

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for use of premises of Ashford Baptist Church (ABC)

As trustees of the building, we have a duty of care to protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to those who use the building this is called a risk assessment.

This Risk Assessment serves the purposes of general use of the ABC premises while mitigating the risks of Covid-19. This contains the minimum requirements to be met. For a specific activity, the Trustees of ABC require additional completion of individual COVID-19 risk assessments pertinent to specific activities, gatherings, meetings by the relevant activity leaders before an activity may take place on the premises.

This Risk Assessment has been written within the framework of, and should be read in conjunction with, the document *Coronavirus: Guidance on re-opening Baptist church buildings* by *Baptists Together*.

In case of conflict of information, Guidance from HM’s Government will prevail over this Risk Assessment.

Name & Address of Church	Assessment undertaken by
Ashford Baptist Church (ABC)	Trustees of ABC: Alison O’Donnell, Keith Tam, Daniel Rai, John Sunwar, Lorna Sylvester, Rob Sylvester, Helen Wilson Member of ABC: Quentin Ma
St John’s Lane Ashford Kent TN23 1PS	Dates of this Assessment: 06/10/21 Date of approval by the Trustees of ABC: 06/10/21 To take effect on 06/10/2021
	Next review date: 10/11/2021 or earlier (See end of document for a record of reviews.)

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: 2 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.

In 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 emphasis the importance of taking control measures seriously in order to reduce the likelihood and severity of the risk.

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		Suggested Timeframe for Action
20+	High	Immediate / within days
15-19	Medium	Within weeks
1-15	Low	Whenever viable to do so

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
	Severity	4	
	Overall Risk	28	
	Likelihood	2	
	Severity	4	
	Overall Risk	16	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Approval by (a) designated representative(s) of the Trustees, subject to satisfactory infection risk mitigation and paperwork, e.g. a signed risk assessment, required by the representative(s), before a gathering may take place on the premises	Activity Leader, Trustee, attendees	
2. For each specific group using the premises that is part of a larger organisation to adhere to the organisation’s guidance on COVID-19 in addition to the control measures set out in this document	Activity Leader, Trustee, designated person	
3. Ask everyone symptomatic not to attend	Activity Leader, Trustee	
4. Emphasise increased risks involved for clinically vulnerable person(s) entering the premises for meetings/gatherings	Activity Leader, Trustee	
5. All attendees asked to follow government guidance on shielding / self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/returning from foreign travel	Activity Leader, Trustee	
6. Attendees are encouraged to undertake COVID-19 self-testing twice a week (even without symptoms) and to make full use of the NHS COVID-19 app	Trustee	
7. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building (see our Coronavirus poster library)	Church Secretary	
8. Everyone to wear a face covering on arrival (except those of primary school age or younger, or specific medical reasons). For spare face coverings to be provided to those who arrive without possession of such coverings.	All attendees	
9. Everyone to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building	All attendees	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
10. Everyone to sign in on the register on arrival	All attendees	
11. Individuals signing to confirm they are free of any COVID-19 symptom and are not bound by any quarantine requirement before entering the building for a Sunday service	All attendees	
12. Social distancing measures to be maintained where possible, including the arrival and departure of the venue.	All attendees	
<p>13. Action Plan in place and communicated to leaders in event of Coronavirus case known to have entered premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a person who has attended any activity at the church, or been inside the building for any reason, becomes symptomatic or tests positive for Covid-19 within FOURTEEN days of being at the church, they must contact both the activity leader, and one of the Church Trustees. An activity leader becoming aware of anyone of the above conditions must also contact one of the Church Trustees. • The Trustees will then take action to close and clean the church and to inform others who may be affected. The register of attenders will be used to inform the Government’s “Track and Trace” organisation regarding those who may have been in contact with an affected person. • The person who has tested positive for Covid-19 and all who may be affected should self-isolate according to guidance from HM’s Government. • The Trustees to informing activity leaders who have scheduled to use the premises not to use the premises until relevant cleaning has been completed. 	Church Secretary, Trustees, Activity Leaders, person tested positive for COVID-19	
14. Activity Leader or Steward(s) present to oversee and facilitate check-in procedures, including registration, hand sanitisation, Personal Protective Equipment and seating arrangements	Activity Leader or Steward(s)	
15. To manage register, and provision of hand sanitiser and spare facial coverings	Church Secretary, nominated person(s)	

