Volunteering during Coronavirus (COVID-19): Volunteer church stewards

Last updated at 21/04/2021

COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. When someone with the virus coughs or exhales, releasing droplets of infected fluid, most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects e.g. tables, seating. When people touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, they can catch the virus and so the cycle goes on.

Where people are near someone infected with COVID-19 (less than two metres between individuals), they can breathe in droplets which have been coughed out or exhaled.

Simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Stay at home if you or someone you live with starts to show symptoms or you are advised to do so because you have been in contact with someone who has the virus.

Keep at least 2 metres away from people you do not live with.

Wash your hands regularly.

Disinfect frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handles, handrails, light switches, pews, tables.

Wear a face covering to protect yourself and others.

Support the test and trace service by following the sign in arrangements at your church.

Avoid unnecessary travel and check travel advice before travelling.

Why stewarding matters

As well as welcoming people to church, stewards are a point of contact and can help people to follow the COVID secure measures that will protect everyone.

Who should steward?

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable to severe symptoms of COVID-19, you should NOT help with stewarding during COVID-19.

If you are 70+ or pregnant you should be aware that you are also vulnerable to serious illness from COVID and consider if there are alternative ways you could help your church.

If you live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, you should also consider whether stewarding is safe for your household circumstances.

Stewarding during COVID

Stewarding during COVID-19 is likely to involve:

- Opening and closing the church.
- Checking that temporary signs, notices and barriers are clear, legible, secure and in the right place.
- Encouraging people to use the check in facilities.
- Reminding people to use the hand sanitising facilities.
- Encouraging visitors to use a face covering.
- Helping people to observe social distancing guidelines e.g. by highlighting one way routes, directing people to seating and helping to manage queues and congestion.
- Checking for obvious hazards that could cause an accident e.g. slip and trip hazards, fire hazards.
- Being vigilant to potential dangers such as slip and trip or fire hazards, unusual or antisocial behaviour.
- Keeping consumables such as hand washing materials, spare disposable gloves and face coverings well stocked

- Monitoring votive candle stations where these are in use.
- Helping with cleaning of hard surfaces that are touched frequently by multiple people.
- Implementing emergency procedures in the event of a fire or accident.
- Being a point of contact for visitors.

> There may be other duties which you are asked to help with from time to time. These will be discussed with you as they arise.

Keep yourself and others safe

In addition to general COVID-19 precautions you should follow these guidelines:

- Familiarise yourself with the arrangements for social distancing, hand washing, cleaning, accidents and emergencies so you know to do.
- Avoid stewarding by yourself. If you are working in the building alone, make sure you have a means of contacting someone in an emergency, that someone knows you are there and to let them know when you are finished. This can be a family member, friend or your Parish Priest.
- Within a stewarding team, check that someone has a fully charged mobile phone with a reliable signal in case you need to call for help.
- Wear protective gloves if you are wiping surfaces or handling rubbish. If you are stewarding in the car park wear a high visibility waistcoat.
- Wipe down equipment you use which is likely to be used by other people who you don't live with an anti-viral sanitiser before and after use.
- Try to work with the same people to reduce the number of people you meet.
- If someone confides in you, listen without passing comment, take their details and pass them to the Parish Priest.
- Unaccompanied children should not be admitted to the church.
- STOP - If you're not sure about something, ASK.
- Bring your own food and drink. Sharing kitchen facilities increases the risk of transmission.
- If you see something that doesn't look safe and you can't easily and safely put it right yourself, report it to someone who can.

What if someone becomes unwell or is injured?

If you are called on to provide first aid and cannot stay socially distanced from the injured person, be mindful of the risk of infection.

- Wear a face covering.
- Wash your hands before and after administering first aid.
- Do not cough or sneeze over someone while helping them. Wear a face covering if possible.
- Cover any open sores or wounds on your hands before putting on disposable gloves before beginning treatment.
- Do not touch a wound with your bare hands and don't touch any part of a dressing that will come into contact with a wound
- Dispose of all waste including dressings and protective equipment safely.
- Complete the Accident Book and report the accident to the Parish Priest

What if you have symptoms or have been asked to self-isolate?

Stay at home if you or someone you live with starts to show symptoms or you are advised to do so because you have been in contact with someone who has the virus. Tell your Parish Priest as soon as possible.

Take advantage of free at home lateral flow tests (LFT) which are available for everyone who wants one. This helps to detect whether you are infectious even if you don't have any symptoms and could avoid someone else catching COVID.

> Find out more about coronavirus (COVID-19) on the government website in your region (see Additional Resources)

Thank you for helping during this difficult time

Version control

Version	Date	Details
3.2	**21/4/21**	**Reference to Vulnerable People changed from 60+, pregnant or BAME to 70+ or pregnant.**
3.1	**12/04/21**	**Removal of duplicated section (who should steward) and reference to LFT testing now available for all.**

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3	3/12/20	Content transfered to online guide. General refresh of content in line with latest guidelines.
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SafetyToolbox Resources

- COVID-19 Event/ Activity Checklist (https://v2.app.safetytoolbox.co.uk/resources/1470)
- COVID-19 Individual Worker Assessment (formerly Staff Return to Work Checklist) (https://v2.app.safetytoolbox.co.uk/resources/1428)

External Resources

- GOV.UK: Covid-19 Guidance and Support (https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- GOV.UK Roadmap out of Lockdown (Summary) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary)
- GOV.WALES Coronavirus Control Plan: Alert Levels (March 2021) (https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/coronavirus-control-plan-revised-alert-levels-in-wales-march-2021.pdf)
- GOV.WALES: Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines (https://gov.wales/coronavirus)