

United Synagogue: COVID- 19

Guidance to Member Communities on Reopening Buildings and Restarting services

1 July 2020 / 9 Tammuz 5780

Aims of this guidance

This guidance supersedes our [guidance issued on 31 May 2020 / 8 Sivan 5780](#). It is framed by and builds upon the Chief Rabbi's Guiding Principles for Exiting Lockdown which can be read in full [here](#) and a tailored version of which is set out below.

It has been approved by the Chief Rabbi, the London Beth Din and the United Synagogue Trustees.

The document outlines the key principles of the reopening process and provides policy and advice to United Synagogue member communities as they prepare to return to their buildings. Its content has been developed by a team of Rabbanim, medical professionals, US Trustees, US Chairs and professionals who will continue to work to develop updated versions over the coming months.

The Government has confirmed that Places of Worship can reopen from 4th July. This means that United Synagogue sites can reopen for services from this date. However, communities are strongly advised against opening on 4th July to avoid the very first service being on a Shabbat. Rather, in order to ensure that all new processes work well and that sites remain COVID-secure, we strongly recommend that communities begin by introducing weekday services which are smaller and more straightforward before building up to a Shabbat, which is more complex and challenging.

We do not apologise for adopting a cautious approach. Evidence from around the world suggests that places of worship have been centres of outbreaks. As much as we all wish to return to as close to normal as possible, it is our responsibility to do so in a controlled and careful manner, particularly at the start, as we get used to implementing and managing a new way of running our communities.

Much of the focus of this document is about preparing our buildings for holding religious services in a COVID-secure manner. The emphasis has been placed on services because this is the first priority of our shuls and for our communities.

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However, in ordinary times, our buildings are community centres hosting support groups, educational events, social get-togethers, sports sessions, youth programmes and much, much more. Government guidance now makes clear that, in a COVID-secure and responsible way, we can restart this communal provision.

We are a long way off being able to offer a full programme of activity but we now have permission to open our doors for more than religious services. All of this has to be done in compliance with the relevant Government guidance (see guidance for Multi-use Settings) and in a COVID-secure way. Of course, we must also recognise that many people may not be able to leave their homes or wish to attend our buildings. See Section E for suggestions of how to plan for a broad communal offering.

Structure

The guidance is organised into six sections:

- A. The Chief Rabbi's Guiding Principles for Exiting Lockdown
- B. Restarting services safely - practical considerations
- C. Restarting services safely – content and format
- D. Planning for the Yamim Noraim
- E. Planning for Broader Provision
- F. Appendix
 - 1. [CST Guidance on Outdoor Services](#)
 - 2. [Protective Equipment Policy](#)
 - 3. [Cleaning United Synagogue settings to reduce risk from coronavirus](#)
 - 4. [Guidance on shortened Yamin Noraim services](#)
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A. The Chief Rabbi's Guiding Principles for Exiting Lockdown

1) Pikuach Nefesh

Every step on the long road towards reopening our communities must be governed by the overwhelming priority of Pikuach Nefesh - the protection of life. Our greatest strength - our close-knit nature, the scope of our communal activity – is, during COVID-19, also our greatest weakness. Over the last few months, we have experienced tragic losses. Whilst every day that we do not open our shuls is painful, it is essential that we follow a cautious path centred on the wellbeing of our members, Rabbinat, staff, volunteers and visitors and take a risk-managed approach.

2) Reopening is a process

The government's approach and guidance is absolutely clear that the reopening of our shuls will not be a single event, but rather a cautious, phased process, which will take place over the course of many months. As such, the answers to the questions we have are subject to the latest medical and scientific data and will therefore evolve and change. We must be prepared for this and the uncertainty this brings.

Communities need to have in place plans for a rapid shut-down, should there be a suspected case of Coronavirus amongst those attending the synagogue or potentially a cluster of cases in the local area. The actual action needed will be subject to the prevailing advice at the time, taking into account our context.

3) We must work together

The process of reopening is a learning curve for us all; for religious and lay leadership as well as for members. It requires the active participation and cooperation of everyone. It will also require a great deal of forbearance from every person wishing to partake in communal life. It can only succeed if we work carefully and cautiously together.

4) One size does not fit all

Every one of our communities is different; from demography to size of membership, from geographic location to the function of the building. Whilst we will all be led by government guidance and the phases the government has set out for emerging from lockdown, what happens within each phase may differ from community to community. What one community does may not be right or appropriate for another community. It may be appropriate for some to move slower whilst others move faster, all whilst adhering to Government guidelines. As a result, these guidelines include options for consideration by community leadership.

5) No community operates in a vacuum

It is important that the detailed guidance being developed for the reopening of our shuls is used by all communities and that communities sense check other ideas, should they have any. In particular where these ideas touch on issues of a halachic or shul services related nature, please discuss these with the Office of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue. Since all communities stand to benefit from the experiences of others, all communities are encouraged to engage with this process by providing comments and feedback, once the first set of guidance is issued.

6) Patience and agility

Whilst we would like to be able to plan months in advance, this year such advance planning will be more difficult. The government's phased approach together with the ever-changing 'R' rate could significantly impact our planning. It is possible that our path out of lockdown could speed up but it is equally possible that it could slow down or even reverse. As a result we have no choice but to be patient and with that, agile, to ensure that we can adapt as necessary.

