

Here follows a brief update on behalf of the Advisory Group of the Scottish Episcopal Church:

The Group met immediately following the First Minister's three weekly review report to the Scottish Parliament yesterday (9 September).

None of the changes announced by the First Minister directly affect Places of Worship but there are, nevertheless, a few of points of note:

- the number of adults permitted to meet either indoors or outdoors is now limited to 6, drawn from a maximum of two households. (Children under 12 do not need to be included in the maximum of 6). This is encouraged with immediate effect but will become a legal requirement on 14 September. This may in some cases have a bearing on pastoral visiting or other informal small church gatherings. No change has been made to the previous guidance that an individual should not meet more than four other households in total (whether indoors and/or outdoors) each day. (More severe restrictions remain in place for the Greater Glasgow area, available here <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-measures/>)
- an indicative date of 14 September had previously been given in relation to a range of activities, some of which may be the kind of activities for which church halls are frequently let. That indicative date has now been put back to 5 October, which still remains indicative. A copy of the revised Government route map setting out such details can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-scotlands-route-map-update-10th-september-2020/>
- the Government has introduced a cap of 20 people attending funeral wakes or wedding receptions. This equates with the maximum number permitted to attend funerals or wedding services.
- no change has been made to the overall cap of 50 for worship services. There had been some speculation as to whether children under the age of 12 were to be excluded for the purpose of calculating church attendance. However, the Scottish Government has confirmed that there is to be no such exclusion and so the maximum of 50 applies to the number of adult and children attending in total.

The Advisory Group will update its Phase 3 guidance in the light of the First Minister's announcement. It will reissue the guidance during the course of next week once there has been an opportunity to assess any fuller guidance issued by the Government in the coming days to reflect what the First Minister has said.

Meanwhile, an updated guidance video produced to support Scottish Episcopal Churches who are working their way through the SEC Advisory Group guidance on Phase 3 will be released by Monday (14 September).

The video shows some of the procedures, demonstrated by the Rev Elaine Garman at St John's, Forfar, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin, that the congregation and worship leaders are required to use during worship. It is important to note that the video has been designed as a supporting resource for the official Phase 3 Guidance, rather than as a definitive guide. Vestries considering re-opening their buildings should ensure to read the full Phase 3 Guidance document.

The video will be made available on YouTube and Facebook.

Kind regards

Donald Walker
Director of Communications
Scottish Episcopal Church
07736 042 850