

PREPARING TO REOPEN OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS & FACILITIES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT	5
3. PREPARING TO REOPEN	6
Making the decision to reopen	6
Preparing our buildings to reopen	6
Where the church building is also a workplace	6
4. ASSESSING THE RISKS	7
Carrying out a risk assessment	7
Items and actions to include in your risk assessment	7
Regularly review and update risk assessments	10
5. PLANNING AHEAD	11
Resumption of worship services	11
Other events and activities	12
Online services	12
Next steps	12
Further assistance	13
6. REFERENCES	14
7. APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: EFGA recovery road map	
Appendix 2: Deep cleaning procedures: guidance notes	
Appendix 3: EFGA Covid-19 risk assessment template for church buildings/facilities	
Appendix 4: Recommended suppliers: Personal Protective Equipment, cleaning & signage	

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1. INTRODUCTION

As the national and devolved governments begin to outline their respective frameworks for moving from the lockdown phase to an easing of restrictions, Elim's National Leadership Team (NLT) are releasing a **Roadmap Towards Recovery** a coordinated and practical resource for our Elim Movement over the next few months. The roadmap is appended as Appendix 1.

The roadmap closely follows the government's use of three week phases as a helpful stepped approach for the purposes of planning and preparation. We will seek to bring regular updates and guidance every three weeks during June and July as things across the various sectors of public life begin to open up.

In the first instance, the guidelines will be aimed at helping our churches and leaders to prepare for all aspects of re-entry, not just into our buildings, but into renewed and reshaped mission in this season ahead. We want to make these updates as practical as possible in order to better equip our leaders and churches concerning the practical and operational assessment, preparations and planning that will be necessary. However, we will also seek to engage our leaders and churches in identifying the key questions surrounding what the future may look like.

We are committed over these next two months to ensuring that our updates prioritise:

- **Clear and regular communication**
- **Cautious, responsible steps aimed at ensuring the safety of all those in our communities**
- **Creative engagement and consultation with our leaders and churches**
- **Concerted action and partnership**

The first stage of that process is to issue alongside the roadmap this document entitled '**Preparing to reopen our church buildings and facilities**'.

Over recent weeks, as leaders across the church denominations have considered the various challenges that are ahead for the church, it has become apparent that getting out of lockdown is likely to be even more stretching than moving into it. Despite the enthusiasm that so many of us would share for returning to gathering and fellowshiping together in our buildings, it is already apparent that there are many uncertainties surrounding the ongoing impact and spread of COVID-19.

We want to urge every local minister to begin, if you have not already done so, to put together a plan for the reopening and reuse of your building. These documents are designed to aid and assist with that planning and to better equip our leaders and churches

on a range of key issues related to all aspects of the use of church buildings in the next phase. They include a **risk assessment template** which we ask you to use in the process.

They bring together a wide range of research, discussion and guidelines for best practice but in a way which is aimed at being as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.

Wherever necessary, we will seek to provide links to government and professional guidelines and requirements, as well as to resources that you may find helpful. We will also continue to utilise our network with regional teams and the Elim International Office staff giving priority to serving and supporting our local churches through the stages ahead.

We will be offering regional Zoom webinars, led by the Malvern Operations Team during the weeks of 8 and 15 June, to give extra support on working through your Buildings Re-entry Plan.

By the middle of June, you will receive a broader discussion document called '**Renewing and Reshaping our Ministry and Mission beyond COVID-19.**' Upon its release, we will be encouraging a fuller consultation process to begin which will give us an opportunity through the next weeks to prepare more fully for far more than resuming our services and existing programmes. It has been pointed out that we will only get to restart once, that just because we can do something doesn't necessarily mean we should and that many are already expressing the desire to start when they are sure they can do so safely and well.

The NLT are unanimously of the view that during this lockdown season the Lord has been recalibrating our lives and our churches. We are more convinced than ever that God has indeed been calling us as a Movement to advance in Mission. We are certain that as leaders we will need to be more adaptive, more flexible but also that He has been preparing us for such a time as this. We believe this is not a time to rush back or rush forward, but by God's grace, to move together into the next season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Cartwright".