7) Communication

As we are about to enter a prolonged period of uncertainty during which we will introduce, and then revise policy and guidance, regular communication with members is critical. We need to ensure that whilst we are effectively communicating the rules and the need for all members to comply, we also remain warm, welcoming and understanding. It is also important that we continue to convey the message that no-one of any age who is concerned about their health should feel obligated to attend a service, make up a minyan or say Kaddish.

B. Restarting services safely: practical considerations

- 1) This section of the guidelines has been written to support communities minimise the risk of spreading the virus as they reopen. However, the risk of the spread of the virus can never fully be removed (in common with many other daily activities that we normally undertake) nor can we guarantee that our sites are COVID-free. As communities prepare to reopen their buildings, it is imperative that this message is conveyed to members and that they understand the personal choice that they are making when attending services.

Policy

- 2) **All communities should follow these requirements. They are not optional.** In the same way, all those attending services are required to comply with these requirements. In order to protect all attendees, Honorary Officers have the right to ask those who do not comply to leave the site.
- 3) Please note that our policy requires social distancing to be kept to 2 metres, indoors and outdoors. It also requires face coverings to be worn indoors. This cautious approach has been taken on the basis of our older demographic, the length of time that people from multiple households will spend together and the experiences of Places of Worship that have already opened around the world. We appreciate that elements of the policy are challenging. We will review them regularly and relax them as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- 4) As communities reopen and plan for broader provision the following principles should be taken into account:
 - a. Activities outdoors carry less risk than those indoors
 - b. Services and activities should take place in the shortest reasonable time
 - c. Where possible, the number of people on site at any one time should be minimised
 - d. It is preferable for members to be seated than standing (except when required by halacha)
 - e. It is the responsibility of every individual to help protect the wellbeing of their fellow community member.
- 5) Our synagogue buildings will need to meet COVID-19 safety requirements and allow for social distancing. The United Synagogue has provided a Risk Assessment template document for each of its communities to complete. Communities should also refer to the document produced by the US Property Department entitled 'US Building Reoccupation', which advises communities on how to reopen buildings following their closure, as well as the 'Reoccupying Buildings Planner' which suggests a timeframe for planning to reopen.
- 6) The United Synagogue is working closely with CST on preparing for reopening. Please discuss these arrangements with local Security Officers and refer to relevant CST guidelines.

Attendance

- 7) In line with current government guidance, the following groups of people should not attend services:
 - a) Those who are shielded (extremely medically vulnerable), according to the government's definition
 - b) Those who show any symptoms of COVID-19 or who live with people with symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in contact with a confirmed case – all in the last fourteen days
 - c) Those who have been asked to self-isolate by the government's Track and Trace Programme
 - d) Those who are in quarantine having travelled recently
- 8) Older members (and certainly those over 70) should use their judgment to decide whether to attend services. They should take into consideration the heightened potential risk to their health should they catch coronavirus.
- 9) Those who are clinically vulnerable should take medical advice as to whether to attend.
- 10) Those who live in the same household as people who are shielding should use their judgment as to whether to attend.
- 11) No person should be or feel pressurised to attend a service in order to make up a minyan.
- 12) Employees who fall into any of these categories should be in touch with HR to discuss attendance for work purposes.
- 13) Members should be advised to travel to shul safely. They should be advised to avoid public transport during the week nor should they travel in cars with people from other households. It is halachically permissible to wear a face covering or mask outside an eruv on Shabbat.

Attendance of children

- 14) Children and young people are at the heart of our communities and we look forward to welcoming them and their parents back into our buildings. However, despite the fact that some children will be familiar with social distancing rules from school, many will find it difficult to sit in one place for the entirety of a service, nor is our environment comparable to the school environment.

As a result, we recommend that communities do not allow children under 12 to attend services in the initial phase of reopening. When communities feel ready and confident that they are able to manage social distancing and people flow, they might wish to invite children to shorter services initially, such as Kabbalat Shabbat. Early exceptions on Shabbat morning might be the siblings, family and close friends of Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah children.

- 15) Government guidance now allows for children and youth programming to take place on site. However, communities should consider the numbers that might be on site at any one time and the management of staggered entry and exit times.
- 16) Small-group programmes for young families or youth could take place on Shabbat afternoons. Those attending any service or activity will need to book in advance. Children's programming or services must not use shared toys, books or equipment and as with regular services, no singing will be possible. Similarly, no food or drink can be permitted.

Capacity, Seating, Layout and Access

- 17) Attendees to services must be sitting at least 2 metres apart from each other in all directions. Seating should be marked to make clear which seats should be used. Shuls might need to reconfigure. Clear signage will be important and a one-way people flow should be established, including separate entrances and exits. Please review the emergency evacuation procedure and make clear any changes.
- 18) Attendees must remain at least 2m apart from one another at all times including when entering and exiting the shul. If space is tight, someone rapidly passing along a gangway need not be at the full 2m from every attendee. Crowds must be avoided.
- 19) Attendees from the same household may enter and exit the Shul building together. This also impacts on seating arrangements as males and females of the same household may sit together in their respective sections of the shul.
- 20) Communities should ascertain their maximum capacity.
- 21) The US has developed its online events system to enable men and women to book into services and to note particular needs (chiyyuvim/aveilim, those with yahrtzeit, those with smachot etc). The system, which will help communities to keep attendance within capacity, will be hosted and supported centrally and administered locally by those designated by the community. Members who do not have access to the internet or who are not confident to use the online booking system should be able to book via the synagogue office.

