

## **Emerging from Lockdown: Phase 3 Guidance**

Guidance for Scottish Episcopal Churches in respect of Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's *Route Map through and out of the Crisis*.

The Scottish Government's *Route Map through and out of the Crisis* outlines four phases in relation to the easing of the coronavirus lockdown restrictions. It is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

Since publication of the original route map a number of subsequent Government announcements have been made. At the time of issue of this guidance, the most recent announcement relating to Phase 3 and the expected timing of the different aspects relevant to Phase 3 is available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-route-map-indicative-dates-remainder-phase-2-early-phase-3/>

It should be emphasised that different elements of Phase 3 are likely to take effect at different times. Experience of prior Phases suggests that the actual easing of lockdown restrictions may not in practice be entirely in accordance with previous Government announcements. As a result, whilst the guidance which follows below is based on information published by the Scottish Government at the time of issue, it may require to be updated in the light of future Government announcements.

At the time of issue of this guidance, public health direction is that appropriate physical distancing requires a distance of 2m. Whilst the Scottish Government has announced some mitigation of this rule for certain sectors (initially hospitality, retail and public transport) the 2m requirement remains the norm. If, in the future, this is altered to a different measure, this guidance should be read as referring to whatever new distance may be recommended by the Scottish Government.

This guidance should be read alongside accompanying Pastoral Advice issued by the College of Bishops for Phase 3 which covers a range of matters of a pastoral and liturgical nature relevant to Phase 3 and is available at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Pastoral-Guidelines-for-Phase-3-Version-1-6.7.-2020.pdf>

### **A. Introduction**

This guidance note has been produced for use within the Scottish Episcopal Church to assist Diocesan Bishops, clergy and vestries in relation to Phase 3 of the Government Route Map which envisages the possibility of places of worship being open for communal worship for "limited numbers". Thus far, the Government has not yet clarified the meaning of "limited numbers". It is suggested that for present purposes vestries prepare on the basis of calculating the capacity of their buildings to take account of physical distancing but it remains a possibility that the Scottish Government may impose a specific cap on numbers.

The Route Map also envisages an easing of lockdown restrictions to enable funerals and marriages to take place in churches but, again, restricted to “limited numbers”. Whilst many will undoubtedly be keen to re-open churches and endeavour to resume some form of public worship, in Phase 3 this is unlikely to be what was considered “normal” prior to the pandemic. In the meantime, a wide variety of online worship offerings continue to be available from the province and many of our individual churches and elsewhere, some of which can also be accessed by telephone.

This guidance for Phase 3 supersedes the guidance produced previously for Phase 2, unless in Phase 3 churches choose only to open for individual prayer and not public worship, in which case the Phase 2 guidance remains relevant.

As was the case for Phase 2, a clear plan will be required for Phase 3 as to how a church may safely re-open for public worship, having undertaken appropriate risk assessment. To the extent necessary, additional guidance will be produced in due course for use in relation to Phase 4.

## **B. Principles**

The Advisory Group responsible for preparing this note offers the following general principles to assist churches throughout the process of emerging from lockdown.

1. The intention of these and any other guidelines produced internally within the Church is to support and enable clergy and congregations to operate within the terms of published Government and Public Health guidance. To the extent that such official guidance becomes more prescriptive at any point over time, it should be regarded as taking precedence over any internal church guidance if there is any conflict. It is also our intention to update these guidelines as swiftly as possible to bring them into line with any changes in Government and Public Health guidance. Key current Government messages are summarised in the Appendix.
2. The fact that opening for communal worship for limited numbers is *permitted* by the Government at some point in Phase 3 should not be understood to imply that congregations are now *expected* to begin such public worship.
3. A decision whether or not to resume public worship should be considered initially by the vestry, as the charity trustees for the charge. No resumption of activity can be entirely risk-free and any consideration of restarting activity will involve the vestry undertaking a Covid-19 risk assessment to consider and address the implications of such restarting. A variety of risk assessment templates have been produced by other churches and in case they are helpful to vestries, they can be accessed at:-

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/advice-for-churches-covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

General advice on risk management (not specifically related to Covid-19) is also available at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/vestry-resources/vestry-responsibilities/risk-management/>

