

Romsey Methodist Church

Risk Assessment in relation to Covid-19

Activity: Coffee Stop or Café style event

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Introduction:

The Coronavirus-19 is a highly infectious disease primarily affecting the respiratory system. The disease can be transmitted as an aerosol from human exhalation/inhalation or by physical contact with an infected surface or person. The disease can be transmitted prior to an infected person exhibiting symptoms. From information provided by the UK Research & Innovation website, surfaces can remain infected between 24 hours (cardboard) to 72 hours (plastics & stainless steel). In the form of an aerosol (ie a fine mist) 50% of the virus will settle out onto a surface in about an hour, whereas the remainder may remain in the air for about 3- 4 hours. It is understood that transmission of the virus likely occurs mainly indoors and in settings where there is poor ventilation and close proximity between people.

Description of Activity (Coffee Stop):

Prior to the pandemic of Covid-19 the sanctuary of the church building has been open on each Friday morning of the week to facilitate refreshments for church members and members of the community. The refreshments are usually tea, coffee with food such as cakes and biscuits. The preparation of the event is undertaken by members of the church on a rota basis. The church seeks to reinstate this activity and possibly to extend the activity to another day of the week also, and/or special occasions within the Christian Calendar. The event usually lasts about 2 hours. The refreshments are consumed by participants seated at tables.

Persons at risk:

The persons at risk are primarily members of the church on the rota providing the activity, members of the church and members of the community attending for refreshments and the cleaner.

Nature & Likelihood of hazard:

The probability of infection is highly related to the current prevalence of the disease in the community. The probability of infection within the Coffee Stop event maybe associated with contact infection and aerosol transmission, both for those on the rota and participants. Whilst the cleaner, working in isolation, might be at higher risk from contact infection, the risk from infection from inhalation is very unlikely. The steward(s) at the entrance and exit are more likely to be at risk from infection by inhalation from participants arriving and leaving.

Severity of Hazard:

The severity of the infection primarily varies with age, gender, ethnicity, obesity and any underlying co-morbidity. The severity is increased with age; being male; being from a Black-Asian-Minority Ethnic group; being obese; having co-morbidities and for those people who are required to clinically shield. See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf

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Children appear to be the least affected from the infection.

Level of risk:

Without further demographic or clinical information it is assumed that all persons on duty and attending the event are at the same level of high risk of infection without control measures, and that all mitigation measures apply to everyone. The risk of infection increases if participants change seating positions and/or are able to meet with people from different households. All duty holders shall have access to the risk assessment on the website and may decline to perform the duty if they believe it may be unsafe for them to do so. Participants attending the gathering will be able to access joining instructions which will inform the requirements of attendance.

Mitigation and control of risks:

The measures taken conform to the regulations

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1374/made/data.pdf> and Schedule 2 relating to **Tier 2** restrictions.

Within the following text 'support bubble' refers to 'Linked households' and 'Linked Childcare households' within the regulations. A support bubble is where a single adult living alone, or a single parent with children under 18, can form an exclusive network with **one** other household where social distancing does not have to be observed. Alternatively, a household may exclusively link with another household for the purpose of informal childcare for children aged 13 or under in either of the households, and where social distancing does not have to be observed. 'Linked Christmas Households' are not addressed within these measures.

- i) The Coffee Stop and Café style events operate under the arrangements approved by the Leadership Team and if the prevalence of the disease in the community is unacceptable the event will be cancelled at any time.
- ii) The service will consist of refreshments being served at tables in the sanctuary only. The event will follow guidance given in:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>
and
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>
and
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-2-high-alert#business-and-venues>
- iii) Those attending Coffee Stop have an obligation to comply with legal requirements and respect the decision of the managing trustees to ensure compliance whilst on the premises.
- iv) **Government legislation.** The premises have been designated as being in an area where Tier 2 (High Alert) restrictions apply. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know#high-alert>. Whilst attending the premises for refreshments attendees **must not** meet or mingle with friends, family or others unless they are part of their household or support bubble. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>). The requirement for social distancing does not apply to members of the same household or support bubble.
- v) **Government guidance.** Whilst engaging in an activity on the premises, all parties should adhere to social distancing guidelines at all times. This means people should be 2 metres apart, or more than 1 metre apart as well as taking extra steps to stay safe (such as wearing a face covering) to reduce the risk of transmission.

