

Secretary for Ministries: Revd. Nicola Furley-Smith
Convener of Ministries Committee: Revd. Paul Whittle

2nd July 2020
By email

Dear Colleague,

Personal Risk Assessment

I write to you from the Ministries Office as you emerge into the new normal. My reason for writing is to stress the importance of the safety of all those who contribute and take part in our shared life by strongly urging you to take the personal risk assessment for Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Lay Leaders which you will find online at

https://urc.org.uk/images/Communications/docs/Personal_Risk_Assessment.pdf.

When the lockdown restrictions were imposed, Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Lay Leaders were designated as key workers because it was not known what increased activity COVID-19 would involve religious workers in. The URC has echoed Government advice that we should work from home where possible. As restrictions change, it is time for Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Lay Leaders, volunteers and participants to consider the risks involved in their work.

The personal risk assessment will take no more than a few minutes. The results will depend on your particular circumstances. For many, the risks will be low and can be managed safely. For those who are medium or high risk, it may mean taking advice from your GP or other health care professionals. If that does not resolve how you may work safely, or restricts your involvement in indoor gatherings, you must seek advice from your Moderator. To support you further, the Moderator may refer you for occupational health advice through the Ministries Office to Thrive Worldwide who can advise on both physical and mental well-being. Whether you are low, medium or high risk please keep your Moderator informed if there are changes to your work practice because of having to shield another family member or you have to self-isolate. If your Moderator is not aware, they will be unable to ensure that appropriate support is provided. There is some helpful health advice at <https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/covid-resources>

If there are differences of opinion between you and your pastorate about your working arrangements that you cannot resolve, your synod can offer support for all concerned through the usual processes. Please talk with your Moderator before attitudes become hardened.

I cannot stress enough that should you have any particular concerns arising from the personal assessment process then please do speak with your Moderator or contact me on 0208 660 6837.

It goes without saying thank you for all you have done during these extraordinary times. These times have brought unprecedented changes to the way we all live and work. Churches have had to learn to adapt how they connect, serve, care and minister to people and I am sure you found both challenges and new opportunities in this season. Your well-being is important and particularly now, so I hope you will get in touch with me if I can be of any help.

With all good wishes,

