

A quick guide Home and Hospital visits



This quick guide needs to be read and understood in the context of a national flu pandemic. The restrictions may only be temporary and are designed to reduce the spread of flu.

Hospital visits

During a pandemic it is essential that only hospital chaplains make pastoral visits to those who are sick and in hospital.

During a full-blown pandemic, with a high mortality rate, it is likely that hospitals will care for the most vulnerable and be closed to visits. Where a pandemic has a lower mortality rate, the hospital chaplain should be called and advice on visiting protocols for the specific hospital sought.

Please check the diocesan website
www.manchester.anglican.org/pandemic for the latest list of hospital chaplains.

Home visits

Home visits should cease in a pandemic situation, where the sick have the virus, or the housebound are in a pandemic risk category as defined by the Department of Health, clergy should cease visits to the sick at home. It is recognised that this is a sensitive issue and those at home or in hospital may want their own clergy to visit. It is essential to recognise however that this procedure is essential for personal safety and to minimise the impact of the pandemic. Alternative forms of visiting are listed below. The 'at risk' list changes from pandemic to pandemic so clergy should check the diocesan website www.manchester.anglican.org/pandemic for the latest advice.



Phone visits for the housebound

During the recent foot and mouth crisis farmers were not allowed to receive visitors. Clergy used the phone to maintain pastoral contact- it is recommended that people adopt a similar practice-having meaningful conversations on the phone with an element of prayer included.

Only in an absolute emergency should home visits be made to the sick

There may be occasions where a home visit is needed for someone who has the flu and is near to death. Protective garments should be worn when making any such visit. The norm is plastic apron, face mask and latex gloves (if you are allergic to latex then alternatives are available). The gloves should be put on before entry and removed and binned before leaving. Hand washing procedures must be followed after removal of the gloves (or use sterilising hand gel).

As flu is a respiratory infection, a disposable face mask should also be worn-these give 20 minutes of protection and must be disposed of immediately.

Home Communion

Communion vessels are a minor contamination risk in themselves, however the following help to reduce risk:

1. Do not carry an unprotected pyx (box containing consecrated communion wafer) in pocket or handbag. Use its protective carrying bag or a small plastic bag. This is to stop fluff and grime getting caught in engravings, hinges, etc.
2. Only open the pyx as the host is needed and close it as soon as possible afterwards.
3. Do not place the pyx directly onto the bedside table use a tissue in between surfaces.
4. Wipe the outside of the pyx with an antiseptic wipe at the beginning and end of each session of use.
5. Do not place any unused hosts back in the main ciborium/paten but leave them in the pyx.
6. Once a week the pyx should be emptied and cleaned with hot soapy water and then with an antiseptic wipe.

Means of administration at home communion

1. Reception in the hand – ministers are to ensure that their hands are cleaned with alcohol gel before communicating each person.
2. Reception on the tongue – is a high risk ritual– if communicating to more than one person, ministers are to ensure that they wash their hands with soap and water in between each person.
3. Intinction is a high risk ritual– if communicating to more than one person, ministers are to ensure that they wash their hands with soap and water in between each person.

Laying on of hands when visiting

1. Do not place hands on any open sores.
2. Do not place hands on any dressing.
3. Wash hands before touching any other people.