Chris Cartwright
General Superintendent

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document gives guidance to church leaders to practically prepare for reopening church buildings. It specifically focuses on preparing a local church plan and carrying out of a risk assessment in anticipation of the resumption of worship services which the UK Government has indicated will at the earliest happen at the start of July 2020.

This document is the initial part of a more comprehensive suite of documents, which will cover the spiritual, pastoral and cultural dynamics that churches are likely to encounter as we navigate the 'new normal'. A consultative group of the National Leadership Team (NLT), senior pastors, business administrators and leaders will have collaborated and contributed to this working paper which is due to be published on 22 June 2020.

In a constantly developing situation, we would stress that there remains considerable uncertainty and that government and public health advice may not always be specific to the context and diversity of local church ministry as represented across the Elim movement.

The NLT will at all times seek to take clear action and issue guidelines to our churches on the basis of the best information and practice available. Yet, all guidelines will inevitably be subject to regular revision as circumstances change. You should therefore always check the latest advice on our website and follow the appropriate links for full details.

3. PREPARING TO REOPEN

MAKING THE DECISION TO REOPEN

The decision to reopen places of worship across the Elim Movement will be issued by the National Leadership Team in accordance with the UK Government advice and following assurance that each of our churches have taken the necessary measures to comply with the social distancing guidance.

Reopening the local church building involves much more than resuming 'business as usual'. It will be necessary for the local leadership to adopt a strategic posture that comprehensively plans for the resumption of worship. Please note that acting against advice and regulation will adversely impact public safety and insurance liability.

PREPARING OUR BUILDINGS TO REOPEN

Building Safety Security Check

The planning and preparation stages should start with a physical walk around the building to check that it is secure. Any evidence of a break-in should be immediately reported to the police and Elim International Office for insurance purposes.

Ensure that emergency detection systems and emergency lighting are working correctly.

The building may need to be aired to minimise mould spores etc.

Make sure access & egress points to the buildings are safe.

WHERE THE CHURCH BUILDING IS ALSO A WORKPLACE

We recognise that some church buildings are also workplaces. Where this is the case, the local leadership, as the responsible employer, must ensure that they adhere to the government guidance. They will need to consider the specific actions that need to be taken to ensure that employees can work safely and their health and well-being is supported. This is especially the case when employees cannot work from home.

For further help and guidance on this, please read the government document '[Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres](#)'.

For additional advice on personnel issues, please contact Jimmy van Santen, Human Resources Manager on **01684 588937** or jimmy.vansanten@elimhq.net

4. ASSESSING THE RISKS

CARRYING OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

Undertaking a risk assessment is an essential step in planning and preparing to reopen your building. The risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork. Simply put, it is about identifying risks and taking proportionate measures to control, mitigate or remove the risk. It also serves to assure the NLT, as trustees of the Movement and therefore directly accountable for the charity, that the reopening of our church buildings for the resumption of work and worship is fully compliant with government guidance and advice.

Although you may already have undertaken a risk assessment as a core activity for your building, this risk assessment is to ensure compliance with COVID-19 advice and guidance. Appendix 3 contains a risk assessment template along with guidance notes for you to use.

You may want to form a COVID Response Team to collaborate and lead the strategic planning and preparation for the building, congregation and employees post COVID-19 lockdown.

ITEMS AND ACTIONS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT

Below are the headings of items for consideration (along with a few mitigation actions) that you will need to consider including in your risk assessment. Please contact your Regional Leader or the administration team at the Elim International Office if you need any assistance to complete your risk assessment.

Utilities: electricity, gas, water including legionella, floors, ceilings including asbestos, etc.

To consider:

- *Were gas and electricity shut down completely?* If so, appropriate testing should be carried out before use. Check around the buildings for any potential water leaks when it is turned back on. Where relevant ensure an appropriately qualified person carries out the checks.
- *Legionella.* You will need to run all the taps (to minimise the risk of legionella), flush and clean toilets. Run the water from all taps, as well as other hot and cold water outlets for at least five minutes to ensure the water system has been thoroughly flushed through. If any water storage system is used on site even if taps are allowed to run for a time, it is advisable to ensure the water is completely free of contamination. If you have any concerns seek appropriate professional help/advice.
- *Electric convection heaters.* You need to ensure these are thoroughly cleaned before restarting to avoid the possibility of collected dust catching fire.

