extra cleaning)?	
8	Have you put up a visible cleaning schedule that is kept up to date?	
9	Have you provided more waste facilities and more frequent refuse collection?	

## Cleaning

1	Have you set up cleaning routines? All surfaces, especially those most frequently touched such as door handles and rails, should be regularly cleaned using standard cleaning products. See <a href="#">guidance</a> . Sufficient time needs to be allowed for this	
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	cleaning to take place, particularly before reopening for the first time. Frequently used objects, surfaces or spaces, including for example doorways between outside and inside spaces should be given particular attention when cleaning.	
2	Do you have any listed historic surfaces to clean? Historic England has also produced <a href="#">guidance on cleaning historic surfaces</a> , which might not be suitable for cleaning using standard cleaning products.	
3	Does your Risk Assessment set out frequency and other cleaning related processes? A decision should be made locally on how frequently cleaning should take place based on an assessment of risk and use of the building.	

### Face coverings

Evidence currently suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms, it may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with. Face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including social distancing, minimising time spent in contact, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in a place of worship. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you and your household should isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

1	Have you taken any views on face coverings with your workers and worshippers?	
2	Have you considered whether face masks should be mandatory or voluntary?	
3	Have you shared your decision with your workers and worshippers?	
4	Have workers and worshippers been advised on best practice use of face coverings?	

Worshippers, volunteers and staff, may choose to wear face coverings to offer protection to others and if so it is important to use them properly:

- Thoroughly wash hands before putting them on and taking them off.
- The key thing is they should cover the mouth and nose and fit well around the face. See [guidance on making face coverings at home](#).
- Face coverings should not be used by young children or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly. For example, primary age children unassisted, or those with respiratory conditions.



- A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These masks and respirators should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers, and those in industrial settings, like those exposed to dust hazards who already use these in their daily work.
- In England, members of the public are strongly urged to wear a face covering in hospital and it is mandatory to wear a face covering on public transport, except for those who are excepted in the list here.

### Protecting the vulnerable

There should be a particular focus on protecting people who are clinically vulnerable and more likely to develop severe illness. Actions should include:

- Religious leaders, lay people, family, volunteers, staff and members of the public, including children, [staying at home and self-isolating](#) if they have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of or change to sense of smell or taste. This is to minimise risk of spread of COVID-19 to friends, the wider community, and particularly the vulnerable.
- Individuals who are shielding should continue to follow the government’s [advice on shielding](#).
- If anyone becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 in a place of worship they should go home immediately and be advised to follow the [stay at home guidance, which covers NHS Test and Trace](#). If they need clinical advice, they should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they don’t have internet access).

In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. They should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Other people who may have been in contact with the person who has become unwell should wash their hands thoroughly after the interaction, but they do not need to take any other specific action unless they develop symptoms themselves or are advised to do so by NHS Test and Trace. If they do develop symptoms they should follow the [stay at home guidance](#).

1	Do you know who, in your workers and worshippers, are clinically vulnerable and more likely to develop severe illness?	
2	Have you made workers and worshippers aware of the actions needed to protect people who are clinically vulnerable and more likely to develop severe illness?	

### Individuals aged 70 years and over attending the place of worship

Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.

1	Do you know who, in your workers and worshippers, are 70 and over?	
2	Have you made workers and worshippers aware of the actions needed to protect those 70 and over? Consider informing those people 70 and over in particular of the symptoms of COVID-19 and <a href="#">current stay alert and social distancing guidance</a> .	

**Individuals who are extremely clinically vulnerable/shielding**

The NHS has written to around 2.2. million who are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, advising them to shield. See the current [guidance for this group](#). Shielded patients are currently advised not to meet more than one person from outside of their own household, and therefore not currently advised to attend places of worship. From Monday 6 July, those shielding individuals may choose to gather in groups of up to 6 people outdoors and form a support bubble with another household, they will therefore still be advised not to attend places of worship indoors. Advice for both the clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable is however advisory and they can choose how to manage their own risks.

1	Have you made the appropriate people in your church aware of the latest guidance for those who are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19?	
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## 7. HOW CAN PLACES OF WORSHIP COMMUNICATE THIS GUIDANCE TO VISITORS? - COMMUNICATION CHECKS

Each place of worship is strongly advised to implement the measures set out in the [government guidance](#) to ensure that visitors comply with Government's guidance, and any risk assessments completed for the venue, for the safety of all those who visit and work there. The Government strongly advises each place of worship ensures that visitors comply with the social distancing guidelines.

