



Diocese of Leeds - Road Map out of Covid 19 Restrictions

Introduction

The Catholic Church has been one of the few organisations to continue to operate through the lockdown period enforced on 4th January 2021. The government in allowing the continuance of public worship did so with the hope that spiritual guidance would assist personal well-being, and this will continue as we enter what is hoped to be the road to recovery.

The tables below will be guided by the government's guidance on easing restrictions across England. The government has communicated that decisions on easing restrictions will be led by data rather than dates. [The indicative, 'no earlier than' dates in the tables are all contingent on the data available at each stage and could be subject to change.](#)

Rate of Infection

Although there have been signs and data that the rate of infection slowing, this does not give reason to think that it is safe yet, as there is still a significant number of people both contracting and dying from Covid-19 daily. Some areas of West and South Yorkshire have increasing R rates. There is still a long journey ahead for all our churches and church halls to be fully re-opened.

Reducing Risk of Infection

The precautions below have been a main stay in reducing the risk of infection throughout the pandemic, until the government guidance tells us differently, the precautions will remain in place in our churches, church halls and any other relevant buildings.

Safe Behaviours



Social Distancing

All visitors to a place of worship are to follow the guidance on social distancing, people should be 2 metres apart or more than 1 metre apart where mitigation is in use.



Hand Washing / Sanitising

Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day.



Enhanced Cleaning of Surroundings

Clean surfaces often. Pay particular attention to surfaces that are touched frequently, such as handles, light switches, work surfaces and electronic devices. Remember to allow sufficient time between services or permitted activities.



Ventilation

Opening windows and doors at opposite sides or opposite ends of the building or room will assist in providing cross ventilation. Where this is not possible open windows and doors where possible but be cautious not to compromise fire safety.



Face Coverings

A face covering must be worn in all public indoor settings, unless you are exempt, or the activity allows for it to be removed.

The Roadmap Steps for our Parishes, Churches and Church Halls

What we can do and when (If permitted through Government lifting of Restrictions)

Step 1 – No Earlier than 8th March 2021 & 29th March 2021

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	6	Weddings Weddings up to 6 attendees within the church/chapel. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	30	Funerals 30 Persons allowed to attend. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	6	Significant Life and Commemorative Events 6 Persons allowed to attend.	Church Hall
	As per Government Guidance for Activity or Capacity	Wraparound Childcare Wraparound childcare and other children's activities can continue or restart where it is needed to enable parents or carers to work, seek work, attend education, seek medical care or attend a support group.	Church Hall
	6	Rule of 6 or two Households Outdoors from 29th March 2021 People will be able to meet outside in groups up to a maximum of 6 people (the Rule of 6) or with one other household, though people from different households will still need to socially distance from each other (No Household Mixing Indoors)	General Rule

Step 2 – No Earlier than 12 April 2021

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	15	Weddings Weddings up to 15 attendees within the church/chapel. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	30	Funerals 30 Persons allowed to attend. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	N/A	Community Centres Permitted activities in line with the governments lifting of restrictions.	Church Hall
	As per Government Guidance	Local Authority Elections (6th May 2021) Government has confirmed that council, mayoral and police and crime commissioner elections will go ahead on 6 May in England and Wales. (Local authorities may seek permission to use Church Halls)	Church Hall
	15 (Up to 15 Parents)	Children's Indoor Activities All children will be able to attend any indoor children's activity, including sport, regardless of circumstance. Parent and child groups of up to 15 people not counting children aged under five years old can restart indoors (with suitable and sufficient risk assessments).	Church Hall
	15	Receptions, Significant Life and Commemorative Events Wedding receptions, and commemorative events will be able to take place with up to 15 attendees.	Church Hall
	6	Rule of 6 or two Households Outdoors People will be able to meet outside in groups up to a maximum of 6 people (the Rule of 6) or with one other household, though people from different households will still need to socially distance from each other (No Household Mixing Indoors).	General Rule

Step 3 – No Earlier than **17th May 2021**

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	30	Weddings Weddings up to 30 attendees within the church/chapel. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	30	Funerals 30 Persons allowed to attend. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	30	Baptisms 30 Persons allowed to attend. This does not include those working or the volunteer stewards.	Church
	30	Receptions, Significant Life and Commemorative Events Wedding receptions, and commemorative events will be able to take place with up to 30 attendees. (In premises that are permitted to open, with table service rule of 6 will apply).	Church Hall
	As per Guidance for Activity or Capacity	Organised Adult Indoor Group Sports and Exercise Classes All necessary risk assessments to be provided by hirer in line with the governments Covid-19 guidance on the activity or sport taking place	Church Hall
	30	Gatherings (Outdoors) Rule of 6 or two Households Indoors The Government will lift most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors, but gatherings of more than 30 people outdoors will remain illegal. Rule of 6 or two Households Indoors (Subject to Review)	General Rule

Step 4 – No Earlier than **21st June 2021**

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	No Legal Limit	Social Contact (Outdoors and Indoors)	General Rule
	No Legal limit	Weddings	Church
	No Legal limit	Funerals	Church
	No Legal limit	Baptisms	Church
	No Legal limit	Receptions, Significant Life and Commemorative Events	Church Hall
	No Legal limit	Organised Adult Indoor Group Sports and Exercise Classes	Church Hall
	No Legal limit	Children's Indoor and Outdoor Activities	Church Hall

Reducing Risk

As we start to re-open our Parish Halls, we not only have to ensure that the Covid-19 safety measures are in place and sufficient, but we must also ensure that our buildings are safe to allow people back into them after a long period of closure. Below is a list of statutory measures that must be reviewed prior to opening our Parish Halls.

Statutory Testing

Gas Safety Inspection

Fixed Electrical Installations Inspections (also known as Electrical Installation Condition Report)

Lightning Protection Inspections

PAT Testing Certificates

Fire Alarms and Emergency Lighting (If Applicable)

Fire Fighting Equipment

(All firefighting and detection equipment should be installed, tested, and maintained by a competent person.)

Regular checks internally are advised to make sure that:

- All fire alarm systems are working.
- The emergency lighting is working.
- Record any faults in systems and equipment.
- All escape routes are clear, and the floor is in good condition.
- All fire escapes can be opened easily.
- Automatic fire doors close correctly.
- Fire exit signs are in the right place.
- Lift Inspections including stair lifts where applicable, not all parishes have these.
- Legionella Testing.

Risk Assessments

All generic risk assessments to be updated, amended and completed for both church and parish hall if not already done prior to opening, these can be found on the Diocesan Intranet: <https://dioceseofleeds.sharepoint.com/sites/COVID-19>

“Covid-19, Documents, Reopening of Churches, Risk Assessment and Documents for re-opening of churches for public mass and private prayer.”

- Re-opening Checklist (Appendix D)
Risk Assessment for churches opening for public mass (Appendix E)

“Covid-19, Documents, Re-opening of Church Halls and Community Facilities, Re-opening of Parish Halls Documents in word”

- Reopening of Parish Halls Checklist (Appendix I)
- Risk Assessment for Re-opening of Parish Halls (Appendix G)
- Cleaning Checklist (Appendix H)

Other Users

All other users of Parish Halls must provide suitable and sufficient risk assessments and insurance for the activities they are undertaking within them, this must also include the covid secure element until such a time that the government lift all covid measures that are in place.