

Limits on attending weddings, funerals and other acts of worship



England

Under new regulations announced on September 22 for England, **weddings** are to be limited to a **maximum of 15 people** present from Monday 28 September 2020. If the church can hold fewer than 15 people socially distanced, then the lower limit applies.

There has been some confusion as to whether the 15 (or 30 people until 28 September) includes the Minister and others present to facilitate the marriage.

Although the guidance for the safe use of places of worship says, “anyone working is not included as part of the 30 person limit” there is no matching provision in the current Statutory Instrument which puts the regulations into law, or any definition of what it means for a person to be “working”.

As the legislation in force does not provide any exemption for Minister, organist, stewards, or Authorised Person or Registrar and these people must be included in the total number allowable.



- For **funerals** the limit of those attending remains at 30 including the Minister and everyone else present.
- For **regular acts of communal worship**, the limit on those attending is determined by the capacity of the building/venue whilst people are socially distanced.
- For **all other special acts of worship** (including baptisms if not carried out during communal worship, wedding blessings, renewal of vows, amongst others) from September 28 a **maximum of 6 people** are allowed, regardless of the capacity of the building.

Scotland

The numbers allowed to attend have not changed since September 14.

- At **weddings** there may be up to **20 people** including third-party suppliers such as a photographer but the Minister, venue staff and third-party catering staff are not included in the headcount.

- At **funerals** the same limits apply as for weddings.
- At **regular acts of communal worship**, **50 people** may attend, including children, or **200** if the worship takes place outdoors.

Wales

As for Scotland, no new changes have been announced in the last week.

- For both **weddings** and **funerals**, the numbers are restricted to **30** and all must be specifically invited.
- For **regular acts of communal worship**, the socially-distanced capacity of the building applies, or a maximum of **30** people outdoors.

September 25, 2020

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