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 4
	Overall Risk 28
Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood 2
	Severity 4
	Overall Risk 16

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Approval by (a) designated representative(s) of the Trustees, subject to satisfactory infection risk mitigation and paperwork, e.g. a signed risk assessment, required by the representative(s), before a gathering may take place on the premises		
2. For each specific group using the premises that is part of a larger organisation to adhere to the organisation's guidance on COVID-19 in addition to the control measures set out in this document	Church Secretary, designated person(s)	
3. Separate measures are made to mitigate COVID-19 risks for Sunday School students when they are in smaller rooms of the premises separate from the main service.		
4. Clinically vulnerable person(s) is (are) encouraged to discuss enhanced precautions/measures when using the premises with an ABC Trustee / Activity Leader	Clinically vulnerable person(s), Activity leader(s), Trustees	
5. Congregants not leading a service not to be seated in the front row immediately facing speakers/singers	Stewards, congregants	
6. A minimum of 4 stewards to be present, where possible, at each Sunday service to facilitate safe practices on the premises	Church Secretary, stewards	
7. Keep open at least one window on each side of the room of the meeting, for the duration of the meeting. Between a rehearsal and the service, to increase ventilation by opening of extra windows / doors. A window may only be adjusted or closed during a large gathering by a steward or a Trustee.	Activity leaders, stewards, musicians, attendees	
8. The duration of each gathering taking place indoors should be limited to a maximum of 1.5 hours.	Activity leaders	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
<p>9. All attendees to wear face coverings, covering mouth and nose, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children of primary school age or younger; or • when there is a relevant medical reason; or • when attendees are at their seats, and are not speaking/singing; or • in situations specified in other part(s) of this table for individuals involved in delivering a service. 	All attendees	
<p>10. Anyone leading from the stage or contributing to the delivery of a service stationary in a specified area of the premises may opt not to wear face coverings, with the following condition: where individuals are 1 metre or less from each other, face coverings may be not worn only with unanimous agreement of all those in proximity. An isolated concern for risk of infection will continue to prevail over other considerations: the person expressing the concern should not be the only person wearing a face covering in the proximity. A leader should ensure a comfortable channel for any individual to express any concern freely without pressure or fear of change of treatment.</p>	Leaders, individuals involved in delivering a service	
<p>11. No physical contact between persons from different households/bubbles</p>	All attendees	
<p>12. Social distancing is encouraged between households/bubbles. Specific measures include: - Attendees are encouraged to arrive early to avoid crowding at entrance just before the start of a gathering.</p>	All attendees	
<p>13. Attendees to be directed to seats by stewards, who will consider the attendees' preferences</p>	Attendees, stewards	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
<p>14. For a Sunday service, congregants are seated with a minimum of 1 vacant chair between households/bubbles. Cards are used to facilitate marking of seats not to be used.</p> <p>Where possible, congregants are seated so that there are no other households/bubbles seated directly in front of or behind them.</p> <p>Congregants are asked to fill up seats from the front (except the first row reserved for musicians) to reduce mixing/mingling between households/bubbles indoors. Those who are physically fit to access the gallery are encouraged to take seats there, in order to allow seats for those unable to on the ground floor.</p>	Church secretary, Stewards, all attendees	19/07/21: Maximum number no longer applies.
15. Musicians including singers to finish rehearsals 30 minutes before the start of service or earlier	Musicians	
<p>16. - Congregants to use Station Road entrance to enter premises, except ramp users who can use the St John's Lane entrance</p> <p>- To allow exit at both doors</p>	All attendees, activity leaders, stewards	
17. 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.	Trustees	
18. Attendees may sing while wearing face coverings and remaining in their positions (as specified in earlier items of this section) during worship. They are informed of the increased risk of singing and raised volume, and are encouraged to be considerate of their singing/speaking volumes for the sake of others.	All attendees, Church Secretary	
19. No playing of woodwind instruments	All attendees	
20. Invitations to speak from the congregation should be planned for times when those who speak will likely be wearing face coverings, i.e. an intercessional open prayer between songs.	Leaders	
21. Verbal responses of raised volume, e.g. an intercessional open prayer from the congregation, should only be made when face coverings are worn.	All attendees	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
22. The maximum number of musicians to be 6 allocated per service; including a maximum of 2 singers and a keyboard player singing. Each singer to be specifically allocated a position for singing and a seat nearby off the stage when not singing. No one else to use the allocated position or seat before, during or after a service.	Leaders, singers, attendees	19/07/21: An additional non-singing musician positioning behind the keyboard player may participate.
23. The maximum number of singers/speakers delivering to be 3 on the stage at any one time. Singers/speakers not delivering should take seats close to their delivery positions off the stage	Speakers and singers at a service	
24. Singers/Speakers to position behind a specified gold line on the stage, or further if practical, while delivering items in a service, to mitigate increased risk from singing/speaking while not wearing masks	Speakers and singers at a service	
25. Each singer/speaker leading a service to be distanced from other people as much as possible.	Speakers and singers at a service	
26. Screens on the stage are not necessary, on condition that all who lead on the stage have had a negative lateral flow test within 24 hours before a large gathering. This will be verbally agreed. and completed in faith.	Speakers and singers at a service	
27. Any background music played, including that before and after a gathering, should be kept to a low volume enough, so people will not need to raise their voices to speak	Activity leaders, musicians	
28. Congregants are encouraged to leave the premises shortly at the end of a gathering.	All attendees	

