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## Frequently Asked Questions for SEC Churches in Phase 2 of the Scottish Government Route Map out of Lockdown

The following questions and answers amplify and give examples of what is permissible in Phase 2 of the Scottish Government lockdown easing. For any other queries please contact your Diocesan Bishop/office.

### Churches Open for Individual Prayer or Funerals

Q: Why does the building have to be staffed at all times?

A: The Scottish Government guidance states that the church must review volunteers etc.: "...to ensure there is sufficient capacity to prepare settings to reopen for individual prayer and manage them appropriately once they are open".

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Q: Who is allowed to volunteer to staff the church when open?

A: Anyone who is not shielding or self-identifies as vulnerable due to underlying health conditions may volunteer.

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Q: Under-18s and 'vulnerable adults' might come into church unaccompanied: must volunteers who staff the church be members of the PVG scheme?

A: No, staffing the church is not regulated work requiring a PVG. The role of volunteers in this context is not to provide pastoral support and they should avoid any significant contact with any visitors. They should be trained in how to refer any issue raised to clergy or another member of the local pastoral team.

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Q: Can we advertise 'on request' opening by volunteer keyholders, rather than advertising particular opening hours?

A: Yes, as long as all the usual physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning protocols are followed for an 'on-demand' visit.

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Q: Church funerals inside church - how many is a 'minimal number'?

A: The Scottish Government Regulations do not specify a number. However the Government's guidance on funerals states that "You can attend a funeral service if you are a household member of the person who has died or if you are a close family member of the person who has died. If no household or close family members are attending the funeral, then you can attend if you are a friend of the person who has died." A person within those categories may be accompanied by a carer.

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Q: We have done our own work to open not using the SEC guidelines: is that OK?

A: No, please use the SEC guidance and proforma as they have been developed for consistency across Scotland and in consultation with the Scottish Government.

## Other Activities in Churches & Church Premises

Q: Can a worship group meet in church to stream or record worship?

A: Yes, with physical distancing and hygiene measures, they can meet in church to stream or record worship for streaming: this is a Scottish Government permitted activity in church.

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Q: Can physically distanced vestry meetings take place in church buildings now?

A: No, that is not one of the Scottish Government approved activities that can happen in church buildings. We hope that vestry meetings in church buildings might start once the Government permits 'non-essential offices' to restart: this is unlikely to be before 23 July, in Phase 3.

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Q. Can non-SEC hall/church tenants/users restart their activities in SEC church buildings or halls?

A1: Non-worship activities: Generally, under Phase 2 other activities are not permitted. Government guidance makes clear, for example, that the following may not take place in Phase 2: lifestyle and leisure/recreational groups such as craft groups or exercise groups; meetings including practices such as choir practice or bell ringing or opening a building for tourism purposes. To the extent permitted by Government Guidance, some activities should be able to restart in Phase 3, such as nurseries, and such groups may be permitted access to prepare for a resumption of activity. However, any such preparation should be subject to physical distancing and hygiene measures. In preparing for Phase 3, a clear agreement must be made between the vestry and the tenant/user over who will manage distancing and cleaning around the specific activities.

A2: Worship by Other Groups in SEC Churches: Other denominations/faith groups may only resume worship in SEC churches when we are all permitted to start worship, later in Phase 3.

## Weddings out of doors

Q: I want to get married in church on e.g. 29 August: that will be in Phase 3 so can I go ahead and plan?

A: From 29 June weddings can take place out of doors with minimal attendance as permitted by the Scottish Government. An SEC priest can officiate if requested and that can be planned for safely. Weddings will be able to take place in church in Phase 3, subject to restricted numbers, but the Government has announced that this is unlikely to be before 23 July so any planning for such an occasion is at your own risk.

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Q: For weddings being held outdoors from 29 June - how many is a 'minimal number' of attendees?

A: Guidance on the [website](#) of the Registrar General for Scotland states:-

- The persons participating in such a public gathering outdoors must **not constitute more than three households**. The Scottish Government is advising that **there should be no more than 8 in the group of three households**.
- The limits of 3 households and 8 people **do not include the celebrant or registrar carrying out the service and any interpreter required**.