



# What's **NEXT?**

Post Covid-19 lockdown  
Guidance Report



Don't rush back,  
**Venture  
Forward...**

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Only the church doors  
have been closed,  
the church has  
certainly not been

## Lockdown will end

Around the UK (and beyond) churches are currently operating in a period of uncertainty, that many won't have experienced in living memory. With seemingly no forewarning, the instruction was giving for mass gatherings, including religious services, to be suspended to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and therefore since mid March, the doors of most church buildings have remained closed. It has only been the doors which have been closed though, the church has certainly not been.

To the credit of the church, 'talk' about church being suspended was very short lived (and in many cases non-existent) as quickly from a state of unpreparedness, and with different resource levels and technical capability, the UK

church migrated from being characterised by their physical presence with a weekly focus on a weekend face to face gathering (*Do you go to church on a Sunday?*) to being facilitated by digital and online tools to continue in worship, discipleship, community and service as a reformed entity.

**The church has been getting fit for a 21st century that up until recently, many would have struggled to imagine.**

This story cannot be summarised as a 'good-news' story or as a 'bad-news' story, but it is, like at many other points of history, the real and uncomfortable story of the church of Jesus Christ.

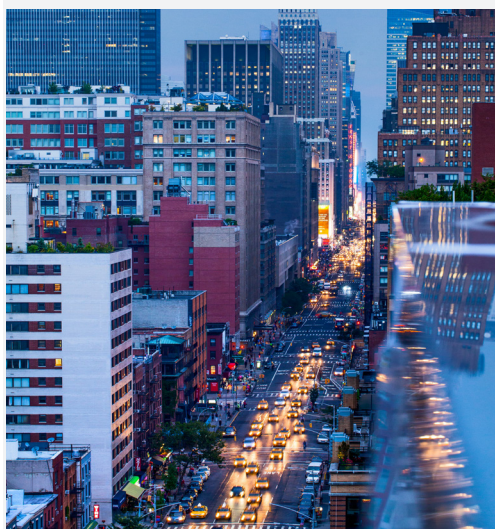
There is no doubt that Covid-19 has shaken the world and that there is nothing good about the virus. This is the basic truth of such an entity. It is also without doubt, that God often performs 'life-giving' and 'transformational' works in the midst of 'bad things' and that no illness, persecution

or social disruptor has ever been too great for His 'life-giving' purposes to be at work.

I don't write this to gloss over the hardship, emotional turmoil, loss of life and worry that has been a present companion in our daily lives over the last 3-4 months. I also don't want to say that the church has universally, if at all, thrived in the challenges it has faced, but it certainly has faced them with courage and creativity. The worship of Christians around the world, virtually, in person, in private and in service, has been to God's glory.

From the hope of the 'UK Blessing' going viral and being recognised by the Prime Minister, to the online Alpha marriage courses seeing large uptake, to the 1000s of meals distributed by churches each week to those in need, to the weekly service provision via video and stream, to zoom small groups, online youth and children's provision, and the scattered church members being active in loving their neighbours-

**Praise be to God!**



photos: John Schnobrich, Joshua Eckstein & Laith Abdulkareem on unsplash.com

At UCAN we have long been a proponent of operating as a church with clarity of purpose. This is just as important now, but the purpose is not to rush back to what there was before.

## The phase we're in...

Now that June has come about, and the novelty of the lockdown arrangements have certainly worn thin, we are living in another phase of uncertainty.

Some restrictions on our lives are starting to ease a bit, and this brings a level of practical relief. However, we don't know if a second wave of the outbreak is on the way and we don't know when and how further derestriction will come. The rate of exit from lockdown, even when self-governed, may be different and disparate, regionally, demographically and ethnically. It is into this present set of challenges that we write.

At UCAN we have long been a proponent of operating as a church with clarity of purpose. This is just as important now, but the purpose is not to rush back to what there was before.

The question to avoid is 'How quickly can we return to normal, as it was before this all happened?' As we move towards July 2020, this question is starting to be voiced. However, it is not a realistic question and no matter how well intentioned, it betrays the reality of the situation.

We don't know what normal will be, but the 'new normal' is highly likely to be different from the 'prior normal'. **This is a social, economic and a missional reality.**

As Katie Allread of Church Communications, featured in the 'Church Fuel: Senior Pastor's guide to Reopening' said, *"we all had to rush into this, but we don't have to rush out of it"*.