- vi) **Government legislation.** It is a legal requirement to wear a face covering whilst on the premises excepting for children, valid health reasons or consuming refreshments. Surgical masks may be available at the entry for those without a suitable face covering on arrival. A face covering is a material which safely covers the nose and mouth and must securely fit round the side of the face. More information can be found in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#:~:text=Face%20coverings%20are%20not%20required,you%20leave%20your%20seat in g%20area>
- vii) All persons, including those on duty, entering the building will be invited to have attendance and contact details registered in order to facilitate tracing should that be necessary as part of a public health requirement. Those attending my use an NHS app and scan the NHS Test & Trace QR code to register attendance in the building: <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-covid-19/>. All local registers will be maintained for 21 days and destroyed within 4 weeks following attendance.
- viii) Everyone attending the premises will comply with the signage and other instructions in order to minimise the risk of infection and/or the transmission of the virus.
- ix) Entry to the premises normally will be via the footpath at the side of the building as this facilitates at least 8 persons queuing at the *social distance* between individuals from the side entrance doorway to the pavement.
- x) In the event of several organisations using the premises, or for other logistical reasons, the doors at the front of the church may be used for entry and exit purposes with adequate supervision.
- xi) Entry to and exit from the building will be controlled by a designated member on duty, and especially when more than one organisation is using the premises.
- xii) There will be no queuing within the building.
- xiii) A one-way system will be adopted so that people will leave the sanctuary via the front of the church.
- xiv) Everyone attending the church building will use hand sanitiser upon entry.
- xv) Personal greetings such as handshaking, hugs, etc are firmly discouraged.
- xvi) The seating around tables in the sanctuary shall be arranged with between one to six chairs at each table for those members of a household (and if appropriate support bubble). There shall be 2 metres separation between each table or group of chairs in any direction. Those persons living in the same household may reduce the separation of chairs to less than a metre. The tables shall be set out such that social distancing can be maintained when participants are joining or leaving their seats.
- xvii) Participants should arrive preferably as a household (and support bubble if appropriate).
- xviii) There shall be strictly no mixing of households or support bubbles between allocated seating.
- xix) Tables must not be rearranged by participants once set out. Tables will be assigned a number to facilitate service.
- xx) The maximum number of persons seated in the sanctuary shall be 10-40.
- xxi) All team members must use the personal protective equipment provided (ie surgical masks, face visors and disposable gloves).
- xxii) All doors relating to thoroughfares will remain open so as to minimise door handles being touched whilst facilitating ventilation, and thereby reducing the transmission of the virus.
- xxiii) Before and after the start of service ventilation to the sanctuary will be maximised by the use of air purifiers and natural ventilation.
- xxiv) Team members will control the ventilation in the sanctuary during the Coffee Stop to minimise transmission of the virus. The degree of ventilation required will be relative to the

number of people attending and the ambient temperature. The ceiling fan will be used to increase the movement of air in the sanctuary and other forced ventilation and filtration may be used.

