

Following the Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus restrictions, the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, said:

"The confirmation tonight of a delay in the next stage of lifting Covid-19 restrictions will be a blow to many people but I understand why this decision has been taken.

"I am hugely thankful for the success and speed of the vaccination programme which has undoubtedly saved many lives - but we do have to take the spread of the more transmissible Delta variant very seriously and do all we can to protect each other as Christians called to love our neighbour.

"I know from those on the front line that the pressures on the NHS are extreme and understand that a delay of a few more weeks in lifting restrictions could make a big difference in helping us all to get ahead in the 'race' against this virus which has caused so much death and misery.

"Thankfully church buildings remain open for public worship and prayer. While we look forward to restrictions on worship being lifted in the near future, I will continue to press for ongoing appraisal of choral and congregational singing.

"We will also update our guidance on public worship where necessary in light of today's announcement and I understand that the Business Committee of the General Synod will be looking at options for the planned July meeting of Synod in the next few days.

"The Prime Minister's comments about lifting the limit of 30 people attending weddings will be a relief to many. We will await the detail from the Government about what it means in practice and will update our guidance to churches accordingly.

"Most of all, however, we do have hope. This pandemic has been a trial for us all but we put our trust in God and have hope that there are better times to come."

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