Once services have restarted, it will be critical to let members and other attendees know that they can only attend if they have booked through the system.
- 22) Keypads to allow entry to the site should be avoided. If they must be used, signage should remind attendees to use hand sanitiser immediately afterwards. Keypads should be cleaned regularly.
- 23) It will be necessary to have someone on the gates or at the door, checking people in.
- 24) Queues at gates should be socially distanced using floor markings and should be avoided as much as possible for security reasons.
- 25) Communities may only facilitate, support or publicise events in members' gardens if they meet the requirements of those settings as laid out in government guidance. Currently no more than two households or six people can gather in a private garden.
- 26) Shiva services (minyanim) s can be held on shul premises but cannot be held in members' homes or gardens. Shiva visits during the day can take place in homes within the restrictions referred to above.
- 27) Communities must not hold kiddushim, seudot or other meals.

Cleaning, handwashing and infection control

- 28) The importance of good and regular handwashing should be highlighted to all members ahead of their visit. Hand sanitiser should be available on site and signs on site should encourage attendees to wash/sanitise their hands on arrival and on departure. Signage should also display the correct and most effective methods of handwashing and using hand sanitiser. The US will facilitate central procurement of some signage.
- 29) If services are to be held indoors, attendees must wear face coverings. It is not mandatory for a face covering to be worn at an outdoor service.

- 30) The room must be well ventilated by opening the windows. If the synagogue has an air-conditioning system that recirculates air (rather than bringing in a fresh air supply air) it should be switched off. Fans should not be used.
- 31) Those who attend services cannot kiss the Sefer Torah, mezuzot or tallitot, nor can there be any handshaking or kissing. Community Tallitot will not be available for use.
- 32) In order to protect members, all service leaders (Baalei Tefillah, Baalei Koreh, Chazzanim) must wear a face covering, as per other members of the kehilla.
The service leader should face away from the kehilla and daven or leyn from the front, rather than the bimah, wherever possible. The service leader should also put as much distance between them and the rest of the kehilla.
We are taking a cautious approach in this area noting government advice that singing or chanting is only permitted by one individual, where it is essential to an act of worship. It is clear that Government is further investigating relevant issues related to singing and we will update our position when their new information is available.
Approaches such as the use of a three-sided Perspex screen may also be employed as an additional protection. If a screen is used, we are still strongly recommending that the service leader should wear a face covering. The screen should be cleaned between services and between service leaders using a disposable cloth and a combined detergent and disinfectant. The service leader should wear gloves and should dispose of cleaning materials and gloves in the correct way. When cleaning the Perspex screen on Shabbat he must be careful to avoid squeezing any liquid out of the towel. As such, he must be careful not to use too much detergent and to wipe it up with a towel that is dry, designated for this purpose and large enough not to become wet.
- 33) There can be no singing other than from the service leader. This is in line with government and medical guidance.
- 34) Those who handle the Sefer Torah or any other ritual item other than books (e.g. the yad) should wear a new pair of disposable gloves for the period that they are doing so. The gloves should be disposed of correctly. (There is no requirement for other attendees to wear gloves.)
- 35) Attendees should bring their own siddurim and chumashim from home. If this is not possible (i.e. on Shabbat where there is no eruv), they should select a book from a 'clean' shelf and replace it on a 'used' shelf. Assuming a book is not used again during the week, it need not be cleaned and can be used again the following Shabbat. Other books should be removed from the shul (alternatively, signs should remind people not to touch these books at this time.)
- 36) Cloakrooms should be closed and attendees should keep their coats and other belongings with them at all times.
- 37) A tzedaka box should not be passed around. Rather it should be set in one place for people to approach. Individuals should avoid touching the box. The box should be cleaned regularly.
- 38) The building should be cleaned between each service. Cleaners should wear a new pair of disposable gloves and should pay particular attention to door handles, hard surfaces, bathrooms and handrails. More detail on the level of cleaning can be found in the appendix.
- 39) Toilets must remain open during services. A hand sanitiser should be placed immediately outside toilet doors accompanied by signs reminding people to sanitise their hands before and after entering the toilet. Any queues should be socially distanced. Signs in toilets should remind attendees to maintain social distancing as much as possible. Attendees should be reminded to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. Cleaning should take place regularly, focusing on flushes, taps and door handles.
- 40) If there has been a confirmed case of coronavirus on the shul site, those who were within 2 metres of the individual for more than 15 minutes should expect to be contacted by the NHS

Test and Trace programme. If there has been more than one confirmed case of coronavirus on site the community should contact both the United Synagogue and their local PHE Health Protection team (<https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team>).

Options to consider

- 41) Communities should consider starting to run weekday minyanim only, to rehearse the new system before moving to Shabbat services.
- 42) Communities should consider, where practicable and when the weather allows, holding services outdoors on the synagogue site. Wherever possible, spaces should be marked out to assist with social distancing. Only the service leader can sing in outdoor services. If outdoor services are held, please consider neighbours; it might not be practicable to hold shacharit. Please see appendix for CST guidance on holding outdoor minyanim.
- 43) A named individual should be appointed as responsible for the oversight of these safety and social distancing requirements. Some communities may wish to assign this responsibility to a member of the Honorary Officer team or to another lay leader. In some communities, Chairs may wish to retain responsibility for this area. In either case, the HOs, Rabbinic team, Council and volunteers should be notified about who holds this portfolio.
- 44) In preparation for welcoming people on site and holding an increasing number of services, communities should build a team of volunteer ushers.
- 45) As allocating seating and determining people flow in a traditionally designed shul with pews is complex, communities might consider reopening services first in the shul hall where layout is more straightforward.
- 46) In order to accommodate need, communities might need to run several minyanim sequentially or with staggered starts. In either case, sufficient time must be allocated for cleaning and for people to avoid meeting at the gates or doors.
- 47) Communities might wish to introduce an informal community behaviour agreement that not only asks people to abide by the health and safety instructions but also reminds them of their responsibility to keep each other safe. The agreement could be displayed on site as well as included in the online booking confirmation.