UCAN's guidance when considering What's Next? Don't rush back, Venture forward.....

*Andy B*

— Andrew Bagwell  
Executive Director, UCAN



photo: Nina Strehl on unsplash.com

## Why do we say this?

Firstly, don't retreat from the missional potential that comes from being accessible and present in a digital (online) medium.

Alongside other voices, and with a particular focus during 2019 in our 'Communicating with IMPACT' training days, (now available as an online course at [churchadministrators.net/shop](http://churchadministrators.net/shop)) we've been banging the drum about the use of online tools and social media as no longer being an optional extra or gimmick for the church, but an essential method of communication.

In fairness, we had no idea about the strength of truth in this message and the prophetic implications for 2020. Now that the church has stepped forward to be more visible and present in the online communities which exist, it would be detrimental to retreat from these when weekend gatherings are once again permissible. This would

risk overlooking those who will remain isolated, or who would never come to a church building. It would communicate a message about our former existence being more important than the new increased openness that has developed through necessity. It would risk going back to serving only those who can attend courses at our physical buildings, as opposed to, for example, the parents experiencing marriage difficulties who would never come to a marriage course due to childcare restrictions. It would risk isolating those of any demographic, who would never have wanted to make a fuss and ask for online access to services or prayer meetings or home groups, but now have been given permission to do so, because it's the 'norm'.

### Perhaps it should stay the norm?

We have been presented with the invitation and the imperative to step-up to a new level of effectiveness. Let's continue to grab hold of it.

## What's Next?

Don't rush back,  
Venture forward.....

### Government Guidance

> [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus)

### Denominational Guidance

> [churchofengland.org/coronavirus](https://churchofengland.org/coronavirus)

> [baptist.org.uk/coronavirus](https://baptist.org.uk/coronavirus)

> [methodist.org.uk/coronavirus](https://methodist.org.uk/coronavirus)

### Other Helpful Links

> [stewardship.org.uk/covid](https://stewardship.org.uk/covid)

> [cpodigital.org/cv19-resources](https://cpodigital.org/cv19-resources)

> [covid.churcheshandbook.co.uk](https://covid.churcheshandbook.co.uk)

> [anthonycollins.com/newsroom/ebriefings/covid-19-ebriefings-and-updates/](https://anthonycollins.com/newsroom/ebriefings/covid-19-ebriefings-and-updates/)





Secondly, the economic reality of Covid-19 has not yet hit and is likely to be more significant than expected.

On a macro scale, the level of borrowing from the UK government to provide support during the Covid-19 pandemic will take years if not decades to repay. We have no idea, as yet, what shape the downturn and recovery will take, but commentators are predicting a slow economic return. It is likely that inflation and taxation will result in less disposable income for our church members and unemployment will increase. Jobs which had previously been considered secure and safe may have disappeared. This will have a knock-on effect to the church's income, (as well as the more significant pastoral implication).

Additionally, the increase in video-conferencing for meeting and new social etiquette for groups getting together will likely result in a decrease in income from room hire. This may also be an intentional decision by the church leadership, as the greater implications for cleaning, risk assessment and the management of a room hire business dawn on us.

If your church has become reliant on income generated from your premises, this will present itself as a big factor to consider.

Even while income decreases, the church will be presented with increased opportunities to financially support the poor and those in hardship. Therefore, a financial re-working is required, and this is likely to have an effect on staff levels and ministry budgets.

Thirdly, those responsible for logistically overseeing the gathered church will need to be diligent in exercising this responsibility. Expectations are already forming in our minds over what adjustments are seen as necessary and reasonable for schools, shops and restaurants etc. We will also have such expectations for church gatherings, certainly this side of a vaccine being developed and widely distributed.

Detailed and pragmatic steps will need to be considered to best care for the health needs of a diverse population, who may for many months (or longer) be advised to socially distance when

together, and to limit being together by self-isolating. Those with greater vulnerability may not be present amongst gathered worshippers for some time, as they are advised to shield themselves. Those gathering to worship, may have to express this worship in the midst of uncomfortable guidelines.

Yes, we may be able to get back together sooner rather than later. This is a big 'may' but yes it may be possible in some settings to make the physical and logistical changes to adhere to social distance policy and risk assessment.

**But will we want to?** Will the outcome be a step forward or not?

What will Koinonia look like when socially distanced?