Cleaning the Building

To consider:

- *New cleaning procedures.* New procedures may be required before the building is reopened. You will need to ensure that the church building interior is appropriately cleaned, paying particular attention to surfaces, light switches and door handles.

This is to include protocols for when the building requires a deep clean. Please note that a deep clean is an intensive clean of a room, area or building removing unwanted substances that can and cannot be seen ie: dirt, viruses, infectious agents, and other impurities, from an object or environment.

A deep clean is over and above a regular cleaning protocol and will necessitate the use of specific cleaning products for Covid-19 where all products are EN14476 standard. Information on EN14476 can be found at blutest.com/services/biocide-efficacy-testing Guidance of how to deep clean your building is included as Appendix 2 with suppliers list in Appendix 4.

- Sourcing and maintaining sufficient cleaning supplies and stock. Consider hand sanitiser stations at the entrances and exits of buildings. Plan for regular cleaning particularly where multiple services are planned.

Communal Spaces

To consider:

- *How social distancing will work in your building* for employment purposes and the various services or activities. Until the government provide more detailed guidance regarding churches reopening this is difficult to consider fully. However, start to think about the pinch points in your building such as doorways, narrow corridors, stairs to the balcony, toilets.
- *How will you ensure that people keep a safe distance from each other* e.g. consider implementing 2 metre markers on floors, consider how you will arrange seating.
- *Ensure appropriate signage is in place* that helps people navigate any new direction of travel e.g. one way corridors etc.

Internal and External signs, posters and information

To consider:

- *That sufficient additional signage is in place* as reminders for social distancing and handwashing principles. Please see the suppliers list at the end of the document.

Maintenance

To consider:

- *How and when to carry out regular general maintenance checks* such as checking whether doors (particularly fire doors) and windows operating properly.
- *Asbestos containing materials* are where labelled are checked for any deterioration.

Access to the building

To consider:

- *How inbound and outbound goods will be handled by staff, volunteers and contractors.* You may need to implement written guidelines on who can access the building, what procedures they must follow especially for briefing contractors and suppliers if they need access to the building.
- *Out of hours access.* You may need to plan for what happens if access is required to the building outside of normal working hours e.g. to attend to a break-in or for access to an emergency contractor.

Record Keeping

To consider:

- *What extra record keeping protocols need to be implemented?* You may need to keep a record of certain people (i.e. contractors, small groups, etc.) entering, using and exiting the building at least until social distancing is no longer required.
- *How you will monitor staff sickness?* How will you notify others where they have been exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19?

Managing customers, visitors and contractors

To consider:

- *How you will ensure that customers, visitors and contractors are COVID-19 compliant?*
- You may require that contractors, hirers, customers carry out their own risk assessment (for themselves and their staff and/any sub-contractors). You may also need to check that external users or contractors have their own public liability insurance in place.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

To consider:

How will you *identify, assess and implement the use of PPE for your church building/facility*. Clearly this will be dependent on the space and how it is used. It is advised that certain items of PPE should be purchased and held in stock so that it is readily available when needed. Please see the suppliers list in Appendix 4.

REGULARLY REVIEW AND UPDATE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Please remember that risk assessments are dynamic documents which means that they will need to be reviewed and updated regularly.

You may be required to submit your risk assessments for review by your Regional Leader and may not be able to reopen your building if certain risks have either not been identified and control measures to control the risk are deemed to be deficient.

5. PLANNING AHEAD

RESUMPTION OF WORSHIP SERVICES

This section will be covered in greater detail in the consultative document to be released on 15 June 2020. However, it is useful to start to plan and prepare for the resumption of worship services as it is anticipated that restrictions may be lifted for places of worship to be reopened in early July.

