

Thursday 29th July 2021

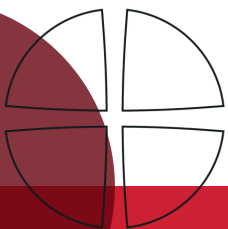
To all ministers and Circuit Stewards in Northern Ireland

This afternoon the Northern Ireland Executive announced that the legal requirement for social distancing indoors will be reduced to a minimum of 1 metre from tomorrow (Friday) at 6pm. In making this change the Executive has also stated that “It is still recommended that social distancing at 2 metres is maintained where possible”.

In light of this announcement the social distancing requirement in Methodist societies in Northern Ireland may move to a minimum of 1 metre.

In saying this we want to note that:

- The closer we are in proximity to others, the higher the risk. The risk of transmission is therefore higher at one metre compared to two metres. The highest risk environments for the spread of the virus are indoor, crowded, poorly ventilated spaces where people are in close proximity to others for a period of time.
- There is no compulsion to move to one metre. Church Councils may wish to maintain 2 metre social distancing. You and your leaders will know what is best in your own context.
- There is no compulsion to move to one metre straight away. These changes take time, you will have to re-measure, change signage and adjust Risk Assessments to reflect the maximum number now permitted in each room. You and your Church Council may decide to wait for a while before you implement this change.
- Please maintain 4 m between those leading ‘from the front’ and therefore not wearing face-coverings and the first row of the congregation.
- The Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor continue to stress the importance of good ventilation.



If and when you are making this change you can find signage here: **[COVID-19 Risk Management Posters](#)**

As ever your DSs are available for guidance, if this causes any issues for you please contact Stephen Skuce.

Warm regards,

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