



Is it appropriate for an individual to Ring?

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF CHURCH
BELL RINGERS

Assisting Towers in Decision Making

Returning to ringing is not risk-free. So it is important for each individual to carefully consider, and personally decide, whether it is appropriate for them to do so – with respect to their own health, that of their fellow ringers, and of the community as a whole.

One of the stronger objective facts that has emerged in the first few months of the Coronavirus pandemic is the difference of risk (of severe illness and death) between individuals. The risk of hospitalisation and death increases very significantly with age, particularly over the age of 50. In addition, men tend to have more severe illness than women, as do people with BAME heritage, whilst pre-existing conditions strongly affect the outcome of infection.

AGE The risk of death, and the likelihood of a severe infection, as a result of contracting Coronavirus, increases very significantly with age.

Older band members should consider seriously whether it is appropriate for them to ring.

RISKS FROM MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The NHS classifies two levels of increased risk. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

1. People at HIGH risk (clinically extremely vulnerable)

These people will have been contacted by the NHS in March / April 2020 and told to shield.

Although the advice to shield has been relaxed, these people should certainly NOT ring.

2. People at MODERATE risk from coronavirus include people who:

- are 70 or older
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)
- are pregnant

Note how this list starts by including anyone with no illness other than that of being aged over 70!

For anyone with one of these conditions, the likelihood of a bad outcome from catching an infection is considerably greater, and so please bear this in mind in your decision making.

Each band member should read this before deciding whether to return to ringing

BEING A RISK TO OTHERS

Some people, although at low personal risk if they were to contract the infection, may be at greater risk of catching it, and then passing it on to the rest of the band – either in the infectious day or two before starting symptoms, or because they happen to be an asymptomatic carrier. Similarly some people by nature of their work or other activities carry much more risk of spreading the disease if they catch it from a fellow ringer in the tower.

Examples of such people are:

University and School Students

Staff in hospital and care environments

Teachers and University staff

Essential workers with client contact e.g. supermarket staff

Security Guards

Factory and processing plant workers

In caring for one another, you may feel that it is better for you not to bring an increased risk into the tower, or to take it away with you.

BEING ANXIOUS ABOUT IT

If the thought of returning to ringing makes you anxious, then you should not do it. You do not have to explain yourself. No one will criticise you. No one will pressurise you.