COVID-19 Update – Autumn 2020

For Circuit Staff team and Circuit Office Holders

# Introduction

As we continue through these challenging times and enter a new phase of lockdown, it felt helpful to offer an update to our circuit office holders, ministers, lay employees and lay leaders in order to make sure that you feel equipped and empowered to deal with the ever-changing landscape of rules which we face. The hope is that this document will show you the best places to look for updated information, our expectations on those who represent the circuit and on who you can ask if you have questions about a particular topic.

# Staying Safe

It is of first consideration above everything else that within your role for our circuit you stay safe. You can assess your risk level using a range of different calculators, such as the [United Reformed Church calculator](https://urc.org.uk/images/Communications/docs/Personal_Risk_Assessment.pdf), in order to establish the level of risk that COVID presents to you as an individual or to those around you. If you have any concerns about your work or role within the circuit, around whether or how to do something, please do talk to your Supervisor if you have one, or to one of the Superintendents. Please feel comfortable in discussing and raising questions.

# Finding Information

It is important that, as leaders within the circuit, we are all aware of the latest guidelines. Here are a few of the key places that you should be looking on a regular basis to stay updated.

* [Methodist Website](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/) – This is the first place to visit, providing links to all the relevant websites and information which is updated regularly as things change. Please check for new information on a regular basis, There is a lot of information here, so please do ask someone from the Covid team for help if it is a bit overwhelming.
* [Government Website](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) – The government website is the central point to read all information about new rules and restrictions and links to this are on the Methodist Website. It is important that we stay up to date with the latest information.
* [NHS Website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) – For information relating to COVID-19 in terms of its effects and any medical advice which has been given, the NHS website is a great starting place for reliable information.

# Following Guidance

Once we know where to find the latest guidance and rules it is most important that we are complying with our legal responsibilities to ensure we offer a Covid secure environment and that we are leading by example in our practice of the guidance. Within your circuit work we ask that you follow government guidelines at all times, and, outside of your circuit work, we hope that you will take seriously your role as an example to those around you.

P.T.O. for who to ask for help

# Who to ask for help

Over the last eight months we have all been on a fast learning journey together as we have learned how to assess the risks involved with our mission and ministry across the circuit. We have all been learning different things at different times and taken different roles. The Circuit Covid Team have worked hard to ensure our churches have Covid Risk Assessments in place and that the Managing Trustees understand their responsibilities. It is important that we share the wisdom that we have learned along the way so that others do not need to duplicate our work.

Below is a list of a few people who have done focussed work in our circuit on particular topics and who might be useful people to call if you require pointers in something that you are doing.

* **Property Risk Assessments** – For all matters relating to Covid 19 risk assessments for property, please contact Richard Burr, Circuit Property Steward, or Jayne Snape, Circuit Property and Facilities Officer. You can find their details in the Circuit Directory online, or do contact the circuit office to be put in touch, contact@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk
* **Activity Risk Assessments­** – There are many different people who have been wrestling with risk assessments for the last few months and the Church Managing Trustees are responsible for ensuring that those who use their premises have risk assessments in place. Do contact Richard Burr to discuss any other risk assessment needs that you might have, he will be able to point you in the direction of someone who has already done something similar.
* **Personal Risk Assessments –** The [United Reformed Church personal risk assessment](https://urc.org.uk/images/Communications/docs/Personal_Risk_Assessment.pdf), or the [BMA personal risk assessment tool](https://www.bma.org.uk/media/2768/bma-covid-19-risk-assessment-tool-july2020.pdf) are useful resources.
* **Worship** – Your Ministers will be best placed to help you with questions in this area or contact Nick Jones as the Co-Superintendent for worship. Tom Milton is a good person to speak to about online/digital worship (details below under training).
* **Human Resources –** If you have any matter relating to employment then please speak to your supervisor or minister or contact Alison Richards as the Co-Superintendent for Resources.
* **Pastoral Visiting** – For questions around pastoral visiting, please do contact your Minister to see what advice they might give on this topic.
* **Children and Youth Work** – For questions in this area do please contact our Children and Youth Coordinator, Ermine Mitchell, on emitchell@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk or 07704 025 491.
* **Training** – If you have any matters around training then please do contact Tom Milton, our Development and Training Officer, for help – tmilton@birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk or 0787537940.

# Thank you

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone for your hard work, perseverance and energy, under what have been very difficult and challenging circumstances. We hope and pray for medical progress which will allow us to move forwards towards a more certain future, but in the meantime, we must continue to support and care for one another as we travel on this ever-evolving journey.

Circuit Covid Team

Rev Neil Johnson, Rev Nick Jones, Rev Alison Richards, Circuit Property Steward Richard Burr, Circuit Property and Facilities Officer, Jayne Snape.