

DAC GUIDANCE NOTE

Sound systems

DAC policy

The DAC considers that installation of sound systems and audio loops in churches can bring great benefits, and will support a sound installation on the basis that it is designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. When introducing a sound system, an audio loop should always be included.

When introducing a new, or replacement system, the Parish should consider the following points:

1. What do you require the sound system to do? Is it to make the spoken word more audible, to amplify musical instruments, to allow group presentations to be clearer or to play CDs to supplement or replace organ music? Please think through the possible need for different arrangements for the occasional offices. Depending on your answers, different systems and solutions need to be thought through.
2. In order to help the PCC with this you will need to consult an expert. The best way of finding a suitable contractor is to ask other churches whom they have used and if they are pleased with the result.
3. Fixed microphones and radio microphones The DAC encourages churches to be as flexible as possible when considering the position of microphones. The best way of achieving this is by using radio microphones. We recognise that most systems will be a mixture of both radio and fixed microphones. When considering fixed microphones please bear in mind the following points - where people read and speak from (including in some churches the intercessor standing in the body of the church). Fixed microphones holders should never be attached to lecterns and pulpits, stalls, or prayer desks. The preferred solution is for a stand to be provided to which a microphone can be attached. If sockets are required again they need to be as unobtrusive as possible.
4. Speakers These can often be obtrusive and unsightly. Nowadays technological improvements mean that speakers can be much smaller than they once were and so the DAC encourages the use of the smallest possible speakers. They come in a variety of colours and it may be possible to paint them so they blend with the surroundings, but care must be taken that they do not detract from the appearance of the church. When placing speakers please bear in mind the following principles:
 - A. Speakers should not interfere with any architectural lines, carvings or sculptures and should never be placed on pillars, the capitals or the springing of the arcade.
 - B. Speakers should not be attached to stonework nor should they be within normal sight lines- they should be placed as high up as possible preferably at wall plate Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Speakers should be fixed by means of screws into the mortar (not the stonework).
 - C. Wiring to speakers should be hidden from sight and follow the mortar lines and be painted the same colour as the stonework/mortar. Control panels.

In the past control panels were placed out of sight often in a vestry. Some companies state that once set up the systems need not be touched, but experience has shown this is not the case, as adjustments will need to be made depending on the size of the congregation, who is speaking and if the system is such that different microphone positions are available. Accordingly, control panels need to be placed within the body of the church so that the person adjusting the system can hear and see what the congregation sees and hears. The exact position needs to be carefully considered, bearing in mind the following points:

1. The balance between security and practicality. Remember electrical equipment can be a target for thieves.
2. The appearance of the cabinet housing? This may need to be designed by the church architect rather than left to the sound engineers. In all cases the architect will need to be consulted. Security Radio and stand microphones, need to be locked away in the vestry after the service. Is there sufficient space in the current vestry safe? Will new cabinets be required? If so a faculty may well be needed for this as well as the sound system.

Applying for a faculty

Please contact the Secretary of the DAC with the following information:

- a. A plan of the church showing the extent and location of the proposed works including all equipment.
- b. Photographs of the proposed location of the new fittings. These photos should have the proposed equipment drawn in to scale so that the impact can be assessed. If drawings are not possible then a cardboard cut out to scale of the speakers should be placed in position so that the DAC can gauge the visual impact of the proposals.
- c. Photographs of the proposed route of cabling should be provided. These should be marked showing the exact cable runs. Attention will need to be given to how openings such as archways and doorways are to be crossed and how cables will run across stonework to speakers.
- d. Details of all wiring, routing, fixing, colour and quality of the cables to be used. → Details of the sockets being used and their location.
- e. Photographs of the speakers and microphones to be installed along with details of size, colour and fixing.
- f. Details of the control panel. Its location, size, colour and design.

Further information

Further guidance can be found at www.churchcare.co.uk