4. If, having undertaken a risk assessment, the vestry wishes to proceed to restart any activities, it should first approach the Diocesan Bishop for consent. A pro forma Phase 3 Plan has been developed for use by vestries in seeking such consent and is available at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Plan-for-Reopening-for-Communal-Worship-Phase-3-Version-1-6.7.20.docx>
5. The role of the Bishop is to respond to an approach by a vestry and in considering whether to give consent is one of oversight and care in relation to both clergy and congregation. No Bishop will encourage the reopening of a church in Phase 3 unless the vestry and cleric wish to do so and any reopening will be the outcome of a dialogue between cleric/vestry and Bishop.
6. Any steps taken by churches whether under Phase 3 or subsequently are likely to involve, to a greater or lesser extent, volunteers or church staff. In considering how the church emerges from lockdown, it will be important for vestries to be conscious of their duty of care to volunteers and staff and, likewise, for bishops in relation to clergy and other authorised ministers.
7. Any person who is self-isolating or shielding or is in a vulnerable category (see: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice>) should not be invited to undertake functions which would be contrary to their duty to self-isolate, shield or stay at home. Such matters are part of the church's safeguarding duties to the vulnerable. Similarly, no such person should be put in a position of feeling under pressure to undertake such functions. Also, any person who becomes unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 should immediately return home and follow public health advice. In an emergency a 999 call should be made if they are seriously ill or their life is at risk.
8. In relation to volunteers and staff who are able to undertake functions, it will be important that each individual is given a clear explanation of what is required of them, has been given training and resources appropriate to the task in question and knows to whom to refer any problems. Where a health and safety risk exists, the risk assessment referred to in paragraph B.3 above should address these issues. Churches with employees should follow any Government or Public Health guidance applicable to employees and, whilst volunteers and clergy are not employees, it is suggested that they should be afforded the same level of protection as paid staff. Also, when planning any activities which are permitted under Phase 3, consideration should be given to appropriate contingency planning to address the situation where an individual (clergy, staff or volunteer) ceases to be available to undertake a task or function if they are required at short notice to self-isolate under the

Government's test and protect policy. This could be the case in relation to clergy, staff or volunteers.

9. Different congregations will move at different speeds as they emerge from lockdown and just because one congregation is in a position to undertake some resumption of activity in their church building does not mean that others should feel any pressure to do likewise. It is also the case that, in the light of appropriate risk assessment, activities which it may be possible to resume in one location cannot be resumed in another (for example, because of constraints imposed by the building).
10. Until the commencement of Phase 4, or at least until most Episcopal churches are able to resume public worship, it is expected that provincially-provided online worship will continue to be available. That may help to reduce the pressure on any one individual church to reopen before it is ready to do so and provide a continuity of worship during the planning stage for reopening in Phase 3.
11. Any gathering carries risk, and everyone should consider their own vulnerabilities and those for whom they are responsible and think through the risks they deem acceptable to themselves and others. It is expected that individual church members will act responsibly and in accordance with public guidance applicable to the population as a whole on matters such as physical distancing, self-isolating, wearing of face coverings (where physical distancing of 2m is compromised or as Public Health guidance dictates) etc. Parents or guardians should ensure that children observe such requirements. No-one should feel pressure to return to church until they feel comfortable to do so.
12. The Advisory Group in producing this guidance has proceeded on the basis of the precautionary principle. In short, in areas where there are elements of doubt, as is inevitably the case in relation to Covid-19, the guidance errs on the side of caution.

### **C. Preliminary matters to be addressed prior to any resumption of public worship**

1. Your church building may have reopened for individual prayer in Phase 2, in which case the following steps may already have been undertaken. However, if that is not the case and the church has been completely closed during the period of lockdown, there are certain initial matters which should be considered (items a.-g. below) in advance of any use being made of the building under Phase 3. The following initial actions are recommended:
  - a. If your insurers have previously been advised that the building has been closed, notify them that it is now being reopened and follow any guidance which they might provide.
  - b. Air the building by opening doors and any openable windows.