BUILDINGS



WEEKEND WORSHIP



COMMUNICATIONS



FINANCES



PEOPLE / HR



Yes we may be able to meet together sooner rather than later... But will we want to?

The physical alterations advised to premises may end up being divisive for community. Necessary changes may be cost prohibitive. Once again, we echo the wise words of the team at Church Fuel – 'Do we have a compelling reason to return to gathering instead of what we are doing now?'

As we are constantly reminded by the Downing Street briefings, the pace of easement is important and will be phased. This will be the same for churches as well.

We are currently in the lockdown phase with online being our only option for public worship. There will be a phase when onsite becomes possible but with significant restrictions and alterations in place. There will then be another phase where some of these practical onsite restrictions can ease. There may be further phases of easement or times when restrictions are tightened again. There may be future outbreak concerns. Whatever the changes, I think we can safely assume that the expectations regarding safe and optimal ways to organise mass gatherings have changed indefinitely. Some of the considerations below may be short term. Others may now be the new 'norm'.

So, with this in mind, we offer the following document as a discussion starter. What's Next for post lockdown? You will find thematic guidance on (1) Building management, (2) Weekend worship and events, (3) Communications, (4) Financial management (including risk) (5) Managing and caring for people (HR). These are some of the main areas you will need to take into consideration when putting together a timetable for reopening for onsite gatherings and worship.

Our guidance will highlight some of the questions you will need to ask about the effect on the vulnerable, families, volunteers teams, employed staff and others. We are indebted to various organisations who have helped shape our thinking, many of whom can be seen speaking in our online video content on this subject. Please also see the web links on page 5. Our prayer is that you find time to pray and think through What's Next? You had to rush into lockdown, you don't need to rush back, instead venture forward....

## What decisions do we face?

1. When to start to open?
2. How quickly to open?
3. What are we opening and why?
4. What will it look like, when we're open?



# BUILDING MANAGEMENT



## BUILDING MANAGEMENT

Any steps towards meeting together post-lockdown will involve taking decisions about building management policy and any physical alterations this policy requires. Here are a few pointers to get you started.

**1** When reopening the church building after a period of lengthy closure, check the operational status of all normal systems for maintenance or health risk issues. This will involve manually assessing all WC and kitchen facilities and any electrical equipment. Please consult online guidance surrounding legionella and other water issues. Running taps for a number of minutes to clear pipes of old water and pouring water in floor drains and traps are all good steps to take, but depending on your installation, greater steps may be required.

Any equipment which was closed-down in a hurry may need a maintenance visit or a deep clean.

**2** It is unlikely that your cleaning regiment or SLA (Service Level Agreement) pre Covid-19 will be sufficient

for post-lockdown operation. You may need to consider an increased amount of cleaning or improved levels of cleaning resulting from an enhanced SLA.

Many churches cover their cleaning through a volunteer rota. This is not likely to be sufficient going forward, and would certainly include increased management, inspection and sign-off. Therefore, if this is applicable for you, consider moving from a volunteer provision to employed or contracted services.

Professional cleaners will provide you with Covid-19 documentation and agree appropriate SLAs. You may need to introduce additional cleaning between services and room use. Perhaps more deep cleans or steam cleans. Agree how you are going to inspect and sign-off the safety of the premises as part of your management. This may involve using a checklist during a Sunday for between service cleans and a 'safe-to-open' procedure.

**3** Your church building or centre, may benefit from physical alterations to reduce touch points for users, maximise the potential for social distancing and minimise the spread of germs

and health concerns. If you have a listed building or one where there is ecclesiastical legislation to comply with, please seek guidance from the appropriate authorities. Your denomination structure will be able to advise you on this.

Physical alterations that you may like to consider are:

- automatic doors or doors remaining open for standard operation, with fire systems for closure,
- foot handles,
- Anti-bacterial door handles / handle coverings to limit the spread of germs / virus
- Automatic lighting
- Reducing the use of communal touchscreens

**Reduce touchpoints is the name of the game.**

**4** Adjusting the furniture layout to facilitate social distancing and social bubbles. Would guards or barriers be helpful in some locations?

**5** Review your premises signage and include social distance signage and floor stripes as appropriate.





## WHO?

Leadership, Building Team and Trustees



## WHEN?

ASAP and prior to re-opening



photo: Bruce A on unsplash.com

**6** Can you implement a one-way system to help the flow of people and utilise separate entry and exit points?

**7** You will need to review room capacities, queuing capacities (on entry to room which is often a concern for child drop-off) and toilet facilities. Is there a volunteer or staffing implication for the safe use of communal areas such as toilets? For example, some airlines now need the cabin crew to facilitate access to WC and others use the vacant signage lights to keep people away to avoid communal queueing. How can you manage these facilities at your church to prevent overcrowding, close contact or excessive queueing?