C. Restarting services: content and format

- 48) It is essential that we are responsive to medical, scientific or government advice that prescribes the amount of time that people can be together indoors. In any event, services should be run without an unnecessary delay.
- 49) There might be several reasons for communities to choose to adjust the content of services:
- a) To limit the time that people are together indoors
 - b) To allow for staggered services to meet demand
 - c) To enable social distancing
 - d) To ensure that all aspects of the service are safe (i.e. handling of objects, singing)
- 50) In order to adjust the service for the reasons mentioned above:
- (i) Weekday Shacharit can begin at Rabbi Yishmael Omer
 - (ii) Shabbat Shacharit can begin from 'Shochan Ad'
- Those parts of the service that are not said in shul should be said at home prior to arrival.

Leyning

- 51) Only the Baal Koreh may take out and carry the Sefer Torah from, and return it to, the Aron Hakodesh. No one may kiss it. He and anyone touching the Aron Hakodesh, Sefer Torah or Yad must wear disposable gloves. Gloves should be put on and taken off following best practice. The Aron may be opened and closed by another person who should move away when the Baal Koreh takes the Sefer Torah out of the Aron.
- 52) Calling up may be done either by the Gabbai (socially distanced from the bimah) or by the Baal Koreh.
- 53) Ideally, but only if easily practicable (e.g. Gabbai acting as an usher), individuals who are receiving an aliyah should come to the bimah, following all the rules of social distancing (with the Baal Koreh stepping away whilst the brachot are said).
If this is not feasible, those who are given an aliyah should move to a designated space from where they can see the Sefer Torah. They should recite the brachot from this space, which could be the other side of the bimah or the pulpit. They should remain there until the next Oleh is called up.
- 54) Hagbah and Gelilah should be done by two members of the same household (it is permissible to call up a father and son or two brothers if they are called up without using their names). If this is not possible, the Baal Koreh should lift the Sefer Torah, display it to the community and then put it back on the bimah before doing Gelilah himself.
- 55) Members of the same household e.g. a Barmitzvah boy and his father, may stand on the bimah together in order to leyn and/or recite the haftarah.
- 56) One communal Mi Sheberach should be made at the end of leyning for all those who were called up, together with one Mi Shebeirach for cholim and one communal Azkarah.
- 57) Friday night kiddush and Havdalah on Motzei Shabbat can take place. However, only the service leader (wearing gloves) can handle the items required (including the disposable cup and wine bottle) and only he can drink.
- 58) On Shabbat afternoons, communities might wish to hold a shiur between mincha and maariv. The same social distancing rules apply.
- 59) At the current time, the blowing of the shofar (i.e. in Elul) is not permitted. We continue to consult with government on this matter

D. Yamim Noraim Services

- 60) For all of our communities Yamim Noraim is the high point of the year, both spiritually and in terms of levels of engagement. In an ordinary year, attendance is extremely high and communities not only run numerous services in multiple venues but also hold children's services, explanatory services, youth services and programmes, Q & As and children's lunches as well as providing a coffee station. It is as much a social and educational experience as a religious one. This year will look different but our aim must be to find a way to invite every person who normally attends – as well as those who have not yet done so- to participate in some way.
- 61) Ordinarily, communities would have made good progress with planning for the Yamim Noraim, often aiming to have all details in place by the end of July. This year is particularly challenging because, we are not able to predict accurately how the government guidance might change nor estimate with any confidence the numbers that might attend.
- 62) These notes have been put together to support communities in planning at this stage. More detailed guidance will follow.
- 63) CST will be providing a set of security guidance for the Yamim Noraim which should be read alongside this guidance

Policy

- 64) Assuming that a community is able to get a minyan, a community should hold at least one set of complete services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, including everything that they would normally say.
If time does not allow for this, communities should refer to the document 'Guidance for shortened Yamim Noraim services' (see appendix) in order to understand which piyutim can be omitted. It is preferable to omit piyutim than omit Pesukei Dezimrah, for example.
- 65) Cohanim should duchen (recite the priestly blessings) in a socially distanced manner i.e. 2 metres apart and without singing. Before duchening, they should wash their own hands. A Cohen is permitted to duchen in more than one service.

Options to consider

- 66) In order to be able to run additional sequential services (with cleaning in between), communities might consider the following options:
- a) Asking members to daven Shacharit at home and running only Musaf as communal prayer beginning with Kriyat Hatorah or Tekiat Shofar. More than one additional Musaf service could be held if necessary.
 - b) Supplementing the services outlined above with 'highlights' services and explanatory services.