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	2
	Severity	4		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	28		Overall Risk	16

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Access limited to room being used and necessary thoroughfares. Other areas to be locked or cordoned off. Signage may be displayed for such instructions.	Church Secretary, designated person(s), activity leaders, stewards	
2. Doors kept open where possible to reduce contact with door handles (may not be appropriate for fire safety or to maintain suitable temperature)	activity leaders, stewards	
3. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Activity leaders, stewards, designated person(s), external cleaners	
4. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own cushions for seating if they need to. Attendees to take their own cushions away from the premises. No passing of cushion between households/bubbles.	All attendees	
5. No passing of cards marking unavailable seats. These are picked up by a household/bubble representative.	All attendees	
6. No passing of collection plate/bag and collection not counted for 72 hours after service.	Trustees, stewards	
7. No contact of the same microphone for speaking from different members of the congregation. A microphone to be assigned to one individual for physical contact per gathering. A congregant invited to speak to respond as part of a service should not touch the microphone.	PA team, ministers, musicians, activity leaders, all attendees	
8. Building not used again for 72 hours or building thoroughly cleaned between uses as per Cleaning Protocol	Activity leaders, stewards, designated person(s), external cleaners	

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
9. No serving of food and drink items prior to, during or after the service, with the exemption of communion as follows	Activity leaders, stewards, designated person(s), external cleaners	
10. Communion resources may only be served in the following conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a sealed portion for each individual • Each portion to be prepared and handled by designated people immediately after handwashing and in gloved hands. • Each portion to be collected by each individual on entry to the premises. • Each individual to keep hold of the portion, with no other person coming into contact with it • Remaining materials following communion to be either taken out of the premises by the same individual, or cleaned immediately at the end of the gathering 	Trustees, Ministers, stewards, designated person(s),	
11. No distribution of bibles or other books – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	All attendees	
12. Each microphone and other equipment kept to a single individual throughout the same gathering.	All users of equipment	
13. All equipment used to be disinfected at the end of each gathering.	Designated person(s)	
14. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and Cleaning Checklist (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	Activity Leaders and Trustees	

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	2
	Severity	4		Severity	4
	Overall Risk	28		Overall Risk	16

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Activity leaders, stewards, designated person(s), external cleaners	
2. For large gatherings, for a steward to ensure 1 person at a time to make their way to, to use and to make their way return from the toilet. For small groups, for an activity leader to ensure the above.	Stewards, activity leader, attendees	
3. Toilets supplied with disposal hand towels (not a reusable linen towel), hand sanitiser. Limit to 1 person per toilet unit (even if it has multiple cubicles), posters etc.	All users	
4. Undertake the 'Pre-Event Checklist' (Appendix 2 of Guidance on Re-opening churches) and Cleaning Checklist (Appendix 3 of Guidance on Re-opening churches)	Activity Leaders and Trustees	
5. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.	Church Secretary	
6. Introducing enhanced cleaning of toilet facilities, provision of more waste facilities, more frequent rubbish collections.	Activity leaders, stewards, designated person(s), external cleaners	

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	2
	Severity	4			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	28			Overall Risk	16

