

## Places of Worship Guidance – June 2020

The government recently announced that Places of worship across England will be permitted to reopen **from Saturday 13 June for individual prayer only**. Under the current law places of worship are permitted to open solely for the following purposes –

- funerals, in line with restrictions on those who can attend as per [Regulation 7\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- to broadcast an act of worship, whether over the internet or as part of a radio or television broadcast
- to provide essential voluntary services or urgent public support services, including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions, or support in an emergency
- for [early years childcare](#) provided by a person registered on the Early Years Register under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006

This law is enacted through the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

### What does 'Individual Prayer' mean?

From 13 June 2020 places of worship will be permitted to open for individual prayer. Individual prayer within a place of worship is defined as a person or household entering the venue to pray on their own and not as part of a group, led prayer or communal act. They should be socially distanced from other individuals or households.

For more information, please see 'COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic' – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic>

### Test and Trace

The government has launched an [NHS Test and Trace service](#) to manage the risk of the virus re-emerging. The service:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus to find out if they have the virus
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus

Further information can be found online including for contacts of people with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection who do not live with the person and for [places of work](#).

### Places of Worship in Redbridge

In Redbridge, we recognise the importance religion and places of worship has within our communities. We have seen these places come together to help our most vulnerable residents

during this unprecedented pandemic. Our faith buildings bring comfort, security and enrichment to our communities and we must ensure they remain safe during this health pandemic.

It is anticipated that before a place of worship opens, faith leaders;

- carry out Covid-19 specific risk assessment for the place of worship
- tailor the guidance from the national faith bodies as appropriate for the venue and practices being carried out.

The risk assessments, should include reference to clear social distancing markings, thorough cleaning of shared spaces, hand cleansing at entry and exit and asking worshippers to bring their own items such as a prayer mat or religious text instead of sharing or using communal ones, register for test and trace, etc.

It is very clear, only individual prayer will be permitted from 13 June, communally led prayer, worship or devotion such as services, evensong, informal prayer meetings, Mass, Jumma prayers or Kirtan will not be possible at this stage.

Places of worship still have discretion over when they consider it safe to open and may decide to remain closed or reopen at a slower pace if they wish to do so. Those in charge of running a place of worship should engage and communicate with worshippers to explain what activity is permitted and what is still prohibited. This will ensure that worshippers understand what the current situation is regarding their place of worship, as well reducing the risk of a resident visiting a place of worship that has decided to remain closed.

The safety of our residents remains our number one priority. That is why our advice is that places of worship in Redbridge should not reopen until they have all the necessary measures in place and have carried out a risk assessment of the place of worship. National faith bodies have shared risk assessment templates and detailed guidance's, links to this have been shared in this guidance.

We urge all places of worship to continue to assess the situation carefully and consider whether they remain open during this moment in time. Our priority must be the health and wellbeing of all residents.

Please note: This guidance will be subject to updates and changes based on advice from relevant teams, bodies and organisations. Please continue to check with the council. For further information, contact [Yusuf.Patel@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:Yusuf.Patel@redbridge.gov.uk).

## **Guidance and Risk Assessment Templates from National Faith Bodies**

- Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales - <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/06/Guidance-Reopening-Catholic-Churches-Indiv-Prayer-100620-1633.pdf>
- Faith Associates - <https://faithassociates.co.uk/advice-and-tips-for-mosques-on-dealing-with-coronavirus>
- Hindu Council UK - <http://www.hinducounciluk.org/2020/06/09/key-principles-for-safely-reopening-places-of-worship-for-permitted-activity/>
- Muslim Council of Britain - <https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/9-Steps-to-Re-opening-Mosques-Safely.pdf>



Parish Risk

- Parish Church - Assessment Template



covid 19 restarting  
sangat at gurdwaras.pdf

- Sikh Council UK –



covid 19 checklist for  
gurdwaras.pdf

- Sikh Doctors Association -
- The Church of England - <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- The Methodist Church - <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus/official-guidance/>
- The United Synagogue - <https://www.theus.org.uk/sites/default/files/Coronavirus%20-%20Guidance%20to%20Member%20Communities%20on%20Reopening%20Buildings%20and%20Restarting%20services.pdf>

## **Further links to information and guidance**

GOV.UK's [5 steps to working safely for businesses and workplaces](#)

GOV.UK's [cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)

Historic England's [COVID-19 guidance on cleaning historic surfaces](#)

World Health Organisation (WHO): Practical considerations and recommendations for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of COVID-19 –

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/practical-considerations-and-recommendations-for-religious-leaders-and-faith-based-communities-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

You may also wish to consult with your national faith organisation or landlord for further advice and guidance.