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 the 4th January 2021. The government allowed the continuance of public worship with the hope that spiritual guidance would assist personal wellbeing and that this will continue during, 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

Whilst current data indicates that the rate of infection has slowed dramatically, assisted considerably by the government's vaccination programme this does not give reason to think that it is now safe, as there is still a significant number of people contracting Covid daily. Some areas of Yorkshire still have high R rates compared to the rest of the country. There is still a long journey ahead for all our churches and church halls to be fully re-opened without restrictions and updates will be provided at every stage.

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 or guidance allows otherwise.

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

Step 3 – 17th May 2021 (Revised 15.06.21)

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	Covid Secure Capacity of your Church	**Funeral Liturgies** The number of persons allowed to attend a Funeral Liturgy will be limited only by the Covid secure capacity of the premises.	**Church**
	(1) 30 **Or** **(2) Covid Secure Capacity of your Church**	**Rites of Baptism** (1) For the Rite of Baptism celebrated outside of Mass, up to 30 persons allowed to attend. This number does not include the clergy, altar servers, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor) (2) For the Rite of Baptism celebrated within Mass, the number of persons allowed to attend will be restricted to the Covid secure capacity of the premises. This number does not include the clergy, altar servers, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor)	**Church**
	Covid Secure Capacity of your Church	**Rite of Marriage** For the Rite of Marriage, whether within or outside the celebration of Mass, the number of persons allowed to attend will be restricted to the Covid secure capacity of the premises. This number does not include the clergy, altar servers, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor)	**Church**
	(1) 30 **Or** **(2) Covid Secure Capacity of your Church**	**Rite of Confirmation** (1) For the Rite of Confirmation celebrated outside of Mass, up to 30 persons allowed to attend. This number does not include the clergy, altar servers, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor) (2) For the Rite of Confirmation celebrated within Mass, the number of persons allowed to attend will be restricted to the Covid secure capacity of the premises. This number does not include the clergy, altar servers, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor)	**Church**
	30	**Rite of Penance** Penance Services may be celebrated with up to 30 persons allowed to attend. This number does not include the clergy, nor persons volunteering (e.g., stewards) or working (e.g., organist, cantor) Individual Confessions may be heard during advertised periods according to the diocesan guidance for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance	**Church**
	Rule of 6 or 2 Households	**Sacrament of the Sick or Home Visit with Holy Communion** Administration of the Sacrament of the Sick or a Visit with Holy Communion to a Care Home or private home will be restricted to the Rule of 6 or two households. The rules regulating visits in each Care Home should be observed. (See diocesan guidance)	**Care Home or Private Home**
	6	**Choirs, Communal Singing, and the use of Musical Instruments** *Inside:* a single small choir of up to 6 amateur singers will be allowed, with social distancing being always maintained. Communal singing should not take place. (Only those choirs operating under, and with the authority of, the Diocesan Director of Music may follow the Government guidance for professional choirs as set out in the Royal School of Church Music guidance) *Outside:* when communal worship takes place outdoors, the congregation may join in with singing, and should follow the principles set out in the performing arts guidance. This includes ensuring that congregation members follow social distancing rules, meaning that groups of more than 30 must not socially mingle. Communal singing in other public open spaces should not take place.	**Church (Inside/ Outside)**

	Covid Secure Capacity of the premises	**Wedding Receptions and Commemorative Events** For wedding receptions and commemorative events, the number of persons allowed to attend will be restricted to the Covid secure capacity of the premises. **(Inside premises that are permitted to open, with table service rule of 6 or two households will apply).**	**Church Hall**
	As per Guidance for Group Age Range	**Catechetical Groups and Prayer Groups** *(1) Groups for under children and young people under 18 years of age:* May meet indoors or outdoors without limitations on group size. For this age range, the regulations no longer require a limit on bubble sizes to a maximum number of attendees (per bubble). However, it is recommended that parish groups review their risk assessments for these groups and take steps to reduce the risk of community transmission between families and bubbles. *(2) Groups for adults over 18 years of age:* May meet indoors or outdoors in groups of no more than 30 (plus staff, volunteers, Catechists, and carers). All standard covid-security measures (social distancing, hand hygiene and face-coverings, etc.) will continue to be required for all age groups.	**Church Hall**
	30	**Parent and Child Group and Support Group** Parent and child groups of up to 30 people not counting children aged under five years old can restart indoors (with suitable & sufficient risk assessments).	**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 guidance on the activity or sport taking place	**Church Hall**
	30	**Gatherings Outdoors (1) and Indoors (2)** (1) The Government will lift most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors, but gatherings of more than 30 people outdoors will remain illegal. (2) Rule of 6 or two Households Indoors **(Subject to Review)**	**General Rule**

Step 4 – No Earlier than **19th July 2021**

	Permitted Attendance	Event	Location
	No Legal limit	**Funeral Liturgies**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Rites of Baptism**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Rite of Marriage**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Rite of Confirmation**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Rite of Penance**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Sacrament of the Sick or Home Visit with Holy Communion**	**Care Home or Private Home**

	No Legal limit	**Choirs, Communal Singing, and the use of Musical Instruments**	**Church**
	No Legal limit	**Wedding Receptions, and Commemorative Events**	**Church Hall**
	No Legal limit	**Parent and Child Group and Support Group**	**Church Hall**
	No Legal limit	**Organised Adult Indoor Group Sports and Exercise Classes**	**Church Hall**
	No Legal limit	**Gatherings Outdoors and Indoors**	**General Rule**

Reducing Risk
Restrictions have been eased in line with the government's roadmap, we will hopefully also start to see our church halls being used more frequently, for some with multiple use. With this there is not only the Covid measures that we have to ensure are still 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. Statutory measures that **MUST** be reviewed and implemented prior to opening our Parish Halls.

Risk Assessments
All generic risk assessments to be in 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.

Local Authority Covid Officers/Inspectors
Please be aware the local authorities have within their ranks Covid Officers that can randomly inspect your property's Covid measures. They do not need to make an appointment or give prior notice. Such visits have occurred to some churches within the Diocese. Please be aware that they have the power to produce you with an enforcement notice, fine or even close the premises, if they feel that measures are not sufficient.

If you are unsure or require assistance, please contact the Diocesan Health and Safety Officer (Barry Lewis), barry.lewis@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or telephone: 0113 261 8033, Mob: 07718 494961