



DIOCESE OF LEEDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions relating to the Government's Covid-19 National Lockdown Restrictions coming into force from 5th November 2020

Q 1. *Can I leave home to attend a Place of Worship?*

Yes. You may leave home to attend a Place of Worship for individual prayer, a funeral (see also Q 5 below), or a related event for someone who has died.

Q 2. *Will our churches be affected by the national 'lockdown'?*

Yes. Places of worship and our ability to use churches for the celebration of Mass and other Sacraments, will be affected by the national lockdown. A place of worship should remain closed for public communal celebrations of Mass and other public communal celebrations of the liturgy, and should be used only for individual prayer, funerals, or to broadcast an act of worship with the congregation not physically present in the church.

Q 3. *Can I still have my child baptised?*

No, the sacrament of baptism cannot be celebrated during this period of 'lockdown'.

Q 4. *Can I still get married in church?*

No. Weddings may only take place where one of those getting married is seriously ill and is not expected to recover. These weddings are limited to 6 people (excluding the priest or deacon celebrant).

Q 5. *Can funerals still take place in church?*

Yes. However, under the government's current Covid-19 regulations, the number of people able to attend a funeral is restricted to a maximum of 30 (excluding the priest or deacon celebrant).

Q 6. *Is the number of people able to attend private prayer being restricted?*

No. Under the government's lockdown Covid-19 regulations, there is no specific maximum number set which limits the total number of people who attend church for individual prayer. However, under the government's longer-standing pandemic safety requirements for places of worship, each church building does have an approved safe maximum capacity number that is determined by its size, seating arrangements and the requirements for social distancing. This means that our churches do not hold as many people during the restrictions of the pandemic as they would do otherwise.

Q 7. Do I need to wear a face covering to go to church?

Yes. Under the government's current instructions, all those who are attending churches must wear a face covering unless they are exempt from doing so as specified by the government. This is for the good of all who gather in the church as it is an enclosed public space where there are people from differing households who they do not normally meet. People attending a church should bring a face covering with them.

Q 8. Are Stewards still required?

Yes. A minimum of two stewards will be required whilst the church is open for individual prayer and funerals.

Q 9. Will our Parish Halls be affected by the "lockdown"?

Yes, parish halls, centres and clubs are to close except for a limited number of exempt activities, such as education/training, childcare/wraparound care, blood donation, food banks, and essential support groups.

Q 10. Can people work in my home?

Yes. Where it is necessary to work in other people's homes, such as tradesman, administrators, or as cleaners/housekeeper then it is permissible to do so. Where it is feasible to work effectively from home then they must do so. Additional care should be taken to minimise your contact with others from outside your household.

Q 11. Am I at more risk of COVID and should I be shielding?

All people over the age of 60 or clinically vulnerable could be at a higher risk of severe illness from the coronavirus and you should be especially careful to follow the rules and minimise your contacts with others.

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or over (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
 - ☛ chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - ☛ chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - ☛ chronic kidney disease
 - ☛ chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
 - ☛ chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS) or cerebral palsy
 - ☛ diabetes

- ☉ a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions or medicines they are taking (such as steroid tablets)
- ☉ being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- ☉ pregnant

There is a further group of people who are defined, also on medical grounds, as clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus; that is, people with specific serious health conditions. Over this period, people in this group are advised to work from home. If they cannot work from home, they are advised not to go to work and may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA). The Government will write to everybody who is clinically extremely vulnerable to set out detailed advice while the new restrictions are in place.

**✠ Marcus Stock
Bishop of Leeds**

4th November 2020