



FREE GUIDE · DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS

Church Digital Health Check – Self- Assessment

A scored self-assessment tool to evaluate your church's digital maturity across website, social media and data.

We try hard to get everything here right, and every guide and template shows when it was last reviewed. But they are free, they are general and things change: the law, prices and the tools themselves. We cannot guarantee they are complete, current or right for your church, so check anything you rely on and take professional advice where a decision matters.

Church Digital Health Check – Self-Assessment

Who this is for: the church council or leadership team working out, together, where the church stands on digital before deciding what to tackle first.

Introduction

This self-assessment is designed to give your church an honest picture of where you stand with digital. It is not a test. There are no wrong answers, and most churches will find they are strong in some areas and weaker in others. That is completely normal.

How to use this tool:

1. Work through it together as a church council or leadership team - it works best as a group conversation
2. For each question, agree on a score from 0 to 3
3. Be honest. The value is in identifying what needs attention, not in getting a high score
4. Add up your scores at the end and read the guidance for your band
5. Choose your top 3 priorities to work on

Allow about 45 minutes for a group discussion, or 20 minutes if completing it individually.

Scoring Guide

For each question, score your church as follows:

Score	Level	What It Means
0	Not started	We have not done this at all, or we are not aware of it
1	Beginning	We have started thinking about this or made initial steps
2	Developing	We are doing this but it could be more consistent or thorough
3	Established	We are doing this well and it is part of how we operate

Category 1: Website

Your church website is often the first point of contact for visitors, newcomers and anyone searching online. It does not need to be fancy, but it does need to work.

#	Question	0	1	2	3
1.1	We have a live website that clearly shows service times, location (with map or postcode) and contact details on the homepage or within one click	[]	[]	[]	[]
1.2	Our website is mobile-friendly (easy to read and navigate on a phone)	[]	[]	[]	[]
1.3	Our website content has been reviewed and updated within the last 3 months	[]	[]	[]	[]
1.4	Someone who wants to give to the church can find out how within a minute, on a phone (a giving page, a QR code or bank details online), without having to ask	[]	[]	[]	[]

Category 1 total: _____ / 12

Notes and discussion points

- If you do not have a website, your denominational directory page (e.g. A Church Near You for CofE, the Church Finder for Methodist) or a simple Google Business Profile is a good starting point
- Test your website on your phone right now – if the text is tiny or buttons are hard to tap, it is not mobile-friendly
- Outdated content (last year's Christmas services, a welcome from a previous minister) actively puts people off
- If the only way to give is the plate, a visitor with no cash cannot give at all. A giving page on the website and a QR code on the noticeboard are the two cheapest fixes, and the same details belong on the funeral and wedding pages, where people most often want to give and least want to ask

Category 2: Social Media

Social media is where your community already spends time. You do not need to be on every platform, but you should be intentional about the ones you use.

#	Question	0	1	2	3
2.1	We have an active social media presence on at least one platform (Facebook, Instagram, X or other)	[]	[]	[]	[]
2.2	We post two or more times a week with relevant, engaging content (not just service times). Score 2 if at least once a week.	[]	[]	[]	[]
2.3	We respond to comments and messages within 24 hours	[]	[]	[]	[]

#	Question	0	1	2	3
2.4	More than one person has access to our social media accounts (so it does not depend on one volunteer)	[	[	[	[
		]	]	]	]

Category 2 total: _____ / 12

Notes and discussion points

- Facebook remains the most relevant platform for most UK churches, especially for reaching over-40s and community groups
- Quality matters more than quantity – one good post a week is better than daily posts that nobody engages with
- If only one person has the password, what happens when they go on holiday or step down?

Category 3: Communications

How you communicate with your congregation and community – week to week, for events and in emergencies.

#	Question	0	1	2	3
3.1	We have a way to contact our congregation digitally (email list, WhatsApp group or similar) beyond Sunday announcements	[	[	[	[
		]	]	]	]
3.2	We send a regular digital newsletter or update (weekly or monthly)	[	[	[	[
		]	]	]	]
3.3	We can reach our congregation quickly in an emergency (e.g. a cancelled service due to weather)	[	[	[	[
		]	]	]	]
3.4	Our external communications (to the wider community, not just regular members) are active and intentional	[	[	[	[
		]	]	]	]

Category 3 total: _____ / 12

Notes and discussion points

- If your only way to share news is the Sunday notice sheet, you are missing everyone who is not in the building that week
- WhatsApp groups work brilliantly for quick communication but are not a substitute for a proper mailing list with consent
- Think about the person who visited once, went home and wanted to find out more – can they?

