

Good News Community Church:

## COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Church services and events

Revised 20.10.21

### **Introduction**

In the coronavirus pandemic the risks, before controls are implemented, were scored as high probability and high severity. This is because coronavirus is very infectious and the consequences of contracting it can be very serious and fatal, particularly to those with underlying health conditions and / or age vulnerability. At the outset of the pandemic, the probability of observing a case or cases within a 12 month period has been high without public health control measures. Therefore, the implementation of control measures is vital. It is worthy of note that the COVID-19 vaccination programme has been a great success and can now be considered a significant public health control measure and helps in the reduction of the severity of the illness.

### **Background**

The Good News Community Church hires the Macclesfield Community Centre from Cheshire East Council (CEC) for its services and events. It also stores its equipment in a designated room. In the recent past, Church services have seen up to around 35 people in attendance in the Hall. The dimensions of the Hall are 12.5m by 16.5m and its stage area is additional 3.5m by 7.5m. So, social distancing within the Hall is possible for around that figure – depending on our equipment layout – particularly at the stage end. The Church has attendees who are in the vulnerable category by reason of age or underlying health condition. However, it is understood that the vast majority of Church members have received 2 doses of the COVID – 19 vaccine.

### **Government guidance:**

It is noted that the Government's COVID – 19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship was published on 16 July 2021. It highlights rules for places of worship that have changed (i.e. relaxed) from 19 July 2021 in line with the Government's 4 stage road map.

Relaxations of note are: a) Face coverings are no longer required by law in any setting; and b) There will no longer be limits on the number of people who can sing indoors or outdoors. This includes congregational and communal singing.

We note that the limit CEC limit of 30 people in the Hall has now been lifted. Control measures in place will take account of this adjustment. Of prime importance is the large volume of air in the Hall that is subject to mechanical / window ventilation, and the adoption of a one-way system for footfall if needed.

## **Means of spread of Coronavirus**

- Primarily through the aerosol droplets entering the air from infected persons who may or may not be showing signs of infection. Person to person spread through breathing in droplets with viral particles attached that have been carried in the air.
- Hands that have become contaminated with the virus that go on to make contact with surfaces or another person. Fabrics can be a particular problem in this respect in that they absorb 'liquid'. Persons hands may become contaminated through touching contaminated surfaces and go on to touch their mouth, nose, eyes or ears (i.e. entry points for the virus).

## **Control measures implemented**

1. No persons to enter the Good News Community Church event with flu like symptoms. If in any doubt, take a lateral flow test before coming to the event. Church members have been advised.
2. A record of names who have attended services is being taken – for the purpose of NHS test and trace, and the Church fire plan.
3. Attendees are encouraged to sanitise their hands on entry into the building. A hand sanitisation station is positioned in the foyer in front of the entrance.
4. Attendees are encouraged to make their way from the foyer to the seating provided in the main Hall quickly.
5. Attendees are encouraged to respect other people's personal space with a view to reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission. Social distancing signage is in place.
6. Face marks are now recommended where spaces are crowded. Attendees may choose to wear masks.
7. Chairs in the main meeting hall are set out in a socially distant manner.
8. Ventilation is provided in the meeting hall by means of 2 large extractor fans and open windows. The internal entrance doors to the meeting hall will be kept open for the duration of the event.
9. The level of convection heating will be monitored to ensure that the air is a satisfactory temperature.
10. A one-way system into and out of the Hall will be introduced should the attendance levels exceed 50.
11. The stage has large fabric curtains, and these must not be touched. It is prohibited for attendees to go onto the stage except for the person who connects / disconnects the power supply cable from the stage electric plugs.
12. Music group participants will be distanced from each other.
13. The basement storage area and the area in front of the side cupboard by the stage are confined areas. Only one designated member of the set up team should enter them.
14. Communion is administered by a designated helper using small fellowship cups containing a prepacked wafer and fruit juice. These are distributed by the helper during the service on a tray.

15. The cleaning of the Hall is carried out by Cheshire East Council. Antiviral agents are said to be used.
16. Teas, coffees, and cold drinks will be served after services. Persons who are seated at tables will be served by designated helpers who come to the tables. 2 persons are allowed to serve the drinks to the helpers from the kitchen, who in turn serve the tables. It is prohibited to congregate in front of the kitchen hatch.
17. The tables used will be sanitised with anti-viral agent after use.
18. Most of the time PA and related equipment will not be used in the 72hr period after its use in the service. However, as a precaution, certain equipment will be sanitised with after use using specialist wipes: the congregational use condenser microphone and computer.
19. The congregational use condenser microphone is not touched by the users – there is a line of cones to remind people about this.
20. At the end of the event and attendees have left, a designated person will sanitise internal door handles and door plates in the meeting hall, kitchen and toilets.
21. The toilets have a one person at a time policy and are kept ventilated. The outer toilet room doors will be kept open.
22. Attendees are asked to take their own waste home if possible.

### **Monitoring**

A revised service event list is in use.

The Pastors, Trustees and Finance / Admin assistant are responsible for supervising the controls.

### **Revisions**

The risk assessment will be from time to time revised taking into account guidance from the Government and local Council, as well as local infection rates and conditions.