

## Site visits – Criteria and guidance for setting up visits with the Cathedral & Church Buildings Division

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*This document will be kept under review and updated as events develop, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the [ChurchCare website](#).*

### Introduction

After lockdown the Division is resuming site visits from 12 April 2021. These will be prioritised according to need, with priority being given to cases received before and during lockdown. As we recommence visits we will check with the diocese or cathedral that the need for the visit is still relevant and could not be done at a later date.

As each of us will have different concerns and risk profile in response to Covid-19 there is no expectation that a request for a visit will be accepted, and no pressure will be put on anyone to participate in a site visit. If there is a strong need for a visit the Division will take reasonable steps to support the diocese, parish or cathedral, but this may not be possible in the short term.

Where there is local guidance in place that imposes requirements which are not included in this document, such requirements will be respected.

Relevant government advice can be found here:

- [Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work](#)
- [Working safely during COVID-19 in or from a vehicle](#)
- [Staying safe outside your home](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It is assumed that visits will not include going to another person's home.

### Before the visit

1. The Division will agree with the diocese or cathedral that the casework giving rise to the request needs to be done.
2. The Officer responsible for the case will consider all information provided with the case to confirm that the matter is not able to be done on papers, without a visit.
3. The Officer will ask the church or cathedral to confirm that it is happy to have a visit.
4. The Officer will ask the church or cathedral to provide a copy of its own current Covid-19 risk assessment.
5. The Officer will agree with the person organising the visit who needs to be present on site, and ask if anyone can join the meeting virtually to reduce the number on site.
6. This policy must be shared with any Council, Commission or Committee member being considered to attend a site visit and the assent to compliance recorded.

7. Time the meeting with the cathedral or church so that it does not overlap with other activities in the building.

### Travel to the site

NCI staff should complete a risk assessment and get specific permission from their line manager to attend the visit.

1. Where it is not possible to walk or cycle to the site, consider what is the most appropriate form of transport bearing in mind your personal circumstances and concerns.
2. When using public transport plan your journey to avoid peak times (in particular on local commuter trains). Check the latest travel advice from your transport operator and book your travel ticket online or use contactless payment whenever possible.
3. Plan your journey to minimise crowded areas and allow for delays.
4. Take the most direct route to your destination.
5. Wear a face covering wherever you are required to do so unless you are exempt.
6. Travel with hand sanitiser and use it.
7. If a visit requires an overnight stay ensure that the accommodation has information about how it is operating to provide a Covid-secure environment. Look for its policy on the website and expect to find a reference to government guidance [Hotels and other guest accommodation - Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hotels-and-other-guest-accommodation-working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

### During and after

1. No one displaying symptoms of Covid-19 is to attend the site visit.
2. The host church or cathedral should keep a record of who is present and collect contact details. Divisional staff and members are expected to comply with such reasonable requests.
3. Social distancing, wearing a face covering, and hygiene rules requested by the church or cathedral will be respected at all times.
4. Hands should be washed, or hand sanitiser used, on arrival at the site.
5. Where possible, business should be conducted outside.
6. If the visit is to give practical support (for example as part of the Bats and Churches project) follow relevant guidance from Natural England and the Bats Conservation Trust. If another organisation's guidance allows a practice not allowed in NCI guidance the NCI guidance takes precedence for NCI staff and members.
7. Avoid shared use of equipment, and where this is unavoidable make sure surfaces are cleaned between users.

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