

The Advisory Group of the Scottish Episcopal Church today reissues guidance for Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's route map. The guidance takes account of the First Minister's three-weekly review report of the Scottish Parliament on 9 September and her further announcement on 22 September.

A brief update by email was issued earlier this week immediately following the First Minister's announcement on 22 September. In that email we indicated our understanding at the time that the restriction on household gatherings meant that pastoral home visits were suspended. We have received a number of queries about that and have now obtained specific guidance from the Scottish Government that pastoral home visits are in fact still permissible, being regarded by the Government as falling within the category of their guidance which permits such activity for "*work purposes, or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services*". We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused. The confirmed position is reflected in the Bishops' Pastoral Advice referred to below, from which you will see that the Bishops indicate that such visits be undertaken only where regarded as essential.

The revised guidance will be posted in the news section of the provincial website later today and can be found here <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Revised-Phase-3-Guidance-Version-5-24.9.2020.pdf> on the coronavirus index page, but we attach copies now of the documents, marked up/highlighted to show changes from the previous versions issued on 14 August 2020.

Attached, please find: –

- Message from the Right Rev Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin, on behalf of the College of Bishops. Bishop Andrew represents the College on the Advisory Group.
- Revised Phase 3 Guidance from the Advisory Group. The changes will be apparent from the attached marked up version but, in summary, include:
 - a. reference to the most recently available version of the Scottish Government route map, issued on 10 September
 - b. an encouragement for church members to use the Protect Scotland app as part of NHS Scotland's test and protect scheme.
 - c. the introduction by the Government of a cap of 20 people attending funeral wakes or wedding receptions. This equates with a maximum number permitted to attend funerals or wedding services. For worship services the overall cap remains at 50.
 - d. whilst the Advisory Group continues to recommend the use of liturgy in digital or single use paper form, guidance has been included to allow the re-use of hard copy material, subject to conditions.
 - e. provision for the possibility of outdoor worship, subject to Scottish Government "events" guidance.
 - f. updated information regarding children's activities. Reference in the previous version of the Phase 3 guidance to the Youthworksupport website has been deleted since the bulk of the information available there relates to youth work south of the border. We are aware that Youthlink Scotland has an amount of resource available on its website: <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/covid-19-guidance/youth-work-recovery-resources/frequently-asked-questions/> However we are advised by the Scottish Government that care must be taken in relation to using such material because it relates to "regulated" youth activities (ie regulated by the Care Inspectorate) and it is highly unlikely that church youth activities will fall within that category. Accordingly, the relevant guidance for churches is the "unregulated" guidance referred to in our Phase 3 guidance (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-activities-for-children/>). As indicated in our guidance, that Scottish Government guidance remains provisional.
 - g. some further expansion of the guidance in relation to church hall use. However, promised Government guidance on community centre use is still awaited.

The Pastoral Guidelines from the College of Bishops has also been revised to reflect the current stage of Phase 3 of lockdown easing and is available at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/revised-pastoral-guidelines-for-phase-3-version-4-24-09-20/> A highlighted version of that Advice is attached showing the changes. They include comment in relation to pastoral visiting, as well as additions on eucharistic practice to address the situation when a person other than the cleric sets up for

communion (for example for a visiting priest) and also the conduct of Sunday morning worship using the reserved sacrament.

The Frequently Asked Questions for Phase 3 have been expanded and are available at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/frequently-asked-questions-for-phase-3-version-4-24-09-20/> A highlighted version of the FAQs is also attached.

Finally, a reminder that an updated version of the guidance video to support churches reopening for worship was released last week and is available at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/new-version-of-re-opening-guidance-video-released/> It should be regarded as a supporting resource for the Phase 3 guidance from the Advisory Group, rather than as a definitive guide.

Kind regards

Donald Walker
Director of Communications
Scottish Episcopal Church
07736 042 850