- 67) In order to shorten additional services, some piyyutim can be omitted. Please see the document 'Guidance for shortened Yamim Noraim services' in the appendix
- 68) To allow for the scheduling of multiple services the US will publish a list of timings to communities i.e. the earliest and latest times that each service can be held.
- 69) If communities do not have sufficient Baalei Tefillah, a Baal Tefillah is permitted to lead the repetition of the Shacharit or Musaf Amidah in more than one service.
However, the Baal Tefillah may not repeat the Birchot Keriyat Shema or the quiet Amidah. In this scenario, during Shacharit, another member of the kehilla should lead the Birchot Keriyat Shema rather than there be no leader.
- 70) As communities might choose to hold additional services in new venues and as regular guest chazzanim might not be able to visit, communities might face challenges in finding sufficient service leaders. The US Centre will be supporting communities in sourcing chazzanim as well as looking into running online training for Baalei Tefilla for the Yamim Noraim. More details will be shared soon.
- 71) To complement this, communities might consider training Baalei Tefillah locally. A full set of recordings of the Yamin Noraim services is available on the US website at <https://www.theus.org.uk/article/services-audio-recordings>

Rosh Hashanah

- 72) On Rosh Hashanah this calendar year, shofar blowing will only take place on the second day (Sunday). It is important to note that although it is ideal to hear 100 notes of the shofar, where this is challenging, it is only necessary for individuals to hear 30 notes in order to fulfil the mitzvah.
Communities could organise multiple shofar blowings on and off site and could consider holding a shofar blowing in the local park on condition that it does not cause a disturbance or Chillul Hashem. Please liaise with CST to ensure that these events do not pose a security risk.
- 73) When blowing the Shofar inside, the Baal Tokea should face away from the kehilla. We are investigating whether there might be a benefit to arranging a COVID antigen virus test for the Baalei Tokea (followed by self-isolation) a few days ahead of blowing the shofar. Similar consideration might be given to other officiants for Yamim Noraim services.
- 74) Although normally the peak time for Rosh Hashanah is the morning, if government guidance at the time allows, communities might consider running alternative programming (e.g. explanatory) in the afternoon and evening as well as inviting people to come to Mincha to hear the Shofar.

Yom Kippur

- 75) To allow for sequential Kol Nidrei services to take place and for maximum participation, an early Kol Nidrei (to be concluded before Yom Kippur commences) could be held from plag hamincha and livestreamed.
- 76) A Baal Tefillah can lead the Kol Nidrei prayer itself and the Selichot of Kol Nidrei more than once, but he may not repeat the Birchot Keriyat Shema or Silent Amidah.
- 77) Yizkor can also be held several times over the course of the day (including before Mincha or Neila) and can also be held online ahead of Yom Kippur.

- 78) Neila must happen at a particular time and communities should explore the option of holding simultaneous services.
- 79) Following Neila, Havdalah and a shofar blast could be livestreamed once the Fast goes out. Alternatively, the community could arrange for a second shofar blowing to be shown online.

Other suggestions for the Yamim Noraim

- 80) In order to provide opportunities for as many members as possible to attend a service, communities should explore alternative venues, noting that Rosh Hashanah falls over a weekend.
- 81) For many members, the melodies of the Yamim Noraim services are a highlight. To ensure that this aspect is not lost this year, communities might ask their regular chazzan to record highlights from the Yamim Noraim services to allow people to listen at home ahead of Yom Tov. A full set of recording of the Yamim Noraim services can also be found on the US website.
- 82) Communities should hold educational programmes online in the weeks and days before Rosh Hashanah and during the Aseret Yamei Teshuva
- 83) They might also wish to livestream some or all of their Selichot services.
- 84) Erev and post Yomtov programmes could include
 - a) Zoom get together just before Rosh Hashana comes in, featuring popular tunes from the liturgy.
 - b) Kol Nidrei Zoomed from shul before the Fast begins (see above)
 - c) Yizkor online ahead of Yom Kippur
 - d) At the end of Neila, Havdalah and a Shofar blast can be shown on Zoom
- 85) Materials could be produced to support prayer at home such as:
 - a) Page numbers of key prayers in Routledge, ArtScroll & Koren
 - b) Printed short prayers for those who are less committed
 - c) Opportunities to loan machzorim from the shul or buy machzorim at discounted prices
- 86) Communities might wish to share with members the full set of recordings on of the Yamim Noraim services on the US website
- 87) Members of the Rabbinic team might call all those not attending shul to wish them Good YomTov
- 88) Deliveries to the homes of those unable to attend could be:
 - a) Small food gift e.g. challahs, honey and apple, and card
 - b) Gift for children and youth
 - c) Cards produced by children for the elderly and housebound.
 - d) Prayer guides (see above)

E. Planning for Broader Provision

- 90) Our communities are far more than places to pray. Together we learn, socialise, celebrate and mourn. Our buildings are intergenerational spaces, ordinarily filled with a diverse range of programmes, meetings and events. Since we have been in lockdown, much of this activity has migrated online with considerable success.
- 91) Whilst some members will return to our buildings for services as soon as they are open, others will be unable to attend or will not wish to return yet. As a result, it is essential that the online provision remains strong and that those that cannot or are not ready to return do not feel excluded.

Over the last few months, we have learned that many online activities have attracted higher attendance and engagement than their 'real-life' counterparts, perhaps due to their immediacy and ease of access. Communities should therefore aim to take a holistic view on their provision integrating the physical and the virtual where possible

Communities need not feel that they need to offer a wide range of homegrown online programming. Whilst there is tremendous value in maintaining or initiating regular opportunities for members to connect socially with each other, many educational events and programming can be shared across communities.