Category 4: Data and Compliance

Handling personal data responsibly is a legal requirement and a matter of trust. This covers GDPR, data security and good record-keeping.

#	Question	0	1	2	3
4.1	We have a written privacy notice and it is available on our website or on request	[]	[]	[]	[]
4.2	We have proper consent for everyone on our mailing lists and we make it easy to unsubscribe	[]	[]	[]	[]
4.3	Personal data and the church's accounts are protected: files password-protected or locked away, access limited to those who need it, and two-factor authentication on for the church email, the website admin and every social media account	[]	[]	[]	[]
4.4	We are registered with the ICO and understand our basic GDPR obligations	[]	[]	[]	[]

Category 4 total: _____ / 12

Notes and discussion points

- If you are unsure about any of these, our Church GDPR Checklist guide covers each area in detail
- "We've always done it this way" is not a lawful basis for processing personal data
- ICO registration costs **£52 a year** for most churches (**£47 if you pay by direct debit**), and for most churches it is a legal requirement. A church that is a charity pays the **£52 tier** whatever its size. Some small churches are exempt: the not-for-profit exemption covers processing only for membership and keeping in touch with regular contacts, and CCTV or a livestream usually takes you out of it. Do the ICO's two-minute self-assessment rather than assume either way. My Church GDPR Checklist explains how the tiers work (*fees checked 3 September 2026 - the ICO reviews them periodically*)
- For the two-factor part of 4.3, start with the church email: whoever controls that mailbox can reset every other password, so it is the account to protect first. At least two named people should be able to get into each account, so nothing is lost when a volunteer moves on. Our Church Social Media Starter Checklist has a day-one list for the rest

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. UK GDPR and the ICO fee are UK-wide, so score 4.3 and 4.4 the same wherever you are. Charity regulation is not: the Charity Commission covers England and Wales only, every Scottish church charity is registered with OSCR, which publishes trustee names on its Register from 9 March 2026, and in Northern Ireland registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is compulsory but is being rolled out in stages. Our Church GDPR Checklist has the detail.

Category 5: Accessibility and Inclusion

Digital should make your church more accessible, not less. This is about making sure everyone can engage with your online presence, regardless of ability, age or confidence with technology.

#	Question	0	1	2	3
5.1	Our website and social media content is readable (clear fonts, good contrast, plain language, not too cluttered)	[]	[]	[]	[]
5.2	We add alt text or descriptions to images we post online (so screen readers can describe them to visually impaired users)	[]	[]	[]	[]
5.3	We provide non-digital alternatives for people who are not online (printed notices, phone calls, personal contact)	[]	[]	[]	[]
5.4	We actively consider people with disabilities, older adults and those with limited internet access when planning digital activities	[]	[]	[]	[]

Category 5 total: _____ / 12

Notes and discussion points

- Accessibility is not a nice-to-have – it is part of our calling to welcome everyone
- Alt text takes 10 seconds per image and makes a real difference for people using screen readers
- Going digital should never mean leaving people behind – always provide an alternative route for those who are not online
- In Wales, if your congregation is bilingual, ask whether your online presence is. The Welsh language standards are aimed at public bodies, not churches, so this is about welcome rather than law

Scoring

Add up your category totals:

Category	Score
1. Website	_____ / 12
2. Social Media	_____ / 12
3. Communications	_____ / 12
4. Data and Compliance	_____ / 12

Category	Score
5. Accessibility and Inclusion	____ / 12
Overall Total	____ / 60

What Your Score Means

0–15: Getting Started

Where you are: Digital is not yet part of how your church operates, and that is OK. Many churches are in this position, especially smaller or rural congregations. The important thing is that you are thinking about it now.

Suggested next steps:

- ☐ Set up a basic web presence (even just a Google Business Profile with service times, address and a phone number)
- ☐ Choose one person to champion digital – they do not need to be an expert, just willing to learn
- ☐ Start a simple email or WhatsApp contact list for your regular congregation
- ☐ Read our AI Starter Guide to see how technology can save you time on everyday tasks

16–30: Building Foundations

Where you are: You have made a start and some things are working. Now it is about being more consistent and filling the gaps. You probably have a website and maybe a Facebook page, but they might not be getting regular attention.