- c. Check the building for cleanliness. If there are bird droppings or other animal waste be sure not to touch or go near it until proper cleaning can be arranged. If the building has been unoccupied, then cleaning at this stage can be of the routine kind. If some use has been made of the building - for example the rector streaming services – then all surfaces which might have been touched prior to reopening should be thoroughly cleaned. (A link to guidance on Covid-specific cleaning is provided below, for use in situations where the building is in use once again.)
  - d. If you are going to use the water system or toilets, flush all toilets and run the water from all taps and other hot and cold water-outlets for at least five minutes to ensure the water system has been thoroughly flushed through to reduce the risk of legionella and Weil’s disease. If you have any concerns seek appropriate professional help/advice. Specific advice from the Health and Safety Executive is available at: [https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/biological\\_agents/specific\\_biological\\_agents\\_infections/legionellosis/covid-19\\_legionella\\_information\\_note.pdf](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/biological_agents/specific_biological_agents_infections/legionellosis/covid-19_legionella_information_note.pdf)
  - e. Consider whether you need to turn on electrical or heating systems where these have been turned off.
  - f. Undertake a simple visual check of general maintenance items such as electrical systems, emergency lighting and other lighting, fire alarm systems, heating systems, fridges, security monitoring and access systems, water systems and toilets. Seek professional help/advice if necessary.
  - g. Ensure that the font and any holy water stoups are empty.
2. Consult with staff on plans to resume public worship and other church activities. If staff have been furloughed or working from home, ask them to complete a “return to work” form prior to their return to ensure that they can properly return to work. A useful template has been produced by the Church of Ireland in Appendix 2 of its guidance document available at:-  
  
<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Resources/ParishResources/PeopleCommunity/Return-to-In-Church-Worship-Protocols-04.06.20.pdf>
  3. Communicate with staff/members prior to reopening on a specific date and explain how services will be conducted and what will be expected of those attending. In particular, provide guidance on who should not attend. Any person who is showing symptoms of Covid-19 should not attend a service. The same applies to any person who is self-isolating, shielding or in any other categories where individuals are being advised to remain at home (see B.7 above for such categories). Similarly, no one should be made to feel that they should attend a service if they are unhappy to do so.

4. Consider resilience planning and develop appropriate contingency measures to address situations such as key personnel catching the virus or having to self-isolate or shield. In the event of an outbreak of Covid-19 in the congregation, anyone affected should follow the 'Test and Protect' protocol immediately (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect/>) and the Rector/vestry should seek guidance from the local public health authority.
5. Calculate the capacity of the building and the number of people who can be accommodated at any one time, so that physical distancing of at least 2m (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government) can be maintained between individuals and households. Where the church building will not be able to accommodate the likely size of the congregation (allowing for the possibility of unexpected visitors), it will be necessary to consider alternatives. That may include the provision of a blend of online and in-church worship, the ticketing of services to ensure capacity is not exceeded, simultaneous video relay to other premises (eg a church hall), the holding of extra services, or dividing the congregations into small groupings so that members might attend only on alternate weeks. Each of such alternatives has its own implications, not least for those responsible for organising services or ministering at them, and vestries should be conscious of the additional burden which that might impose. Equally, consideration should be given to the fact that the church community may inevitably have to be divided, rather than being able to meet as a whole.
6. Where it is possible within the constraints of the building, it is recommended that a "one-way" system be introduced and made clear by appropriate floor markings or other signage so that physical distance between people can be maintained. A safe "queue management" system should be put in place to ensure that the flow of people both in and out of the building can be carefully controlled (including queuing outside the building on arrival), having regard to the capacity of the building and to reduce the risk of congestion or contact. The congregating in groups of people in church car parks or at the entrance to the church should be discouraged. Anyone managing queues or flows of congregants should follow physical distance guidance.
7. In order to minimise physical contact, consideration should be given to hygiene and the use of handrails and door handles on entry. Leaving a door open would minimise physical contact.
8. Welcomers/sidespeople should help to inform and reassure the congregation as they arrive (or queue) regarding the way to safely enter and be seated in the building. Our welcome should be demonstrated by appropriate gestures and not handshakes or hugs. Welcomers should wear face coverings.
9. A procedure should be developed for the filling of pews or seating as people arrive at church, starting with the pews or seating furthest from the entrance. Similarly, on leaving at the end of the service, those nearest the exit should leave first. Seating should be clearly marked to ensure distancing of at least 2m (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government)

between individuals or between households and it should be made clear to those attending services that they must maintain a distance of at least 2m (or other alternative measure) from each other.