Churches that choose to reopen must continue to take appropriate steps to minimise the impact the virus may have on members, activities and personnel. They need to observe appropriate physical distancing and keep a register of those attending in line with contact tracing guidelines.

In preparation for this, it would be sensible then to expand your risk assessment to consider the associated risks of reopening your church building and facilities.

As part of your church's planning and preparation, please consider the following:

- **Public worship and capacity seating.** You need to assume that social distancing measures are likely to continue for a significant time beyond the end of the lockdown period. So how will you space chairs to accommodate this? How will this impact clear access to exits in case of an emergency?
- **Communal areas.** How will you ensure and enforce adequate circulation space to implement social distancing measures?
- **Stewarding.** How will the role of stewards be expanded to remind, advise and guide worshippers to adhere to the new protocols?
- **Children, toddlers and youth ministries.** How will these ministries, and others, now operate?
- **Vulnerable groups.** How will you determine and enact your social responsibility to protect, minimise risk to older persons, those with underlying medical conditions, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations?
- **Food and drink.** How will the availability and serving of food and drink operate within your church, if at all?
- **Finance.** . How will you revise your budget to accommodate the new 'normal' as well as bear in mind that some members may be in considerably reduced financial circumstances?
- **Hygiene.** What new protocols do you need to implement to ensure cleaning the church after general use; cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms?
- **Communion.** How will the elements be distributed and disposed of safely?

- **Communication.** How will the guidelines be communicated to church members, attendees, staff and volunteers?
- **Offering.** How will this be safely undertaken? Have you considered the implementation of online giving platforms such as GIVT or Elim Paythru?
- **Lettings and church activities.** How will you agree and communicate responsibilities regarding social distancing, cleaning regimen, etc. with hosted congregations and groups? How will you manage external users of the building?

Please remember that risk assessments are dynamic documents which means that they will need to be reviewed and updated regularly.

OTHER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

This risk assessment will need to be expanded to include the most up to date government guidance for weddings, funerals, baptisms and other events when they are officially permitted. The NLT working with the Regional Leaders will assess the situation and will give explicit permission to resume these events.

ONLINE SERVICES

It seems unlikely that a resumption of worship services in the building will remove the need or desire for continuing online service. The future is likely to necessitate the inclusion of both the resumption of gathering in the building and the broadcasting of online services for the short to mid-term.

Churches who are intending to resume broadcasting online services from your building over the next few weeks, must ensure that the risk assessment and appropriate plans are put in place before doing so. Please speak to your Regional Leader if you need further guidance and advice on this matter.

NEXT STEPS

1. **Please complete the risk assessment using the template in Appendix 3.**
It is a good idea for a team (i.e. Covid-19 Response Team) or other selected individuals, to work together to complete this so that differing perspectives on identifying risks and their mitigation, can be incorporated.
2. **Attend one of the Zoom webinars that are organised for each region.**
A series of zoom webinars will be organised for each region from 9 June to 22 June. These will provide an opportunity to discuss these issues with the Elim International Office administrative team which will include the Executive Director, HR Manager,

Communications Manager, Property Administrator and Safeguarding Coordinator. We will also provide any assistance required to complete your risk assessment. The dates, times and Zoom links will be sent out by email.

3. Every church leader to **submit their church's risk assessment to their regional office by Monday 22 June 2020**. You may not be able to reopen your building if certain risks have either not been identified and/or control measures to control the risk are deemed to be deficient.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

We trust that this document will have been useful to you. For support beyond this please call or email the administration team at Elim International Centre or speak to your Regional Leader.

6. REFERENCES

For additional information, please access the documents and websites listed below.

Guide to reopening church services: A step-by-step, Biblically based approach to resuming in-person ministries. Wheaton, IL: Humanitarian Disaster Institute Guide to Reopening Church Services. Annan, K., Aten, J., & Louissaint, N. (2020).

www.reopeningthechurch.com

Ready for the new “normal” A discussion paper for a pandemic recovery and resumption plan; The United Reformed Church

www.urc.org.uk

Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres: Guidance for people who work in or run offices, contact centres and similar indoor environments.