**8** If you operate a physical church office, please assess the furniture layout and configuration, including those for visitors (greeting and waiting areas). What adjustments need to be made to stop people working within prolonged close proximity of each other, stop colleagues facing each other when close, and also to provide a comfortable area to welcome and greet others, whilst facilitating social distancing. You may need to provide more equipment for individual use to minimise the amount of communal items.

During the week, when greeting visitors to the premises it will be important to contain them within a designated area where the expectations for social distancing, etiquette and hygiene are clear. You may want to maintain a record of who comes on to the premises, when and for how long. Contact with staff members should be socially distanced, and restricted to 15 minutes or less where possible.

**9** Where would it be appropriate to install alcohol gel dispensers and what other PPE will you need to have available, as optional or mandatory, to facilitate safe activities? If you need to buy PPE you may like to consult a group buying scheme such as 2buy2.

**10** Please don't overlook the implications of any building adjustments on those with existing disabilities.

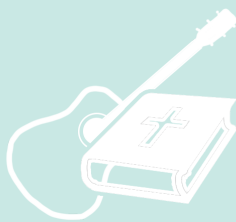
**11** Is your HVAC, (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) sufficient to keep your office working and public areas well ventilated and fresh, and are appropriate filters installed to remove germs?

**12** At this stage, and into the future, it will be an essential management requirement to produce and implement a social distancing plan and Covid-19 strategy.

**13** You can download an example post-lockdown risk assessment and checklist from the UCAN website at [churchadministrator.net/covid](http://churchadministrator.net/covid).

## Phased out?

1. When planning changes, consider whether they are for the short term, medium term or longer term?
2. Are they for immediate use or for future emergency / contingency deployment?
3. If temporary or for the future, where are you going to store and document the provision / policies?



# WEEKEND WORSHIP



## WEEKEND WORSHIP

Weekend worship won't look the same for quite some time. It may have changed and evolved indefinitely, just as at many other times in history social trends and political realities have helped the church's gathered worship develop. Is 2020/2021 another year of ecclesiological reformation?

**1** Your first step will be to consider the capacity of congregations when socially distanced and the 'feel' this creates. You don't want to take steps which will get people back together, only to make them feel more apart. Some adjustments may end up creating an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere. This could be counter-productive. Calculating capacity will involve a combination of considering:

- Number of entry and exit points and size of egress / waiting area
- How many seats you can fit in when spaced out to appropriate gaps
- Capacity & number of WC facilities

- Other group factors such as corresponding capacity for children's groups.

**2** Once capacity is agreed, you may need to consider limiting attendance to meet the capacity, by implementing an attendance rota to spread people out or adding additional services to the weekly timetable. If doing the latter, consider whether they all need to be on a Sunday or not?

**3** Please pay particular attention to the implication for volunteer workload when looking at arrangements to reinstate services / add additional services.

**4** You may need to come up with a policy around sung worship. Taking deep breaths and then projecting voices to sing can be considered high risk due to exhaling droplets. There have already been concerns around this with countries issuing guidance on bans.

**5** Once sensible and safe adjustments have been agreed, please consider changes to your welcome and greeting procedures to try to mitigate any negative

effect on the atmosphere. This may involve re-writing your welcoming instructions for your stewards and host teams. It will be important to still have people smiling and verbally greeting people.

**6** For many churches, the provision of coffee and tea on a Sunday is a big part of their hospitality strategy. It is also common for churches to have self-service biscuits, snacks or fruit. Due to the transmission concerns, self-service food should be avoided. Consult guidance from food hygiene specialists and local authorities and then decide what refreshment provision, if any is possible. Once decided, communicate the implications clearly.

**7** If you are affiliated to a denomination, you should find that there is guidance about specific aspects of worship such as administering communion or sharing the peace. It is difficult to conceive how either are possible in the normal way in a social distancing environment.

**8** Similar considerations apply to prayer ministry. If it is the normal practice for your church to offer 1:1 prayer after services, this is going to be seen as higher

risk. The use of PPE would be sensible to reduce the risk of transmission, but this may not be a comfortable step. The end may not justify the means and an appropriate and well communicated approach should be agreed and followed.