10. Public health signage should be prominently displayed to emphasise the need for ensuring appropriate hygiene on the part of those attending. Sample materials can be viewed at the following (some materials are for purchase):- <https://www.cpo.org.uk/catalogue.aspx?cat=630>
11. Hand sanitiser, with an alcohol content in excess of 70%, should be available at or near the church entrance and those attending should be asked to use it on arrival and departure. Adequate supplies of tissues should be available and bins, ideally pedal operated bins, should be provided for their disposal.
12. It seems likely that, whilst not mandatory, the Scottish Government may recommend that places of worship maintain a record of those attending public worship to be held for the sole purpose of enabling contact tracing in the event of a Covid-19 outbreak. Any such record will require to comply with data protection principles, should be held confidentially by the rector and be destroyed after 21 days. Further guidance will be issued on this once the Government has clarified the position.
13. Ideally liturgy should be displayed digitally so as to avoid physical contact with paper-based material. If that is not possible, single use orders of service should be used rather than prayer books or other liturgy books, so as to avoid multiple handling. Orders of service should be distributed on seating in advance of any service or be available for picking up on arrival to minimise unnecessary physical contact. Those distributing such materials should wash or sanitise their hands beforehand and also after collecting up any spares left over at the end of the service. An alternative may be for orders of service to be made available electronically and accessed on worshippers' devices. Where those attending public worship bring their own bibles or prayer books, they should not share them during worship and should take them home again afterwards,
14. Because of the potential for the virus to remain on surfaces, prayer books, hymn books and Bibles should not be available and should therefore not be stored in a place to which a people have easy access. Similarly, consideration should be given to removing any soft furnishings (such as kneelers or hassocks) or other items that are difficult to clean.
15. Face coverings should be worn if the 2m physical distancing (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government) is likely to be compromised. Churches should therefore consider encouraging those attending to bring their own face coverings and additionally should make face coverings available on arrival at the church building for any person who does not have their own. Hands should be washed or sanitised before putting on and after taking off a face covering. Any such covering supplied should be taken home or disposed of after use.

**D. Matters arising during worship services**

Worship in the Scottish Episcopal Church covers a wide range of different styles and practice. The guidance below is broad in scope but it is recognised that some aspects will not be relevant in every congregation (for example, not all congregations will have a tradition of processions at the beginning or end of services). It should be read in conjunction with the Pastoral Advice from the College of Bishops available at:- <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Pastoral-Guidelines-for-Phase-3-Version-1-6.7.-2020.pdf>

1. Processions may take place if 2m physical distancing (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government) is not compromised. However, no server should assist at the altar. Choristers should sit in the nave.
2. The reading of scripture and Intercessions may be undertaken from a fixed lectern or any other position in the church that does not compromise the 2m physical distancing requirement (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government). Similarly, the sermon or other exposition of scripture needs to be delivered in the same manner. Handrails to a lectern or pulpit should be wiped down between use if touched by different individuals during the service.
3. The minister presiding at the service should avoid unnecessary movement within the congregation and ensure a distance of greater than 2m (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government) since increased voice volume increases the size and quantity of aerosol droplets
4. Liturgical and related matters concerning services are dealt with in detail in the Pastoral Advice from the College of Bishops. That includes a Protocol in relation to eucharistic worship and comments on matters such as the Peace, use of incense and the administration of Holy Communion. It will be important that clear instructions are given to the congregation on how such a protocol is to be observed (for example, in relation to the Peace or queuing for Communion).
5. Singing: current advice is that singing, chanting or shouting should be avoided, including any signing or chanting over the Communion elements. This will be updated if Government advice changes.
6. Use of microphones: consider having sufficient microphones so that they do not need to be shared. If that is not possible use individual foam coverings for each speaker and wash in soap and water after use.
7. To reduce the risk of infection it is recommended that vestments are not shared. Where possible, the use of vestments should be kept to a minimum.
8. Use of incense poses risks because it may cause some people to cough and thus potentially increase the risk of transmission of the virus. Consideration should be given to whether the risks associated this can be reduced, in particular so as to reduce the risk of coughing. The incense load in the thurible

can be reduced and thuribles should not be carried into the congregation. If the building size permits, censuring may be carried out at distance from the main congregation with reduced or minimal incense loads.

9. Congregational giving should be encouraged to be by way of standing order or other electronic means. If an offering is to be taken in church, the collection plate should not be circulated but could be by arrival or retiring offering. Guidance on the counting of any collection is set out in section E below.
10. Worship bands: members of worship bands should observe appropriate physical distancing and avoid sharing instruments or other equipment during the course of the service. Instruments which require breath to operate should not be used. All instruments which are used should be cleaned appropriately before subsequent use.
11. Prayer/healing ministry, laying on of hands: pastoral guidance on these matters is contained in the Phase 3 Pastoral Guidance from the College of Bishops.