Government Department for Business website Published: 11 May 2020 Updated: 29 May
[gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres)

Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak – a short guide, Health and Safety Executive [hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm)

7. APPENDICES

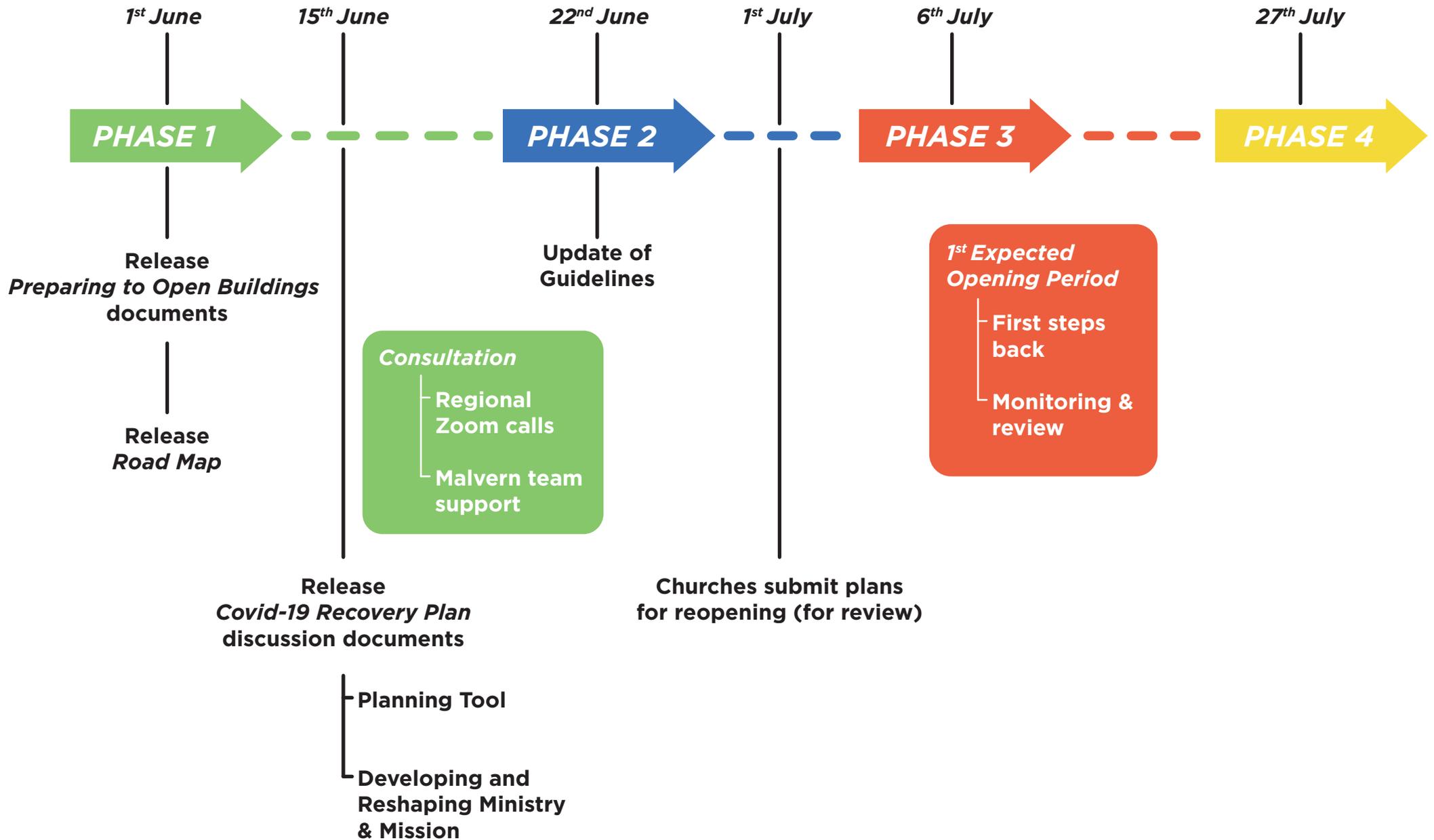
APPENDIX 1: EFGA RECOVERY ROAD MAP

APPENDIX 2: DEEP CLEANING PROCEDURES: GUIDANCE NOTES

APPENDIX 3: EFGA COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FOR CHURCH BUILDINGS/FACILITIES

APPENDIX 4: RECOMMENDED SUPPLIERS: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, CLEANING & SIGNAGE

APPENDIX I Covid-19 Response Plan: A Roadmap for Re-opening Churches & Ministries