Suggestions

- 92) All of the suggestions below should be considered in the context of each community's capacity and resource. A risk assessment of every activity must be carried out and logged to ensure that it is COVID-secure. It is important for community expectations to be set appropriately to avoid staff members becoming overwhelmed.
- 93) In-person, socially-distanced activities that might be resumed initially include pastoral meetings with the Rabbi, chavruta learning, small support groups and educational sessions with very limited attendance. It will be necessary to book in for all activities.
- 94) On weekdays, online programming should continue to be promoted. The United Synagogue is soon to launch USTV, an online video on-demand-service that will enable members and people in the wider Jewish community to watch live or catch up on a wide range of online programming. The platform will be available to local communities too in due course.
- 95) Even when services resume in the building, communities should maintain online davening either as livestream from the building or in the format that has been successful over recent weeks
- 96) Communities might explore the use of the telephone and radio to connect with members who do not have internet connectivity or confidence with technology (often the oldest and most vulnerable)
- 97) Keeping up creativity online is likely to become more challenging as lockdown continues. To keep up momentum, communities might ask creative members to brainstorm ideas and run focus groups of members.
- 98) Communities might run a 'skills audit' in order to identify the skills and interests of members, enabling you to ask them to contribute their time.
- 99) We recommend that communities collaborate and share programming ideas. If details of all online events are uploaded to the US Events System, HOs, Rabbis, Rebbetzins and members will be able to search for, view and access online programming across all US communities.

- 100) Communities might also choose to participate in the community buddying programme which brings two (or more) communities together, enabling them to share digital content and welcome each other's members to their events.
- 101) Some outdoor socially distanced activities can now be resumed or introduced such as cycling, walking and jogging in groups of no more than six.
- 102) Similarly, a small shiur of no more than six people in total could be held in a garden assuming that the social distancing were applied and a booking or invitation-only system were implemented.
- 103) On Tisha B'Av, communities might wish to livestream kinnot from shul, supplementing this with online programming, discussions and, where possible, the broadcasting of films.

Children and Youth Online provision

- 104) As children and youth programmes will not resume in our buildings immediately, online provision - both from Tribe centrally and local communities - is essential. Tribe already has a range of online programming. Details are available [here](#).
- 105) Online davening, activities, story time and children's services should continue.
- 106) Communities might consider giving children ownership of some of their own activities and broadcasts, inviting them to produce the shul's YouTube channel, for example

F. Appendices

1. CST Guidance on Outdoor Services: [click here](#)
2. Protective Equipment Policy: [click here](#)
3. Cleaning United Synagogue settings to reduce risk from coronavirus: [click here](#)
4. Abbreviated Yamim Noraim Services (see below)
5. Change log (see below)

ABBREVIATED YAMIM NORAIM SERVICES

The following is a guide to which parts of the services may be omitted on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to enable additional services to take place because of the limitation of numbers at a service due to social distancing. Page references are to the Koren Sacks Minhag Anglia Mahzor.

The guide is intended to be permissive, not prescriptive. Rabbonim may wish to adapt what is here depending according to the needs of their own communities.

ROSH HASHANAH

Commences Friday evening 18 September. Candle lighting time 6.54 pm. Plag Hamincha 5.51 pm. Depending on local requirements, Mincha can either precede Maariv, as on a regular Shabbat and Yom Tov, or as a stand-alone service from 1.25 pm

The Beth Din have ruled that, **if necessary, a chazzan can act more than once for the repetition of the Amida for Shacharit, Musaf and Mincha and Neila**

(a) **Maariv.**

In theory, it should be possible to run two Maariv services: one at 5.51 pm and a second at 7.00 pm. However, anyone who has prayed at the first service must be aware that they have brought-in Shabbat and Yom Tov early.

The Maariv service doesn't need to last more than 30 minutes

There is no need to omit anything. The chazzan for the first Maariv cannot be the chazzan for the second Maariv.

(b) **Shacharit.** Latest Shma (Gra) 9.48 am. Latest Amida (Gra) 10.50 am

Congregants should be advised that *Berachot* and *Pesukei Dezimra* should be said at home and individuals should complete *Pesukei Dezimra* till after *Yishtabach*. The shul service will begin at *HaMelech*. (It is envisaged that an informal group will gather 15 minutes beforehand for *Rabbi Yishmoel*, *Kaddish Derabanan*, and *Pesukei Dezimra*.)

It should be possible to run a 90-minute service for shacharit, leining and shofar (30 notes, 2nd day)

First service 8.00 am. Second service 9.45/10.00 am. Times to reflect local requirements for exiting and cleaning.

The following can be omitted:

Day 1

Birchot Kriat Shema

P. 349. After ... עולם באוצר החיים... omit *piyut* and continue יודך p. 361

P. 369. Omit *piyut* אהל כבודו

P. 371. Resume with ישרורו והחיות

Repetition of the Amida

P. 405 -407 as usual. Omit *piyut* חיל את on p.409, and continue with זכרנו לחיים, 411.

Omit *piyut* תעלת זו, and resume with מי כמוך אב הרחמים, p.413.