**9** Churches who use touchscreen technology for signage, data gathering or child registration and check-in should suspend this activity and instead move to a manned provision.

**10** As referred to earlier, significant questions need to be asked as to whether children's and youth activities can be operated safely in a face-to-face context when socially distancing. If I think about the arrangements I'm required to go through as a parent of an early years child who has recently returned to school, (with small static bubbles of child contact (less than 15 per group), staggered drop offs and pick-ups, one way systems and immediate reporting of any Covid symptoms to all those potentially affected), running a traditional creche or kid's church group is going to be challenging, potentially prohibitively so. The value of this needs to be weighed against the excellent online

provision that many churches have managed to resource during the lockdown.

**11** This guidance emphasises a strong encouragement to continue with the provision of online streams in a hybrid mode even when face to face gatherings have resumed. Retreating back to an onsite only provision may cut-off people from worship, teaching and community when they desperately need it the most.

Please don't neglect your digital congregation or audience when you start to be able to meet together face to face. Not everyone will be back at the same time. Continued online provision with both serve the existing congregation, some of whom will still be isolating, the newly welcomed congregation who have found your church as a member of the online audience, and those who will find you in the future by this method. Let's not overlook the missional opportunities of being present and accessible online.

However, please consider the production implications of this appropriately? Seek advice on what it takes to put up a good streamed service on a weekly



## WHO?

Leadership, Worship Team,  
Administrators, Trustees



## WHEN?

ASAP and prior to re-opening



photo: Kristina Paparo on unsplash.com

basis alongside physical gatherings. Invest in equipment where necessary, but bear in mind the cost of this against the wider financial constraints of the church. The new 'norm' may make this investment a priority. Look for ways that the streamed provision can be achieved well without needing multiple manual camera operators and a production mixer? After all, we're not running a TV station. There will be solutions available to streamline your online output to minimise the need for a prohibitively large technical crew.

## Phased out?

**1.** It is highly likely that post-lockdown adjustments to weekend worship patterns will need to be rolled out in phases, adjusted nimbly as the situation develops.

**2.** You may like to plan for this by detailing what each phase will entail in diagrammatic form.



# COMMUNICATIONS



## COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is the business that the church is in. It's our core business. We have a message of good news and hope to proclaim. The need for effective communications has never been greater with a church which is scattered due to lockdown restrictions and only able to meet virtually.

As some restrictions are lifted and some physical gatherings reconvene, the communication need and challenge will increase, not decrease. This will be the time to be more intentional and robust with communication, to avoid unclear messaging and the risk of groups or individuals being overlooked.

**1** Audit existing communication and plan a post-lockdown strategy that covers the following priorities:

- Clear messaging about physical and online provision, logistical arrangements, providing reassurance over steps to mitigate health risk and the action required from individuals

- Promoting inclusivity and the freedom of personal choice as some choose to return and others don't. The physical and online offering need to be of equal value and not grades A & B.
- Be pro-active when communicating to local communities about how the church can serve them, (a) physically, (b) emotionally and (c) spiritually.
- Build community at all opportunities.

**2** It is likely that you will want to continue using Zoom or other video-conferencing tools for small groups, prayer meetings, courses and governance meetings. This can be a hybrid provision alongside physical gatherings when they reconvene. Perhaps this online provision should now always be available as an inclusive provision. There are always people who for health, childcare or other good reasons can't attend church activities in person. Continue to be diligent over security arrangements for online meetings.

**3** Give particular consideration as to whether on-site courses (marriage, parenting, money advice, alpha, discipleship, welcome etc.) could be offered with an online option.

**4** Use social media tools to build community. WhatsApp and Facebook groups are good for smaller group settings.

Facebook pages, Instagram, Twitter or others may be suitable for a wider reach. When planning a social media strategy, consider the following:

**Objective** – What are you trying to communicate and why?

**Audience** – Who's the intended audience. Church member, visitor, newcomer, leader, member of public, Youth, Elderly, parent etc.

**Strategy** – What tools and personnel are you going to use to make the communication effective. What's the approach?

**Implementation** – How are you going to implement with consistency? What frequency of use and are the time commitments manageable.

**Scoring** – Make sure you review and evaluate whether your approach is working. If not change it.

The above OASIS mnemonic comes from the Government Communication Service.

