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## **Pastoral advice from the College of Bishops for Phase 2**

The guidance that the Advisory Group has been working on in relation to our churches has been in regard to the safe opening of our buildings, but the College of Bishops is very aware of questions being asked in relation to the pastoral ministry of our churches outside of our buildings; in other words the day-to-day life of ministry. The advice that follows in this document will apply once the Scottish Government's Route Map allows Phase 2 church activities to recommence. This is currently scheduled to take place no earlier than 18 June, if the rate of infection continues to fall.

Phase 2 involves a further relaxation of existing restrictions which are detailed fully elsewhere but include meeting family and friends outside in larger groups than before, and meeting people from another household indoors. In addition, places of worship can reopen in certain limited situations, which are detailed today by our Advisory Group in the accompanying document *Emerging from Lockdown: Phase 2 Guidance*. A phased resumption of visiting to care homes will also start.

These changes have an impact on pastoral visiting. We therefore should:

- Plan for potential pastoral visiting under Phase 2 guidance, which allows two households meeting indoors.
- Identify existing pastoral visitors, who are not shielding or in vulnerable categories. These visitors must already be PVG cleared and be trained/supervised.
- Identify members urgently requiring support, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

When pastoral visiting in Phase 2:

- Visitor can enter one other household indoors, provided social distancing and hygiene measures such as the wearing of face coverings are followed. No home communion or other physical sacraments are possible at this stage, because of the risk of infection they present.
- Assume only one pastoral visit is conducted per visitor, per day.
- Clergy and pastoral visitors manage schedules to prioritise visits to people requiring urgent support.

Other aspects of the pastoral life of the church:

- We should continue to provide Provincial, Diocesan and Local Services online where possible, such as streamed or recorded from homes and churches. Consideration should be given to those who cannot access the internet, for instance by highlighting the existence of telephone access to online worship, and the provision of paper copies of liturgies/pewsheets where these are available.
- We should continue to utilise various existing forms of communication, including e-mail, social media platforms, posted letters, and telephone calls, to keep members connected. These can be used to keep in touch in the following ways:

- Inform about Church building opening plans & times (if a church chooses to open);
- Provide newsletters, texts of prayer services and scripture, and other useful leaflets, either electronically or delivered to family homes;
- Make telephone calls to connect to, and pray with, the isolated;
- Highlight recorded services that are available e.g. on local radio, or by telephone;
- Provide lists of services that can be joined in with at home;
- Draw attention to online worship and support, where available.
- Essential mission and outreach activities (e.g. food/poverty support projects) should continue only in line with Scottish Government and local authority guidance.
- There should be no formal outdoor activities for church and congregation e.g. worship, picnics, and fundraising events. The Scottish Government Route Map does allow 'larger' outdoor gatherings in Phase 2 but it remains unclear how to safely manage any such event.
- There should be no job interviews or visits to be held for applicants for posts. The Scottish Government's Phase 2 guidance suggests that only two households can meet indoors, so conventional interviews are not yet possible. The interview process also presents potential problems with travel and accommodation, which should be avoided.

There will potentially be a huge number of pastoral visits requested in addition to considerable work required to produce information and worship resources. Please be kind to yourselves and to those who are volunteering. We must pace ourselves through what looks certain to be a long process. And please remember, no cleric should undertake any visit if they have any concerns for their own health or wellbeing.

**+Mark, Primus, Moray, Ross & Caithness**

**+Kevin, Argyll & The Isles**

**+John, Edinburgh**

**+Anne, Aberdeen & Orkney**

**+Andrew, Brechin**

**+Ian, St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane**