

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Covid-19 Route Map: Step 4 Guidance

It is important to reiterate that, as Step 4 is reached, the general principles of continuing to create a safe environment in places of worship are not abandoned. Recognition that the virus is still in the population means that certain preventative practices will be required.

Although any measures will not have the “rule of law,” there is a strong emphasis on common sense and taking care of our congregation.

- Churches should continue to provide hand sanitiser, and face coverings are strongly recommended to be worn by those in church.
- From 19th July, there will be no legislation on social distancing in England and thus churches may increase their capacity. However care has to be taken to ensure that churches continue to be places where people feel safe to gather to worship.
- Indoor congregational singing will be permitted from 19th July. It is recommended that singing should be phased in gently as part of worship over the summer period and that face coverings should be worn by members of the congregation whilst singing together, until infection levels reduce.
- As long as the NHS Test, Track and Trace system is in operation, churches should continue to make available the means for people to sign in for acts of worship using the NHS app with the associated QR code (on the front door of the church) or the Track and Trace forms
- Holy Communion will continue to be under one kind and the ministers will continue to sanitise their hands beforehand and wear a face covering whilst distributing.
- Holy Communion will continue to be given at the end of the Mass, with the exit through the Sacristy remaining as usual.

It may seem that not much has changed for the time being, however, the new guidance makes clear that a duty to keep premises safe continues beyond the removal of any covid-19 legislation.