**5** Consult with local authorities, other churches, denomination organisations, schools etc. to identify and speak into continuing community needs. The communication message from



the church is 'We're not just here for times of crisis' and a relaxation of restrictions is not a relaxation of our commitment to be hope for our area.

**6** Remember, clear communication is needed at all times, to minimise uncertainty. Include feedback loops to help people feel like they have been consulted and heard. You may like to consider survey tools for congregation and community input.



#### WHO?

Leadership, Administration /  
Comms Team



#### WHEN?

Ongoing priority



photo: Aaron Burden on unsplash.com

## O.A.S.I.S.

When planning your  
communication, consider the  
following mnemonic:

Objective  
Audience  
Strategy  
Implementation  
Scoring  
(see opposite page)



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial impact of Covid-19 is both unknown and significant. Any short term effect already felt has been cushioned and reduced by government support schemes, and as these tail off and companies, employees and households make medium term plans, there will be a financial impact to the church.

It is highly likely that church income of multiple sources will decrease, and income from room hire or lettings may be significantly affected.

The overall message into this financial uncertainty is that now is the time to pray and wisely plan for the next 3-18 months. Risk Management is not a meaningless governance term. It is a responsible and appropriate function of church leadership and trustees.

Here are some thoughts to get you started.

**1** Meet (albeit virtually) to plan for a range of scenarios. Plan for 3 scenarios:

- The best outcome being the drop in income that you expect,
- The second being a greater drop than this, and
- The third being a worse case scenario.

What would you do in every eventuality? These scenarios will be different for each church, but many churches will be looking at plans ranging between 10% - 50% drop in income. Your church may not experience one of these scenarios and of course God's resources and provision is infinite. Plan taking a diligent governance approach and pray in faith knowing that God is sovereign.

**2** Try to accurately forecast your income streams, increasing your knowledge and visibility of where your income comes from and apply a risk level to each source. It is important to understand the shape of your donor base as well, looking anonymously in most cases what the spread of the income is and how leveraged you are on particular key donors or groups.

**3** Cash is king. This means your liquidity – accessible cash / easy access investments in the bank. It doesn't matter if your balance sheet shows £1.5m. If most of this is made up of building assets and your available cash dries up you will discover that you can't pay your bills and salaries in bricks and mortar.

Consider whether you need to borrow or plan to sell any assets.

**4** Plan and implement a clear communication plan for financial updates and requests to the church family. The clearer we are, the more opportunity there will be for positive response of generosity.

**5** Assess and control outgoings. This may be planning to delay some activity or recruitment and looking at cost savings for utilities or other regular items.

You may like to speak with procurement specialists such as the Christian company 2buy2.com. Alongside making cost savings, also assess the community need for supporting those in hardship as this may rise due to Covid-19. Please budget accordingly.



## WHO?

Leadership, Treasurer, Finance Team, Trustees



## WHEN?

ASAP for advance planning

**6** Look at staffing implications and be prepared for a post furlough reality. Will all staff be able to return? Do hours need to be adjusted, or do you need to look openly and with advance notice about the potential for redundancies. This is often painful, but clear and advance communication helps. If it becomes the financial reality that present staffing levels are unaffordable, or as post lockdown ministry priorities have changed your staffing needs to be adjusted, this is best dealt with head on.

**7** If making staff reductions, communicate well, look after those going and those staying, and reduce workload and expectations accordingly.

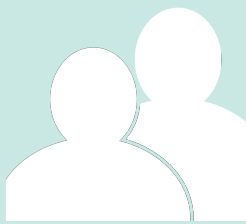


photo: Carlos Muza on unsplash.com

## Where to go for support and help?

UCAN are indebted to Stewardship who offer great advice and support for churches in relation to governance and financial management. You can find their contact details and Covid resources at [stewardship.org.uk/covid](https://stewardship.org.uk/covid).

Alongside considering the here and now, set aside some designated time to put in place a Pandemic Response Plan so that you are prepared for any future outbreaks. This should cover: how to safely close down your premises, diverting means of contact offsite, consistent communication whilst remote working, having emergency signage ready, operating to a clear decision making structure, implementing effective dispersed staff management and robust financial contingency planning.



# PEOPLE & H.R.



## PEOPLE & H.R.

Churches are not immune from having to make difficult decisions as an employer based on the reality we find ourselves in. Covid-19 has however, provided an opportunity for us to shine and excel at being an employer, prioritising the wellbeing of our team in times of uncertainty.