#### **E. Post-service issues**

1. Refreshments should not be offered before or after the service. We will need to rely on our warmth of verbal and non-verbal communication, whilst maintaining a 2m physical distance (or any alternative measure announced by the Scottish Government), to convey our hospitality of welcome and community.
2. Those attending services should be encouraged to bring their own bottles of water or other refreshments if they wish. Otherwise, in emergency, drinking water could be made available in a disposable cup. Those handling any such cup should wash hands or sanitise before and after making contact with it.
3. Those responsible for counting the collection (if any) should ensure handwashing/sanitising before and after doing so. Disposable gloves should be worn for counting and banking.

#### **F. Cleaning**

1. After any service, the areas to which those attending the service have had access should be cleaned and disinfected, before the building is required for its next use. Where possible, to reduce risk to those undertaking cleaning, cleaning should be deferred until shortly before the next use of the building, since Covid-19 persistence and infectivity on surfaces diminishes over time.
2. Handles, rails, light switches or other areas with which physical contact is likely should be cleaned and disinfected. Guidance on cleaning surfaces is available at: [COVID-19: Guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) and also at <https://www.scdc.org.uk/supporting-communities-safely>
3. Those responsible for cleaning should be provided with disposable gloves to protect their hands from corrosive cleaning substances. Cleaning materials

should be appropriate to the surfaces to be cleaned (especially any historic surfaces). Gloves should be disposed of and not reused.

4. Church toilets may be used provided physical distancing and good hygiene practices can be implemented. Depending on the specific circumstances, it may be that use needs to be restricted to one person at a time, with a physically distanced queuing system being operated. Since toilet facilities may create additional infection risks, careful consideration must be given as to how regular cleaning can be undertaken. There is evidence that the virus can be transmitted by intestinal infection which means that toilet seats, handles, doorknobs and locks should be cleaned regularly. Paper towels rather than hand dryers, and liquid soap should be provided, and an individual should be appointed to be responsible for ensuring appropriate cleaning.

## **G. Other Matters**

1. **Outdoor worship:** any outdoor worship in Phase 3 must be subject to Scottish Government requirements limiting outdoor gatherings and must also comply with the same requirements for physical distancing as apply inside, as well as the guidance about eucharistic services in the Bishops' Pastoral Advice referred to above. As with indoor worship, it should be subject to appropriate risk assessment.
2. **Baptisms and other services:** guidance is provided in the Pastoral Advice from the College of Bishops referred to above.
3. **Children's and youth activities:** activities for children and young people are permitted under Phase 3 but must operate under the accepted procedures for physical distancing and good hygiene. As in relation to church services, consideration will require to be given to the capacity of spaces used for children's and young people's groups. Where children are part of the worshipping community in Phase 3, children should sit in family groups and young children should remain close to their parent or guardian to ensure that physical distancing is maintained or, separate children's activities may be offered provided that appropriate risk assessment and planning has been undertaken and approved by the Diocesan Bishop. Toys or games used during children's activities should be washed before next use. Government guidance for use in educational and child minding settings may also be of assistance in planning children's and young people's activities:-  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/pages/overview/>  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-childminder-services-guidance/pages/summary/>  
General guidance on youth activities is available at:-  
<https://youthworksupport.co.uk/>
4. **Church events:** events such as congregational picnics, outings, fundraising activities, fetes, car boot sales, should follow Government Guidance on

outdoor social gatherings. In principle, such events should be possible in Phase 3 but must be conducted in accordance with continued physical distancing requirements and good hygiene practice and Government restrictions on meetings of multiple households must be observed. Unless permitted otherwise by Government, it is recommended that if food and drink is to be part of any such events, each person attending should be responsible for bringing their own food, drink and crockery and it should not be shared with others.

5. **Kitchens:** since refreshments will not be provided in connection with worship, church kitchens are unlikely to be used for church events. However when it becomes possible to make use of kitchen premises, guidance on the handling of food is from Food Standards Scotland may be of assistance:-  
<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus>

Where a church runs a café, it will be subject to the Government regulations regarding the hospitality sector.

