

## **Covid-19 and church buildings: Permissions required for works to enable safe use and streaming services**

The national church has prepared guidance on permissions for making churches safe to access, which can be accessed here: [National guidance on temporary permissions](#).

This document, produced by the Diocesan Advisory Committee, is intended to be read alongside the national guidance and provides more detailed advice of the level of permission that will be required for various types of works to church buildings within the Diocese of Leeds, with reference to the diocese's [Lifting the Lockdown](#) guidance.

The document covers general matters for all types of public access first, broken into categories as set out in the Lifting the Lockdown guidance. It then covers some considerations relating to re-starting worship services.

Note that this document is subject to ongoing review and advice may change over time. If in any doubt about whether works require permission, contact the DAC staff or your Archdeacon.

This is revised guidance to that issued on 30 October 2020. The guidance incorporates changes to advice on permissions for the installation of cameras and links to diocesan guidance on streaming.

### **GENERAL ACCESS MATTERS**

- **Social distancing marks on floors or pews**

Provided marks to floors are made in materials that are designed to come off easily (e.g. paint designed to wash off on external paths, stickers or tape on internal floors), this constitutes "temporary signage and cordoning" under the national guidance and therefore outside the faculty jurisdiction and requiring no permission.

Marks on pews will be best achieved by simple posters (placed on seats or stuck to backs with fixings that do not damage fabric) and/or roping off, which is also classed as "temporary signage and cordoning" under the national guidance and therefore requiring no permission.

PCCs may wish to take advice from their Archdeacon or DAC to confirm that the materials, set-up and style of signage are appropriate.

- **Directing foot traffic with signs**

This is likely to be done by free-standing signs or signs affixed temporarily to furnishings and walls and can therefore be classed as "temporary signage and cordoning" under the national guidance and therefore outside the faculty jurisdiction and requiring no permission.

Better movement flows and appropriate distancing might also be achieved by some relocating of furniture. Furniture which is already flexible (such as moveable pews and chairs) can be moved without permission, but fire safety will need to be factored into the positioning of the furniture.

The movement or removal of fixed items will require a Temporary Minor Reordering licence from the Archdeacon, an application for which can be made via the Online Faculty System.

- **Restricting certain areas**

This can be generally be achieved by use of signage, roping off, or by arrangement of furnishings. Signage is covered above and can be introduced without permission if it is temporary.

If roping off can be achieved without any new fixings (for instance, looping rope around pew ends), it will be classed as “temporary signage and cordoning” under the national guidance and therefore outside the faculty jurisdiction and requiring no permission. If hooks or other fixings need to be affixed to historic fabric, the PCC should make an application for Directions from the Chancellor by contacting the Registry.

If the church contains pews and seating designed to be flexible and moveable, these may be rearranged in a way to restrict access to various areas without permission being needed. More substantial reordering may require a Temporary Minor Reordering licence – seek the advice of your Archdeacon or the DAC staff.

- **Hand sanitiser dispensers**

PCCs are encouraged to consider free-standing, temporary solutions that do not require a dispenser to be attached to a wall (e.g. a pump on a table or a free-standing station) as these can be introduced immediately without permission and can be positioned to be clearly visible on entry into the building. If a PCC wishes to pursue a wall-mounted option, they will need to make an application for Directions from the Chancellor by contacting the Registry.

- **Perspex screens on existing café units / serveries / welcome desks**

PCCs should make an application for Minor Works Directions from the Chancellor by contacting the Registry.

## **ADJUSTMENTS FOR SERVICES**

- **Internet installation to enable streaming**

PCCs should make an application for Minor Works Directions from the Chancellor by contacting the Registry. Consideration may need to be given to burials if the cabling is to run underground, and careful decisions will be needed about how the cabling enters the building and visibility of wiring.

Further information on internet installations can be found in the diocesan [toolkit on broadcasting worship online](#), with particular reference to the Frequently Asked Question: How do I get internet/WiFi into my church?

- **Cameras to enable recording and streaming**

Free-standing audio equipment can be introduced without permission, under List A5(4)(k). The use of free-standing equipment for the immediate term provides a good opportunity to experiment with what angles and equipment work best, before making any commitment to a longer-term solution.

If a PCC wishes to make a permanent installation, this may be possible under List B1(15) for unlisted buildings. If your building is listed, a faculty may be required, but it may also be possible to request Minor Works Directions from the Chancellor by contacting the Registry. Consideration will also need to be given to introducing signage for GDPR and privacy reasons, if the congregation may be filmed, and such signage would need to be covered by permission.

Further information on AV set-ups for streaming can be found in the diocesan [toolkit on broadcasting worship online](#).

- **Screens to project service words**

With the advice against sharing service books, PCCs will need to consider other means for congregations to follow along with services. A quick and easy solution could be single-use printed material. However, some PCCs may wish to consider screens – either LED screens or screens with projectors. As above, free-standing equipment can be introduced without permission, under List A5(4)(k) and allows for a useful period of experimentation before committing to any longer-term solution. A permanent solution may be possible under List B1(15) if the building is unlisted, but will require a faculty if the building is listed.

- **Relocation of furnishing**

It may be necessary to relocate furnishings, particularly in the chancel area, to enable those conducting the service to move around whilst maintaining a safe distance from one another. Movement or removal of furnishings will usually be possible with a Temporary Minor Reordering licence from the Archdeacon, provided that the movement of the furnishing doesn't cause irreversible change and provided that the furniture can be stored safely (if it is to be removed from the building). Temporary Minor Reordering licences last for two years.

## **SEEKING FURTHER ADVICE**

DAC staff can give further advice about necessary permissions and how you might successfully make alterations to your building. They can also help you developing your ideas by putting you in touch with its audiovisual adviser.

The contact details of DAC staff are as follows:

- Lisa McIntyre (DAC Secretary) – [lisa.mcintyre@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:lisa.mcintyre@leeds.anglican.org) / 0113 353 0277
- Jen Read (Assistant DAC Secretary – [jen.read@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:jen.read@leeds.anglican.org) / 0113 353 0278
- Stephen Craven (Church Buildings Support Officer) – [stephen.craven@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:stephen.craven@leeds.anglican.org) / 0113 353 0274

The contact details of the Registry, if requesting a Minor Works Direction or other advice from the Chancellor, are as follows:

- Beverley Mightly (Registry Assistant) [beverley.mightly@luptonfawcett.law](mailto:beverley.mightly@luptonfawcett.law) / 0113 280 2241

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