

Trinity Baptist Church, Maryport

Risk Assessment (Revision 2) Addendum update 7

Additional safeguards associated with Worship Services at the church premises following further easing of lockdown restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Introduction

This risk assessment addendum has been carried out in accordance with the Health & Safety Executive's guidance, taking account of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government document "COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship from 19 July 2021" along with the Public Health (England) guidance relating to Covid-19 safeguarding arrangements. The church has a Health and Safety Policy document, and this Risk Assessment Addendum forms part of the overall Health & Safety suite of documents and applies whilst Covid-19 restrictions are in place nationally. This document will be reviewed regularly, and when restrictions are eased, this addendum will no longer apply.

With the easing of restrictions relating to Covid-19 control, the church can now progressively reduce constraints that have been in place since the onset of the pandemic. The only abnormal arrangements to continue in the short-term are:

- Opening windows to provide additional ventilation.
- Retaining the hand sanitizer stations (use is optional)
- Using different hymnbooks for the morning and evening services
- 'Plan B' reintroduction of compulsory face coverings in indoor spaces

Updated by Roger Nash and Raf Cobos

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Risk Assessment

All adults who regularly attend church services have now been vaccinated, and the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK is not increasing (potentially in decline). The government-imposed restrictions have now been lifted allowing the church to consider resuming meetings and reduce infection control constraints. If Covid-19 infection rate increases (particularly locally) then safeguards will be re-introduced.

The most significant risk of transmitting this disease is through inter-person contact and aerosol transmission by being close to one another. The guidance remains that inter-person contact (e.g., hand shaking) should be avoided, and people should stand or sit at least 1m apart (especially when conversing indoors). The guidance not to attend if people have Covid-19 symptoms or are obliged to self-isolate also remains in force. These guidelines are repeated regularly in the media and are included on the church website.

The most significant safeguard against transmission of the disease is adequate ventilation, and the church will continue to open windows in the meeting rooms for the duration of any meetings whilst pandemic concerns persist.

The introduction of 'Plan B' requirements in response to the Omicron variant has reintroduced the compulsory obligation to wear face coverings from Friday 10th December.

Optional safeguards which individuals can employ include the use of hand sanitizer. The sanitizer stations at the entrances will remain in place, and people who wish to wear facemasks can bring their own (although a small stock of disposable masks is also provided at church).

The most likely route for contact transmission of Covid-19 (other than personal physical contact such as hand shaking) is via frequently handled surfaces and items. Door handles and light switches are generally recognised as the most frequently handled surfaces and items but contact with these are minimised to those opening and closing the church building and the door steward. The next most common example is hymnbooks, the church will continue to alternate hymnbooks on the Sunday (using different coloured books at the morning and the evening services).

People are still encouraged to maintain some physical distance between one another, but the strict control of 2m spacing between people from different households is no longer mandatory.

People can now sing during services, talk to one other indoors, and partake of refreshments. With these, it is still recommended that where possible people maintain a gap of 1m between each other.

Participation in the communion service is encouraged for all believers who faithfully follow the Lord, and care is taken to minimise potential infection transmission whilst partaking of the elements. As far as possible, the bread and the cup will be served individually. The bread on the communion plate will be cut into individual portions and placed apart on the plate. The wine will be served in individual glasses again applying some separation between glasses.

Guidance arrangements for public worship at Trinity Baptist Church, Maryport; in the light of the Covid-19 constraints

You should not, according to government health guidance, be attending church if you have the symptoms of Covid-19 (may include: a dry cough, high temperature, or loss of taste or smell) or have a confirmed positive PCR test result. Neither should you attend if a member of your household has such symptoms, nor if you have been ordered by the NHS to shield or self-isolate (and you do not meet their exemption criteria associated with being fully vaccinated).

If you are well, and free from Covid-19, we encourage you to meet regularly with God's people for the worship services on the Sundays, and the Bible study & prayer meeting on Tuesdays. We can also recommence other meetings (outreach, children's work, etc.,) and encourage you to support these as appropriate.

The government has now removed some restrictions associated with Covid-19 but advise people to proceed with caution. However, face coverings have been reintroduced in all indoor spaces from Friday 10th December as part of 'Plan B'. The church now insists that people wear face masks unless exempt for medical reasons. Use hand sanitizer at entry and exit is still optional.

The primary constraints that will continue apply at church are:

- Ensure that heating and ventilation is proportionate.
- Use different hymnbooks for the morning and evening services.
- Optional use of hand sanitizer at entry and exit.

To reduce the potential for cross-infection, some windows in church will be open to improve ventilation. Please remember this and dress accordingly.

Please note that Government guidance and legislation can change quickly in response to the changing situation nationally and locally. Please be aware of these changes as they occur in the news, but you will be notified of any changes that materially affect us in our ability to hold services or other meetings.

Worship services (Sundays and Tuesday evening)

Arrival at the building

1. A hand wash sanitiser is available at the main entrance and the side entrance, using this is now optional. Certainly, seek to wash your hands (as the last thing you do) prior to leaving home.
2. Wear a face covering (unless exempt) when you enter the building. We encourage you to bring your own face coverings. If you forget to bring a covering or mask, we have a limited supply of disposable face masks.
3. Hymnbooks for use during the services on Sundays will be available on tables at the entrances. Please collect your hymnbook as you enter.

During and after the service

1. Singing is now permitted and will form part of the services (on Sundays & Tuesdays).
2. At the end of services return your hymnbook to the box/table at the entrances.

Other meetings

Non-worship meetings can now resume, as can refreshments after the evening meetings on Sundays or Tuesdays. The only constraint is to check that no attendees are showing signs of Covid-19 infection.

Communion services

These will generally follow the pre-Covid arrangements but will adopt the following:

- The bread will be cut into individual pieces and placed spaced out on the plate.
- The cups will be either the normal reusable individual glasses, or disposable glasses.
- Both bread and cup will be served to the congregation in the pews.