



Figures published recently show that more than 9,000 churches (eight in 10 parishes) offered 'Church at Home' worship, such as online or dial-in services, during the March-July 2020 lockdown.

The full report also details in-person attendance figures for services which were, as expected, significantly lower than usual, amid legal restrictions on numbers because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Most of the figures are based on an annual snapshot taken in October, which fell just before the second full national lockdown in England, when adult average weekly attendance was 57 per cent lower than 2019.

Despite the restrictions, the figures were still collected by the Church of England Research and Statistics Unit to record and recognise those things that churches were able to do in such difficult circumstances, understand the impact of the pandemic on church life and give context to future figures.

A spokesperson for the Church of England said: "The 2020 Statistics for Mission figures are very much in line with expectations and really underline the scale of the challenge churches faced in the first year of the pandemic.

"The main figures represent a snapshot in time in October last year, as the second wave of Covid-19 gathered momentum, while many churches in England were still closed for public worship, and all were under a legal requirement to limit numbers.

"The Advent and Christmas figures show this even more starkly - given the restrictions we all remember being introduced just a few days before Christmas last year.

"So they bear tribute to the resilience of local churches in the face of real challenges to which they responded in remarkable ways.

"We know that eight in 10 parishes offered 'Church at Home' online, via email, post and telephone during the first lockdown, helping sustain parish life when it was so dearly needed and also bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to some people for the first time."