6. **Church halls:** use by a church of its own church hall in Phase 3 should be done in accordance with the guidance outlined above in relation to services in churches – the same general provisions will apply. In Phase 3 it is likely that some external groups, and in some cases other denominations or faiths, may be permitted to and wish to restart using church buildings or other facilities such as halls. Vestries will need to consider carefully the implications of allowing such external groups to resume use of church facilities. This will include
- a. the physical capacity of the accommodation,
  - b. the need to adhere to physical distancing and good hygiene practice and
  - c. use of facilities such as toilets and kitchens.
  - d. consideration as to whether the same premises can be made available to a number of different users during the week.
7. Arrangements for the hire of church premises by external groups should ensure that such external users are responsible for adhering to guidance on physical distancing and hygiene and should clearly set out responsibility for cleaning. It is also recommended that both the church and the external user ensure that the arrangements are adequately catered for under their insurance policies. If there is any doubt as to whether an external user can adequately clean premises after use, consideration will need to be given to the church itself ensuring appropriate cleaning and disinfection.
8. **Meetings:** unless taking place in church, any indoor meeting of vestries or other groups is subject to the Government restrictions on number of households meeting inside or applicable guidance in relation to office premises depending on the venue. That would include for example, house groups or other meetings which normally take place in homes. Any outdoor meeting of any such groups should observe Government restrictions on outdoor gatherings. A meeting taking place in a church or church hall, such as

an annual meeting, should observe the same principles set out above in relation to worship (eg physical distancing, good hygiene etc).

9. **Safeguarding matters:** existing safeguarding policy should continue to be adhered to in Phase 3. It is possible that as lockdown eases, churches may encounter a higher incidence of reporting of issues of abuse which may have taken place during lockdown. The provincial Safeguarding Officers are available should advice be required in relation to this. There may be stories of individual or family trauma, as well as pastoral support in relation to issues of ill-health, bereavement, and for those on furlough or facing redundancy or financial difficulties. Similarly, pastoral care for those experiencing the effects of isolation, separation and fractured relationships may be needed. For some, continuing pastoral support may require to be on a remote basis.
10. **Bellringing:** bellringing activities may resume in Phase 3 but subject to physical distancing and observance of good hygiene practice. General guidance on bellringing developed south of the border is available at:- <https://cccbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guidance-Notes-23.6.20-complete-set.pdf>

[Please note that that guidance has been developed in England in the light of the UK Government's approach to lockdown easing in England. In Scotland the Scottish Association of Change Ringers has issued advice in May to its members on safety and maintenance regarding bell towers. Any further advice issued by SACR should be available from its website: <https://www.sacr.org/>](#)

Should any queries arise in connection with the application of this Guidance they should be raised in the first instance with your Diocesan Bishop.

Scottish Episcopal Church Advisory Group on Re-opening of Churches

## **APPENDIX**

### **Key Government Messages**

Any local policy within a place of worship should be clear that:

- If a person is symptomatic (showing [symptoms of COVID-19 infection](#)) or has tested positive for COVID-19 they must not attend a place of worship during the period they are required to [self-isolate](#) due to the risk that they pose to others. This includes individuals who work at the place of worship;
- If a person is not symptomatic or a confirmed COVID-19 case, but is self-isolating due to another member of their household either showing symptoms of COVID-19 or their household member has tested positive for COVID-19, that person must not attend a place of worship. They should instead continue to follow household [self-isolation advice](#);
- If person is not symptomatic or a confirmed COVID-19 case, but is self-isolating as a result of other contact (identified through contact tracing), they must not attend a place of worship. This person should instead follow all [contact tracing](#) and [self-isolation](#) advice provided to them.

Places of worship should encourage all staff, volunteers and worshippers to maintain personal hygiene. This includes:

- Frequent washing of hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and drying thoroughly, particularly when entering/leaving the building;
- Use of hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are not available;
- Encouraging staff, volunteers and members to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
- Using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

The Government has encapsulated its key guidance as **FACTS**

- **Face coverings** should be worn in enclosed spaces
- **Avoid crowded areas**
- **Clean your hands** regularly and thoroughly, and clean hard surfaces after touching them.
- **Two metre distancing** remains the clear advice.
- **Self-isolate**, and book a test immediately, if you have symptoms of COVID - a new cough; a fever, or a loss of, or change in, your sense of taste or smell.