Suggested next steps:

- ☐ Audit your website – is the content current? Does it work on mobile? Can a newcomer find what they need?
- ☐ Create a simple social media plan (even just "post twice a week about what's happening")
- ☐ Review your data handling – do you have a privacy notice? Are your mailing lists consent-based?
- ☐ Identify your biggest gap (the category where you scored lowest) and focus there first

31–45: Developing Well

Where you are: You are doing a lot of things right. Your digital presence is active and mostly working. The opportunity now is to be more strategic and to make sure nothing is falling through the cracks.

Suggested next steps:

- ☐ Look at your lowest-scoring category - this is where focused attention will make the biggest difference
- ☐ Consider accessibility - are you reaching people who find digital difficult?
- ☐ Make sure your digital efforts are sustainable (not dependent on one overworked volunteer)
- ☐ Think about how digital supports your church's mission, not just administration

46-60: Leading the Way

Where you are: Your church is digitally mature and well-organised. You are likely doing things that other churches in your area could learn from.

Suggested next steps:

- ☐ Share what you have learnt with neighbouring churches or through your denomination's regional network (deanery, circuit, district, presbytery or equivalent)
- ☐ Look for innovation - livestreaming, online community building, digital discipleship resources
- ☐ Review regularly - digital changes fast, so keep this assessment in your annual cycle
- ☐ Consider whether you could mentor a church that is just getting started

Our Top 3 Priorities

Based on this assessment, what are the three things your church most needs to work on? Write them here and bring them back to your next church council or leadership team meeting.

Priority 1

What: _____

Why it matters: _____

Who will lead on this: _____

By when: _____

Priority 2

What: _____

Why it matters: _____

Who will lead on this: _____

By when: _____

Priority 3

What: _____

Why it matters: _____

Who will lead on this: _____

By when: _____

What Next?

This health check is a starting point, not a one-off exercise. we recommend revisiting it every 12 months to track your progress and adjust your priorities.

- **Wired for Good** – subscribe to our free newsletter for practical digital tips: churchdigitalstrategy.com
- **Church GDPR Checklist** – if data and compliance was your weakest area, our free GDPR guide walks you through everything step by step
- **AI Starter Guide** – curious about how AI could help your church? My free guide shows you where to begin
- **CDS resources** – guides, tools and support at churchdigitalstrategy.com

If you found this useful, share it with another church leader. Most leadership teams would benefit from spending 45 minutes on this at their next meeting.

Sources

Figures in this guide were checked against the pages below on 3 September 2026. Prices and product names change; the date at the top of the guide says when they were last confirmed. Claims that rest on pages we could not reach at the time of checking are not listed.

- **ICO fee amounts and the direct debit reduction:** [The Data Protection \(Charges and Information\) Regulations 2018, regulation 3](#). Confirms the £52 tier 1 charge, the £5 direct debit reduction and that a charity is tier 1 regardless of size.
- **The fee is compulsory:** [The Data Protection \(Charges and Information\) Regulations 2018, regulation 2](#). Confirms a data controller must pay the charge within the first 21 days of each charge period.
- **Fees current for 2026:** [The Data Protection \(Charges and Information\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2025](#). Confirms the tier amounts of £52, £78 and £3,763 now in force.
- **Church of England directory:** [A Church Near You](#). Confirms free, church-editable listings carrying location, service times and contact details.

- **Methodist directory:** [Church Finder](#). Confirms a searchable directory of Methodist churches and community groups.
- **Google Business Profile:** [Get started with Google Business Profile](#). Confirms the profile is free and shows business hours, website, phone number and location.
- **Alt text and screen readers:** [Images Tutorial](#). Confirms a text alternative is read aloud or rendered as Braille for screen reader users.
- **2FA on email first:** [Setting up 2-Step Verification \(2SV\)](#). Confirms the NCSC's advice to use a second step on email because an inbox can be used to reset passwords on other accounts (checked 5 September 2026).
- **No excepted charities in Scotland:** [Registration: cross-border charity regulation in Scotland](#). Confirms that all organisations representing themselves as charities in Scotland must register with OSCR (checked 5 September 2026).
- **OSCR publishes trustee names:** [More information to appear on the Scottish Charity Register from 9 March 2026](#). Confirms trustees' first and last names appear on the Register entry from 9 March 2026 (checked 5 September 2026).
- **Registration in Northern Ireland:** [Registration](#). Confirms that every charity must register however small and that organisations are invited in stages (checked 5 September 2026).
- **Welsh language standards:** [Public organisations](#). Confirms the standards apply to public organisations and to bodies providing public services in Wales (checked 5 September 2026).