1	You may have provided your own guidance to your workers and worshippers. Have you considered making the government's information on COVID-19 available to your faith community and others, in order to challenge misinformation?	
2	Have you considered informing <a href="#">certain groups of people</a> who may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, of the symptoms of COVID-19 and <a href="#">current stay at home and social distancing guidance</a> , and strongly discouraged them from attending gatherings during this time or set aside a time for them to attend for individual devotions?	
3	Have you considered how guidance can be communicated to regular worshippers and new visitors, including before they visit, in a way that is accessible and appropriate for the cultures, languages and reading levels of communities served by the place of worship?	

## 8. PROTECTIVE SECURITY - SECURITY CHECKS

Adapting a place of worship to COVID-19 measures will inevitably result in changes to operating policies, processes and procedures at the place of worship. Any changes to these should always be considered with regard to security implications.

In implementing the [government guidance](#), places of worship should continue to take account of protective security considerations to maintain effective security of the premises, all staff and visitors, especially around entry and exit procedures, and any queueing or crowding outside the building where people can be more exposed.

Individuals with responsibility for the security of the venue should be consulted and involved throughout to help ensure good security is maintained as far as possible and that there are not any unintended security consequences as a result of any changes that are made.

A risk assessment should be undertaken on any new measures or changes in operation to ensure risks have been considered and all practical mitigations identified and implemented. It is up to each place of worship to assess the level of risk, and places of worship may choose to delay opening if they do not feel they are able to safely do so under current social distancing measures.

1	Have you considered how to maintain effective security of the premises, all staff and visitors, especially around entry and exit procedures, and any queueing or crowding outside the building where people can be more exposed?	
2	Have your considerations been built into your risk assessment? A risk assessment that considers protective security should be conducted in addition to, or as part of, any health and safety/ fire safety or other broader assessment of the hazards and threats to the people in and around the place of worship as a result of changes made to how that place of worship functions	

### Queues, social distancing and security:

Whilst dense crowding is unlikely if social distancing is operating correctly, the revised layout of spaces could present new security risks, particularly where multiple queues are created.

1	Have you organised queuing? Venue managers should wherever possible, and in line with social distancing, organise queuing within existing protected areas; venue managers should not remove any security features or useful street furniture items without considering protective security in the round.	
2	Have you considered queuing in public areas? If queuing is only possible outside of protected areas then venue managers should consider and mitigate any vulnerabilities by: routing queues behind permanent physical structures (such as street furniture, bollards, trolley parks & bike racks) to provide a visual deterrent and delay; closing off vehicle access to shared spaces; adjusting servicing and delivery times; reducing the opportunities for vehicles to interact with pedestrians; erecting robust barriers; introducing a reduced speed limit mandated using traffic calming.	
3	Have you considered the implications of making your queuing arrangements known to the public? Venue managers should avoid making public at the site or online, detailed information about queue locations, times and number of people or removal of security features such as street furniture and bollards.	

### Staff, security officers/ volunteers and stewarding

It is vital for staff to remain vigilant and act on potential security threats including terrorism and wider criminality. Whilst stewards, and in some cases security officers, may be focussed on managing people and queues for COVID-19 safety reasons, they should continue to remain vigilant for and report any suspicious activity as soon as possible.

1	Have you included awareness of security threats alongside health and safety risks in your worker briefings?	
2	Have you considered having separate workers/teams for managing social distancing and health and safety aspects, and for security as this will allow proper due attention to be given to keeping the site safe from threats?	
3	Have you got a good communication system in place to inform people of any incident. Carry out a short exercise or test to check procedures and equipment for this are working correctly.	
4	Have you tested your security procedures and equipment to check they are working correctly?	

## ENFORCEMENT

It is important to be aware of the enforcement provisions, as is the case for other sectors. Where the enforcing authority (your local authority), identifies responsible individuals who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks (including this guidance), they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of risks. For example, this would cover employers not taking appropriate action to ensure social distancing, where possible.

Under existing [Health & Safety legislation](#), failure to complete a COVID-19 risk assessment could constitute a breach, as could having a risk assessment with insufficient measures. The actions the enforcing authority can take include the provision of specific advice to employers to support them to achieve the required standard, through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years.

Employers are expected to respond to such actions of any advice or notices issued by enforcing authorities rapidly and are required to do so within any timescales imposed by the enforcing authority. The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the Government and their sector bodies to protect their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.