APPENDIX 2:

DEEP CLEANING PROCEDURES

WHAT IS A DEEP CLEAN?

This is an intensive clean of a room, area or building removing unwanted substances that can and cannot be seen *i.e.* dirt, viruses, infectious agents, and other impurities, from an object or environment.

CLEANING MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITY

1. Cleaning Chemicals

Only authorized cleaning chemicals can be used for cleaning.

- All chemicals must have a COSHH Material Safety Data Sheet which can be found on the manufacturers website or from the supplier.
- It is the responsibility of the person in charge to ensure that cleaning staff use cleaning chemicals according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2. Risk Assessment

- It is the responsibility of the person in charge to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for all cleaning tasks and filed correctly.
- The agreed safe method of working must be effectively communicated to staff.

3. Working at Height

- It is the responsibility of the person in charge to ensure that all staff comply with the Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

HOW TO DEEP CLEAN YOUR CHURCH BUILDING

1. Make a list of the chemicals you will need to use.
2. Organise the order in which you will complete your deep clean by area/room.
3. Put on your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) this includes aprons, masks, gloves and goggles.
4. Collect the materials and chemicals you need to complete a deep clean and place in a bucket or container you can carry safely.
5. Cloths used should be disposable or able to be washed at a very high temperature.
6. Make sure to read the instructions on how to use and where you can use the chemicals and cleaning products.
7. To stop cross contamination, you will need to change materials (clothes, mops and sponges) when changing between bathrooms, catering areas and general areas.
8. Use large open top waste bins with a strong black bin bag inserted. It is recommended to take your bin lids off prior to use.

Start by disinfecting/cleaning all heavy touch areas, these include:

- Desktops and all work surfaces
- Door knobs and door handles
- Light switches
- Computer monitors, keyboards and mice
- Tablets and laptops
- Telephone equipment
- All chair rests and arms
- Canteen tables and chairs, crockery, trays and cutlery
- Sinks, taps and kitchen areas
- Toilets including all surfaces
- Water fountains, drinks dispensers and vending machines
- Lifts including doors and buttons
- Door frames, glass in doors

9. Finish each area/room by vacuuming and mopping.

10. Put all your chemicals away in a locked store cupboard.

11. Remove your PPE and dispose of it in a designated bin.

12. Wash your hands thoroughly as per government guidelines and hand sanitise them afterwards as well.

13. When you get home, make sure that you shower and change immediately to stop the cross-contamination into your home.

Cleaning Chemicals advised for use for Covid-19

It is recommended that all products are EN14476 standard

You must download and keep a copy of the following:

- Hazard data sheet for every product used
- Risk assessment for cleaning

BYOTROL

Multi-purpose, COVID killing products for furnishing, surfaces, bathrooms

www.byotrol.co.uk

Clinitex - Target - Multi Surface Cleaning and Disinfection Wipes

Nobel Express –Avica www.nobleexpress.co.uk 01604 660009 sales@nobleexpress.co.uk

Information on EN14476 blutest.com/services/biocide-efficacy-testing

APPENDIX 3: COVID-19 Risk Assessment for EFGA Churches

Church: _____

Assessment carried out by: _____

Date assessment was carried out: _____

Date of next review: _____

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for EFGA Churches

What are the hazards? <i>List the hazards or risks that you have identified? Use a separate box for each hazard or risk identified</i>	Who might be harmed and how? <i>List the person(s) or personnel groups</i>	Is the risk High, Medium or Low	What are you already doing to control the risks? <i>Briefly describe any actions that you have already put into action</i>	What further action do you need to take to control the risks? <i>Briefly describe actions that you. Your department or the organisation need to undertake</i>	Who needs to carry out the action? <i>Name the person responsible for making it happen</i>	When is the action needed by? <i>Please put the date by which the action needed to be completed</i>	Date Completed <i>Please put the date here when the action has been completed</i>