P. 415. Omit *piyut* חוג אבן and continue with ימלך p. 417 including the *piyut* אתה הוא אלקינו

P. 419 *piyut* is omitted anyway on Shabbat. Omit *piyut* את שרה p. 425 and succeeding *piyutim*. Resume p. 441 with *piyut* הכל יכתירו. Service now continues as

usual. *Kaddish Titkabal*. שיר של יום and קדיש יתום. *Kriat Hatorah*. Shuls that normally make a *mi shbrch* between aliyot should omit them. Sermon as appropriate. עלינו, יתום, קדיש

Day 2

Birchot Kriat Shema

P. 349. After ... באוצר החיים. omit *piyut* and continue המאיר לארץ p. 359

P. 369. Omit *piyut* אהל כבוד

P. 371. Resume with ישוררו והחיות

Repetition of the Amida

P. 657-661 as usual. Omit *piyut* צרופה אמרתך and continue with לחיים p. 663.

Omit *piyut* פעלך and resume with כמוך p. 667. Omit *piyut* במלאכות and continue with ימלך p. 671 including the *piyut* הוא אלקינו. This is followed by וכן לך תעלה. שיר של יום. *Kaddish Titkabal*. אבינו מלכנו. קדישה and קדיש יתום. *Kriat Hatorah*. Shuls that normally make a *mi shbrch* between aliyot should omit them. Sermon as appropriate, preferably before Shofar. The preliminary prayers before Shofar, p. 749-751 should be omitted. ברכות and 30 notes. עלינו, יתום, קדיש

(c) Musaf. Zman Minchah Gedolah 1.25 pm

It should be possible to run a 60 minute service of Shofar (2nd day) and Musaf

First service at 11.30 pm. Second service 12.45 pm. Depending on local circumstances *Kriat Hatorah* can be added.

Day 1

Sermon at beginning or end, as appropriate. Even if *Kriat Hatorah* is not taking place, *Ashrei*, p. 501, is said.

P. 511 הנני omitted.

Repetition of the Amida

p.551 as usual. Omit *piyut* מאז אפד p. 553. Resume p.555 as usual. Omit *piyut* במכון p. 557 and resume with כמוך at the bottom of that page, continuing with ימלך and ואתה קדוש at the top of p. 561 then straight to ותנה תקף p. 565. The service now continues uninterrupted. *Duchaning* (with social distancing). ק"ת. Usual concluding parts.

Day 2

Sermon at beginning before Shofar, or end, as appropriate. The preliminary prayers before Shofar, p. 749-751 should be omitted. ברכות and 30 notes. Even if *Kriat Hatorah* is not taking place, *Ashrei*, p. 755, is said.

P. 759 הנני omitted.

Repetition of the Amida

p. 797 as usual, including *piyut* הכל יכתירו p. 799. Continue with ותנה תקף p. 801. The service now continues uninterrupted. *Duchaning* (with social distancing). ק"ת. Usual concluding parts.

(d) Mincha

It should be possible to run a 30-minute service of Day 1: *Kriat Hatorah* and Amida, and Day 2: Shofar and Amida

Mincha services can take place after 1.25 pm

(e) Maariv for 2nd night.

Maariv services for 2nd night can take place from Plag Hamincha, 5.48 pm. ותודיענו is said but הבהלה with a candle cannot be said before Shabbat ends at 7.53 pm.

YOM KIPPUR

Fast begins Sunday evening, 27th September, 6.33 pm.

Plag Hamincha 5.34 pm

A stand-alone Kol Nidrei service can take place before the fast and be live-streamed.

The service would comprise of a sermon and Kol Nidrei 3 times etc. omitting שהחיינו and the people would not bring in Yom Tov and travel home. This would be for a community that wanted to provide something of a "Kol Nidrei experience" for those who come 3 times a year but the local logistics do not allow for additional parallel services

(a) Kol Nidrei.

It should be possible to run the service in 60 minutes, allowing for a 6.45 pm and an 8.00 pm service.

If necessary, in order to save time, the Chazan only needs to say Kol Nidrei once.

Maariv p. 63, as usual.

Selichot.

Depending on local circumstances a community may decide to chant fewer selichot participatively, or say more as in a weekday selichot service. The 13 Middot should be said only once, p. 135. From הרחמים והסליחות, bottom of p. 163 omit 165-171 and continue with אבינו מלכנו p. 171.

(b) Shacharit Latest Shma (Gra) 9.54 am. Latest Amida (Gra) 10.53 am

As on Rosh Hashanah, Congregants should be advised that *Berachot* and *Pesukei Dezimra* should be said at home and individuals should complete *Pesukei Dezimra* till after *Yishtabach*. The shul service will begin at *HaMelech*. (It is envisaged that an informal group will gather 15 minutes beforehand for *Rabbi Yishmoel*, *Kaddish Derabanan*, and *Pesukei Dezimra*.) It should be possible to run a 90-minute service for shacharit, leining.

First service 8.00 am. Second service 9.45 am

Birchot Kriat Shema

P. 541. After ... באוצר החיים... omit *piyut* and continue המאיר לארץ p. 547

P. 557. Omit *piyut* שם כבוד מלכותן

P. 561. Resume with ישוררו והחיות

Repetition of the Amida

P. 601-605 as usual. Omit *piyut* עשור on p. 607, and continue with לחיים זכרנו, 609 Omit *piyut* נפש on p.611, and continue with הרחמים מי כמוך אב הרחמים p.615. omit *piyut* p. 617, אחדת יום זה בשנה, Continue ימלך bottom p. 617 and *piyut* following page אתה הוא אלקינו. Move to key *piyut* p. 655 והאמונה. Continue uninterrupted for the rest of Amida. אבינו מלכנו. Kaddish *Titkabal*. קדיש יתום and שיר של יום. *Kriat Hatorah*. Shuls that normally make a שברך מי between aliyot should omit them. Sermon as appropriate.