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone to take individual waste (that they have touched) home with them if possible	All attendees	
2. All waste to be assumed contaminated and handled appropriately	Activity leaders, stewards	
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	Activity leaders, stewards, Trustees	
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE (see cleaning guidance for details).	Activity leaders, stewards, Trustees	
5. All bins lined with disposable liners and all waste double bagged prior to disposal and disposed of as hazardous waste in line with normal infection prevention control policies and procedures.	Activity leaders, stewards, Trustees, external cleaners	
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided, including at least one by the exit.	Church Secretary	

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	2
	Severity	4			Severity	4
	Overall Risk	28			Overall Risk	16

Control Measures	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Consider use of remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.	All attendees	
2. Restrict attendance of individuals at meetings to those absolutely necessary and encourage social distancing throughout.	Trustees and Chairs of meetings	
3. Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, by avoiding sharing pens and other objects.	All attendees	
4. Provide hand sanitiser in rooms used for meetings.	Activity leaders, stewards	
5. Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.	Trustees and Chairs of meetings	
6. For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people achieve social distancing.	Church Secretary and designated person(s)	
7. Implement infection control procedures for goods and items entering the premises.	Church Secretary, Trustees	

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Confirmed by	Comments
01/05/21	Quentin Ma	Revised for the purpose of church re-opening for Sunday services from 30/05/21, including the number of people present on the premises, and spacing of people on the stage.
19/07/21	Quentin Ma	Revised in line with the Government easing of legal requirements. This includes removal of a maximum number of people present, discontinuation of a booking system to attend a Sunday service, stepping down social distancing, re-introduction of congregational singing, adding a non-singing musician to the maximum number of musicians and the use of a microphone for congregational verbal responses.
02/09/21	Quentin Ma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of minimum number of stewards to 4 to meet anticipated increase in size of congregation Discontinuation of alternate unavailable row of seats. This is stepped down to congregants being seated without people from other households/bubbles seated directly in front or behind, where possible. Stepping down mandatory requirement re mingling between households indoors: Attendees are encouraged to leave the premises shortly at the end of a gathering.
07/10/21	Quentin Ma	<p>Amendments to previous version of the assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of re-opening and pre-event checklists. These are replaced with a requirement for a gathering to proceed on the premises only with the approval by (a) designated representative(s) of the Trustees, subject to satisfactory infection risk mitigation and paperwork, e.g. a signed risk assessment, required by the representative(s). Separate arrangements to mitigate COVID-19 risks for Sunday School students in smaller rooms of the premises separate from the main service. Removal of requirement of entrance only within 15 minutes before a large gathering Removal of a one-way system, while retaining requirement to enter via Station Road for signing in for a large gathering Attendees to be directed to seats by stewards, who will consider the attendees' preferences Adjusted spacing in seating: minimum of 1 vacant seat between 2 households/bubbles in the same row Exemption of mandatory face coverings when attendees are at their seats and not speaking or singing Invitations to speak from the congregation should be planned for times when those who speak will likely be wearing face coverings, i.e. an intercessional open prayer between songs. Duration of a large gathering specified to be a maximum of 1.5 hours A window may only be adjusted or closed during a large gathering by a steward or a Trustee. Anyone leading from the stage or contributing to the delivery of a service stationary in a specified area

		<p>of the premises may opt not to wear face coverings, with the following condition: where individuals are 1 metre or less from each other, face coverings may be not worn only with unanimous agreement of all those in proximity. An isolated concern for risk of infection will continue to prevail over other considerations: the person expressing the concern should not be the only person wearing a face covering in the proximity. A leader should ensure a comfortable channel for any individual to express any concern freely without pressure or fear of change of treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The keyboard player may also sing without a face covering subject to the above. • Screens on the stage are no longer mandatory, on condition that all who lead on the stage have had a negative lateral flow test within 24 hours before a large gathering. This will be verbally agreed. and completed in faith. • No change to the positions of all who lead the service from the stage: singers and speakers to remain as far from the congregation as they have been, or further if practical. • Attendees no longer required to wait until directed by a steward to leave their seats • Removal of mandatory requirement to spray clean the toilet • Removal of mandatory requirement for children going to the toilet to be accompanied by adults for infection control reasons
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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		
Staff Member Name (Print)	Signature	Date