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for EFGA Churches

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COVID-19 Risk Assessment for EFGA Churches

Creating a Covid-19 Safe Worship/Workplace

In line with government guidelines, EFGA is required to make sure that church buildings/workplaces are Covid-19 compliant. In order to do this, we are required to undertake a Covid-19 specific risk assessment by completing the grid for EACH of the hazards or risks that you identify.

Please refer to the guidance document 'Preparing to Reopen our Church Buildings and Facilities as well as the notes below, to assist you to complete the risk assessment. Should you need further advice, or help to complete this document, please email Olivia.Amartey@ElimHQ.NET or speak to your Regional Leader.

Column 1: What are the hazards? What are the main hazards or risks that you can identify? There is no right or wrong answer. Please list these as you identify them, even if they seem to be small ones

Column 2: Who might be harmed? I.e. church attenders, volunteers, staff, visitors? And what could happen as a result?

Column 3: What are you already doing? You may or may not have already taken measures to reduce the risk. I.e. working from home, removing seating in the main auditorium, installing sanitising stations. If you have not actioned anything then complete this section by saying 'no action yet taken'

Column 4: What further action(s) do you need to take? Please state here what you need to do to be Covid-19 compliant.

Column 5: Who needs to carry out the action? Please state WHO needs to assume the responsibility for carrying out these actions.

Column 6: When is this action needed by? Please be as specific as you can

Column 7: Date carried out: You will complete this section when the actions have been satisfactorily carried out.

What Next?

When you have completed the risk assessment by filling out the grids, you may wish to ask others in your team or leadership to have a look at it to see if you may have missed something.

Your Regional Leader may also wish to speak to you about your risk assessment and it would be useful to share this document with him.

APPENDIX 4: SUPPLIERS

Below are the details of the various suppliers that the Elim International Centre has used. Please note that for most of these suppliers there is a lead time of between three to five weeks from order to delivery.

Signage

Social distancing floor signs (internal & external)

Paul Martin - Fantasy Prints

01289 303242 paul@fantasyprints.co.uk fantasyprints.co.uk

Social distancing floor tape

Amazon amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B087QJCH9C

General Covid-19 related signage

Paul Martin - Fantasy Prints

01289 303242 paul@fantasyprints.co.uk fantasyprints.co.uk

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Cleaning & Catering

BYOTROL

Multi-purpose, COVID killing products for furnishing, surfaces and bathrooms
byotrol.co.uk

Clinitex - Target - Multi Surface Cleaning & Disinfection Wipes

Nobel Express – Avica

01604 660009 sales@nobleexpress.co.uk nobleexpress.co.uk

Alliance Online

General PPE supplies allianceonline.co.uk/home

Nisbets

Face shields, wipes, gloves nisbets.co.uk

Protection Screens

Nick Thorpe Planet Business Interiors Ltd.

01865 892323 or 07748 683415

nick@planetinteriors.com www.planetinteriors.co.uk

Re-usable face masks/face-shields

Paul Martin - Fantasy Prints

01289 303242 paul@fantasyprints.co.uk fantasyprints.co.uk

Also:

amazon.co.uk/face-masks/s?k=face+masks

lloydspharmacy.com/en/health-wellbeing/face-masks#first

medworx.co.uk

versoshield.com

siteking.co.uk/face-shields

Mobile sanitizing units

Mark Birt Abbey Business Interiors

07513 121295 or 01424263444

markbirt@abbeybusinessinteriors.co.uk

abbeybusinessinteriors.co.uk

Post & retractable webbing barriers (product code 36485)

Barriers Direct

0800 0288010

support@barriersdirect.co.uk

barriersdirect.co.uk

Seton

seton.co.uk 0800 316 3533 sales@seton.co.uk