- xxv) Personal items should not be left in the building without the permission of a Team Member.
- xxvi) Items belonging to the church should not be removed without the permission of a Team Member.
- xxvii) When handwashing is undertaken in the toilets the electric hand dryer or paper hand towels should be used for drying hands: the latter being disposed in the bin provided. Material hand towels have been removed to avoid contact transmission.
- xxviii) As well as washing hands sanitisers are provided in toilets for users.
- xxix) Sanitising wipes are provided in toilets so that users may clean handles, switches, etc after use. The wipes are to be disposed within the bins provided.
- xxx) Wherever possible everyone attending the building should be self-sufficient with tissues, pens, etc. Care must be undertaken not to touch, handle, replace or share objects (eg pens, pencils, books, etc) that might aid the transmission of the virus.
- xxxi) A thoroughfare will be maintained in the sanctuary for the purposes of providing an easy exit for participants whilst maintaining a *social distance*.
- xxxii) The tables and chairs shall be sanitised by a team member using disposable paper towels/cloths prior, between and after use by participants.
- xxxiii) A notice will be placed adjacent to the pathway requesting participants to wear a face covering on entry to the building and until seated, and to wear the *face covering* when leaving the table.
- xxxiv) At the time of entry participants will be welcomed and general enquiry made about their health. If a person appears to be unwell or not wearing a *face covering* then entry will be refused.
- xxxv) Team members will take refreshment orders from each table. The refreshments will be prepared in the lobby kitchen and placed on a table outside the lobby kitchen to be served to the appropriate table by a Team member. Only one team member can be in the lobby kitchen. Those team members in the lobby kitchen and serving, together with those sanitising tables must wear surgical face masks and protective gloves at all times. The Team member(s) clearing and sanitising tables will not serve refreshments.
- xxxvi) Participants should wear face coverings unless consuming refreshments.
- xxxvii) All used cups, saucers, etc must be collected from the tables and taken to the **main** kitchen, or if the Main Hall is being used stacked in the Wesley Room until the Main Hall is vacated. The cups, etc will be washed and sterilised normally using the commercial dishwasher before replacing in the cupboards. The team will sanitise tables, chairs and major contact points after the event has finished, but the furniture will remain in situ until the next event is prepared.
- xxxviii) A slotted bucket will be available for cash donations and as a consequence there will be no facility to provide change. The bucket will be dated and retained in a secure location for 72 hours prior to opening and counting by a Church Steward wearing protective gloves. A contactless donation system is being explored and maybe introduced at a later date.
- xxxix) Parents/carers should ensure supervision of children at all times whilst in the sanctuary. Children may participate in supervised activities within the sanctuary but must not transfer between tables.
- xl) Children may leave the sanctuary, accompanied by a parent/carer, to the adjacent Main Hall if a supervised activity is being provided, usually craft/drawing materials on the tables provided. In this circumstance the main hall shall be limited to 15 persons, excepting

children. All adults shall remain at the *social distance* from one another and continue to wear *face coverings*. Adults and children will regularly wash their hands.

- xli) All craft and drawings should be taken home and the table(s) sanitised. Other items may be disposed of or quarantined in a secure location depending upon continued usefulness.
- xlii) If a person is taken poorly during the event they shall be taken through the Wesley Room to the adjacent hall where they will be isolated by a Team member wearing protective gloves and surgical mask. A surgical mask and protective gloves may be given to the affected person. The person should remain in the Hall until it is safe to exit the building without further contact of others. The areas where the person was sitting will be sanitised. A note against the name of the person will be made on the registration sheet. In the event of a more complex condition emergency services should be contacted.
- xliii) Team Members will be trained and briefed regarding the processes and procedures for the event, and shall have read a description of the event and the risk assessment.
- xliv) Waste disposal will comply with <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>
- xlv) Face coverings and PPE, such as gloves, may be disposed in 'black bag' waste' only (ie not recycling waste) and need not be double bagged or quarantined for 72 hours unless the waste is suspected to be associated with an infected person (eg a person taken ill).
- xlvi) The Cleaner will perform hygienic cleaning (ie sanitising toilets, wash basins, door handles, etc) as soon as practicable after the event and before the building is used for other purposes.
- xlvii) In the event of fire, all fire safety measures take precedence.

Further guidance in the form of emails, noticeboards, notice sheets, website etc will be communicated to those wishing to attend the building for the Coffee Stop Event. By registering those attending the building agree and will be required to follow the mitigation measures to ensure safety.