(c) Yizkor

Although some will have held real or virtual Yizkor services before Yom Kippur, the Yizkor service on Yom Kippur itself is the most essential one of the year. The core of the Yizkor is the section of personal memorial prayers and the *El Molei Rachamim* for the list of names. Additional readings and communal Memorial Prayers can be omitted, according to local needs. The Yizkor service need not necessarily take place before Musaf. It can stand alone, be appended to Shacharit or precede a Mincha or Neilah service.

(d) Musaf

The Musaf service can begin with *Kriat Hatorah* and Yizkor, if appropriate. Even if *Kriat Hatorah* is not taking place, Ashrei, p. 765, is said.

p. 769. הנוני is omitted

Repetition of the Amida

P. 801 as usual. Omit *piyut* גבעות שתילי, p. 805 and resume with זכרנו לחיים at the bottom of the page. Continue till ומצמיח ישועה. Omit *piyut* הוחס יום מימים, p. 807 and resume מי יום כמורך אב הרחמים p. 813. Jump to תוקף ס p. 843. Continue to end p. 857. Omit *piyut* וכל מאמינים, p. 859. Resume תשגב לבדך, p. 863. Continue until after the עבודה, end p. 907. Jump to bottom p. 927, אל נא תשת עלינו חטאת. Continue with אזכרה אלה and continue, uninterrupted until the end of the repetition of the Amida.

(e) Mincha

There is not much to omit in Mincha in the repetition of the Amida, other than the *piyut*, א-ל נא רפא נא, p. 1057, which many communities omit anyway. It is not the custom in the United Synagogue to say מלכנו אבינו at Mincha. The service takes about an hour. Communities can assess whether to hold more than one Mincha service with possibly the addition of Yizkor

(f) Neilah

It is very difficult to fit in an extra Neilah service. Whilst it is possible to hold the service before sunset – and indeed, this is the practice in some Yeshivot in Israel – it would be very confusing for the community to conclude the service with the שמות, if the fast was not nearly over. However, as the custom in the United Synagogue is to blow the Shofar after Maariv, it is possible to livestream Maariv and Shofar after the fast has ended.

Dayan Ivan Binstock

Change log

Version 1 reference	Version 2 reference	Changes
Aims	Aims	Additional paragraphs emphasising our cautious approach, the fact that our communities offer far more than religious services and highlighting the ongoing need for broad provision online and by other means. Maintaining social interaction is key
Structure	Structure	Note the addition of the appendix
Section B: Introduction	B: Introduction	Opening paragraph pointing out that all requirements have been introduced to minimise risk but that no sites can be confirmed as Covid free. This message should be conveyed to members.
Section B	Policy: Introduction	Additional paragraphs emphasising that all communities and all members need to comply with these requirements, pulling out key principles of managing the site and emphasising that the policy on 2m and face covering remains
No ref	B: 1	Paragraph pointing out that all requirements have been introduced to minimise risk but that no sites can be confirmed as Covid free. This message should be conveyed to members.
No ref	B: 2	Highlighting that policy points are mandatory
No ref	B: 3	Paragraph emphasising that policy on 2m and face covering remains
No ref	B: 4	Key principles of managing numbers on site
No ref	B: 5	More detail on property documents as these have not been shared with community
No ref	B: 6	Additional point about importance of referring to CST
No ref	B: 10	Additional point about those who live in the same household as people who are shielding
No ref	B: 13	Additional point about travelling to shul
B: 7	B: 14, 15 and 16	Information on the attendance of children and provision for them has been moved its own section and has been revised.
B: 8	B: 17	Additional information on reviewing evacuation procedure due to reconfiguration of shul
B: 9	B: 18	Additional comments about gangway
B: 10	B; 19	Revised wording about attendees from the same household
B: 12	B: 21	Revised wording about the booking system
B: 13	B: 22	Revised wording on keypads
B: 16	No ref	Information on taking temperatures of attendees has been removed as this is not a US requirement
B: 17	B: 25	Revised wording on minyanim in other spaces
No ref	B: 26	Additional information on shivas
B:19	B: 28	Revised wording on handwashing
B: 20	B: 29	Revised wording on face coverings

B: 20	B: 30	Revised wording on ventilation, air conditioning and fans
B: 22	B: 32	Revising wording on service leaders
B; 25	B: 33	Updated wording on singing
B: 24	B: 35	Revised wording on siddurim and chumashim
No ref	B: 36	Additional note about cloakrooms and personal belongings
No ref	B: 37	New information on tzedaka boxes
No ref	B: 39	Information on use of toilets
No ref	B: 40	Advice if confirmed case of coronavirus
B: 28	B: 42	Revised wording on outdoor minyanim on site
B: 29	B: 43	Revised wording on having a named individual responsible for implementing these guidelines
No ref	B: 47	Suggestion of a community behaviour agreement
C: 36-42	C: 51-55	Revised wording on leyning
No ref	C: 57	Note on kiddush on Friday night and havdalah
No ref	C: 59	Note that currently shofar not permitted
No ref	D: 63	Reminder to read our guidance alongside the CST Rosh Hashanah guidance
D: 53	D: 72	Revised wording on shofar blowing
E: 65	E: 91	Additional wording, emphasising the need for maintaining a broad offering but doing so in a sustainable way
No ref	E: 93	Suggestion of in-person group activities that could be introduced initially
E: 66	E: 94	Information on USTV included
No Ref	Appendix	Addition of appendix including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CST guidance on outdoor services • PPE policy • Cleaning advice • Guidance on abbreviated YN services • Change log