

Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of your organisation's management committee to ensure the health and safety of its staff, volunteers and service users. This responsibility can however be delegated to a member of staff or a volunteer.

Risk management is about taking practical steps to protect people from real harm and suffering. It should be supported by completing a risk assessment and making every person who encounters the risk aware of the actions that should be taken to protect themselves.

The Health & Safety Executive (also known as the HSE) is the United Kingdom's regulator of health and safety activities and is the go-to source for all risk assessment-based information.

Managing Risks

There are five main steps in the process of managing risks:

1. Identify hazards

Consider all of the activities that your organisation engages with and think about what harm might be caused to the following groups:

- The organisation
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Service users

2. Assess the risks

Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed, and what the impact of the harm could be (you may wish to use a scale of 1-5 to help you with both the likelihood and the impact).

If the likelihood is ranked as a 1 and the impact is ranked as a 1 then the risk could be said to be minimal and it should simply be monitored. However, if the likelihood is ranked as a 5 and the impact is ranked as a 5 then the risk could be said to be maximal and the activity should be avoided. To make risks easier to rank, you might wish to multiply the likelihood score by the impact score for an overall risk score.

3. Control the risks

For each risk that you have identified, consider whether there are any actions you could take to reduce the likelihood of it happening. By putting a risk control in place (e.g. using a cloud-based data storage system instead of a pen drive-based storage system), you are protecting your organisation against the impact of the risk (in this case, loss of personal data could see your organisation prosecuted by the Information Commissioner's Office; please see our separate guidance note on GDPR for further details).

4. Record your risk assessment activities

Your organisation should hold a written record of your risk assessment. If someone comes to harm as a result of your activities, and depending on the severity of the harm, you may be asked for a copy of your risk assessment by the relevant authority. A sample template from the HSE can be found by [clicking here](#).

5. Review your controls

You must review the controls you have put in place on a regular basis to make sure they are working and are still fit for purpose. You may use experiences that your organisation has had or is aware of to help you do this.

The HSE has a specific section on its website that discusses risk assessments for voluntary groups. It is keen to point out that it is often blamed for preventing organisations from running events and people from volunteering; instead, it states that voluntary organisations taking a sensible, proportionate approach is the key to making sure things go smoothly and safely, whilst avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy. Further information on this can be found by [clicking here](#).

The HSE also has a section of its website dedicated to answering some health and safety-related questions which can be found by [clicking here](#).

Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action

We are funded by the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire's Health and Social Care Partnership to support third sector organisations who are delivering a service within Aberdeenshire in the following ways:

- Development: Further information on any of the subjects within this document is available from your local Development Officer. To find out how to contact the relevant person, please visit our website by [clicking here](#).
- Funding Search: Our dedicated Funding Officer regularly updates our funding webpage with information to help fund your group. You can find out more by [clicking here](#).
- Office Services: We support organisations by offering services such as independent examination of accounts, payroll provision and PVG services. Further details can be found by [clicking here](#).
- Member Services: You can join us and become a member: Information can be found by [clicking here](#).

We are Aberdeenshire's Third Sector Interface



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