Therefore, please approach all adjustments to your employment, office setups and team requirements with appropriate and clear communication and a love for the people involved.

**1** Be open and clear about timescales and plans for how any staffing changes may be considered.

**2** Please consult with team members, don't just dictate outcomes or approaches. It is good to give the opportunity for everyone to make suggestions to the way forward.

**3** You may need to put in place alterations to the physical workplace, employment conditions and expectations re: flexible or home-working.

Consider the well-being of everyone concerned when making these changes and again communicate the rationale and the implications clearly.

Is remote working affecting work/life balance? Watch out for the risks of isolation or burnout. Where has home working reduced productivity and where has it created advantages?

Make sure to provide in advance, clear guidance and re-training for any practical implications prior to team members returning to work.

**4** Many employers will continue to encourage a degree (even a high degree) of working from home.

This can bring benefits as well as disadvantages. It may not be appropriate for all employees. There may be causes of stress or concern for those working from home (isolation, lack of social interaction, additional costs, lack of equipment, less than ideal work environment), as well as for those remaining to work onsite but without other team members present. You may need to take additional intentional steps to maintain and develop team relationships.

Consider whether there are any financial costs for your workforce working at home more (either in the short term or longer term) and decide how best to meet these / make appropriate allowances.

**5** Practically speaking, have you got the right technology in place? These are some of the following technical considerations:

- Cloud based storage and databases for secure and centralised use
- Laptop risers, extra screens, appropriate chairs for home-based working. Docking stations for offices
- Designated equipment in office and at home to avoid sharing (reducing transmission risk)
- Video conferencing subscriptions and adequate numbers of software licences for all applications
- Printing and scanning facilities, either avoiding lots of communal use or providing the facility to wipe down and clean equipment
- VOIP phone lines to divert to staff mobiles.

Do assess any potential security considerations or weaknesses in your remote working I.T. setup and seek appropriate advice.



**6** Depending on the size of your team and the capacity / layout of your office space, you may want to stagger work times, or work to a 'x' weeks in: 'x' weeks home rota.

When considering office layout - social distancing is now every day language and this is likely to remain part of our culture and terminology for some time to come. Look at ways that the furniture, I.T equipment, signage and walking flow around your office can be adjusted to emphasise and encourage appropriate socially distancing behaviour.

Implement a strict clean desk policy with all non-essential items removed from the workspace and consider supplying disposable paper placemats for daily desk use.

**7** Please create and communicate a policy over your expectations surrounding staff requirement to use public transport for getting to and from work.

**8** Create or review your stress management plan, taking into account all of the considerations above.

As an employer it will be critical to understand what has been your employee's experience of lockdown, how it has affected their relational connection with the church, their managers and colleagues and any stresses and strains experienced. Any emotional reactions or concerns resulting from the use (or not) of the government furlough scheme should be explored and discussed openly.

**9** Create a wellbeing action plan for your staff team to help plan the intentional steps you're planning to take. Invite a member of your trustee board to share the accountability for this aspect of staff management. Wellbeing plans can cover morale, stress, mental health, physical health, sense of fun, communicating value of individuals, rewards and celebration, spiritual direction etc.

**10** If you need to consider staff reductions, communicate clearly, follow appropriate guidance re: redundancy consultation, ensure decisions are taken in the best interest of the organisation as well as



## WHO?

Leadership, Managers,  
Trustees, HR Team



## WHEN?

ASAP In preparation for all  
changes affecting teams



photo: Austin Distel on unsplash.com

respecting and caring for those involved and give as long a notice period as possible. Once any staff reductions are implemented, make sure you adjust the workload accordingly and speak to all the staff team about how they are feeling.

## WHY RETURN TO WORK ONSITE?

- For increased productivity
- To access needed equipment
- For greater team collaboration (where online meeting isn't enough)
- For social and relational benefits

## WHY CONTINUE TO WORK FROM HOME?

- Due to Individual health concerns & worries
- To assist with childcare responsibilities
- To help manage capacity and office density onsite
- To avoid wasted time commuting or unnecessary use of public transport
- Where productivity benefits have been experienced due to fewer distractions

What's Next?  
**Don't rush back,  
venture forward...**



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*Since 2009, UCAN has led the effort to support church administrators across the UK and to promote the Spiritual Gift of administration within the church. We are a relational membership network of over 1600 administrators facilitated by a company limited by guarantee.*

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