

# Wales Guidance: moving to Alert Level 0 from 7 August onwards

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The Welsh Government have announced that Wales will move to Alert Level 0 from Saturday 7 August onwards. Whilst this broadly means the lifting of many restrictions, there is still a need for bellringers to exercise caution in returning to bellringing activities. Covid-19 has not been eradicated and it is a disease that is likely to be with us for some time. Whilst over 80% of the adult Welsh population has been vaccinated, there remain people who cannot be vaccinated for health reasons and people who have chosen not to be vaccinated. Furthermore, even with vaccination some people can still become ill or even die from the virus.

Even at Alert Level Zero, there three key legal requirements that **must** be observed:

1. Organisations must undertake a written coronavirus risk assessment of their premises and activities and take reasonable measures to minimise exposure to, and the spread of, coronavirus based on that risk assessment.
2. Everyone must still self-isolate for 10 days if they test positive for COVID-19. If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive and you are not fully vaccinated you must also self-isolate for 10 days as instructed by the Test Trace Protect system.
3. Adults and children over 12 must (with limited exceptions) wear face-coverings in indoor public places (including churches and halls), with the exception of hospitality settings such as restaurants, pubs, cafes or nightclubs.

Key sources of guidance on preparing risk assessments is available as follows:

Welsh Government - <https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-guidance-employers-businesses-and-organisations-html>

Church in Wales - <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

There is also some very useful information from the Health and Safety Executive regarding ventilation available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm> .

Risk assessments **must** be approved by PCCs or Ministry Area Councils.

The Scottish Association of Church Bell Ringers has a useful template risk assessment available at <https://www.sacr.org/images/documents/covid-19/Return%20to%20Ringing%20Risk%20Assessment.docx>

Risk Assessments should take into account the following:

- Ventilation: spaces with good ventilation are safer spaces. If a space cannot be ventilated with fresh air, then social distancing will be even more important.

- The wearing of face coverings is a legal requirement for public buildings and this includes churches. Raised voices remains a particular risk factor.
- Social distancing: Whilst the requirement for social distancing is no longer a legal requirement, it remains a useful mitigation to reduce the risk of transmission.
- There are clearly much lower risks from fully vaccinated persons mixing than when unvaccinated people are mixing.
- Hand washing and sanitizing should continue.
- The cleaning of surfaces and premises remains important.
- Track and Trace – continuing to record who is present in a building enables effective tracing if there is a positive contact.
- It is important to remind people that Covid-19 has not been eradicated and people should still exercise caution in their behaviour.

Association and Branch events will also require a completed risk assessment to be agreed with the PCC/MAC of the host tower. Visiting groups of ringers should comply with the risk assessment in place at that particular host church.