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# RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

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CHURCH IN WALES

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## **Risk Assessment and Management**

Risk is a part of life in the Church in Wales. Risk assessments help identify whether adequate precautions are in place to protect against potential harm and risk management is the ongoing process of anticipating hazards and developing a plan to mitigate the threat.

Our first concern must always be to protect those who are vulnerable – children, adults at risk and those vulnerable in the context of the church. Activities and environments always carry a risk, which we have to assess and manage as well as possible. By managing risk effectively, we will not only be protecting the vulnerable but also our workers, volunteers, and our churches.

### **What is a risk assessment?**

A Risk Assessment is looking at an activity and/or environment to identify potential hazards (something that could cause harm) and risks (the likelihood and seriousness of the potential harm) for vulnerable individuals and others and then thinking about what will need to be put in place to eliminate or reduce the identified risks.

Hazards are the things in the environment that can cause harm e.g., trailing electrical wires, dangerous items that are accessible to small fingers, badly stacked chairs, or parts of an activity, especially off-site, such as crossing roads, transport arrangements or play equipment. Hazards also can be associated with people or behaviour.

After identifying relevant hazards in a situation or activity, the risk assessment then identifies how likely it is that someone will be harmed and, if that happens, how serious the harm might be. Some things will be a higher risk than others and it's the high risks identified that must be addressed first as these have the potential to cause the greatest harm. As well as physical harm to an individual, risk assessments must consider emotional harm and harm to the institution, including reputational harm.

### **When will we need to do a risk assessment?**

A risk assessment should be carried out for all activities which involve vulnerable groups before they take place. If an activity is regular, it should be risk assessed at the outset and then at regular intervals to ensure continued safety (at least annually). For one-off activities a risk assessment should be carried out well in advance. If the activity is to take place off-site, part of the assessment should be to visit the venue so that all potential hazards both on the journey and at the venue can be identified effectively.

Risk assessments should be completed for every relevant event or activity and kept on file within the church and Mission/Ministry Area. Risk assessments should be available to everyone involved in the event or activity and provided for audit purposes. Risk assessments should be kept under continuous review and updated as necessary when circumstances change, or new information is obtained that has potential to change the level of risk.

As well as events and activities, risk assessments can be used to identify the level of risk presented by an individual, e.g., an offender attending church under a safeguarding agreement.

## **Risk Assessment Process**

There are five questions you will need to address in order to identify the hazards and assess the risks of an activity or event or associated with a person that will then enable you to identify the actions needed in order to manage the risk according to the level of risk identified.

**1. What are the potential hazards?**

For example: crossing roads, open water, vehicles (including as passengers), challenging behavior, specific activities (such as cooking or participating in sports or games).

**2. What harm might occur**

What might happen as a result of the hazard?

**3. Who will be in attendance and may be at risk of harm?**

There is no need to list individuals by name – just think about the groups of children or adults at risk and staff who are taking part in the activity (including those with disabilities or special needs).

**4. What mitigating factors help to reduce the risk?**

What factors make the risk less likely or less serious? For example, it might be necessary to cross a road but there is a nearby pedestrian crossing that could be used.

**5. What is the level of risk?**

For each group, what is the likelihood and potential seriousness of the harm that may occur?

**6. What actions have been taken to help reduce the risk?**

Have precautions been taken against the risks created by the identified hazards listed? For example, have the following been provided: adequate information, instruction or training, adequate systems, or procedures and policies including the Safeguarding Policy? Can the risk be eliminated? If not, have you reduced the risk as far as reasonably practicable? Are the controls achievable and sustainable? Do the precautions represent good practice?

**7. What further action can be taken to reduce or to minimize the risk?**

What more could reasonably be done for those risks which are found to be inadequately controlled? There will be a need to give priority to those risks which affect significant numbers of people and/or could result in serious harm.

## Estimating the level of risk

The assessment of risk includes two elements: the likelihood of the risk and the potential impact of the risk.

The likelihood of the risk is measured by five categories:

1. Very unlikely or improbable
2. Unlikely
3. Possible
4. Likely
5. Very likely or certain

The impact of the risk also is measured by five categories:

1. Negligible or Trivial
2. Minor or Acceptable
3. Moderate
4. Significant or Substantial
5. Severe or Intolerable

The action taken in response to a risk assessed at each of the five impact categories is based on the following table.

<b>Negligible or Trivial</b>	No action required – no recording necessary.
<b>Minor or Acceptable</b>	No action required, however, monitoring and recording is required to ensure that controls are maintained.
<b>Moderate</b>	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk. If a risk is associated with harmful consequences, further risk assessment will be necessary.
<b>Significant or Substantial</b>	The activity should not commence or continue until the risk has been reduced or removed
<b>Severe or Intolerable</b>	The activity should not commence or continue until the risk has been reduced substantially or removed

However, it is important to consider both the likelihood and impact of the risk before deciding on the seriousness of the risk and creating a risk management plan. The following risk matrix identifies how consideration of the combination of likelihood and impact of a risk can help identify one of five risk seriousness types or levels:

1. Low
2. Low Medium
3. Medium
4. Medium High
5. High

Risk Matrix (Likelihood x Impact)

		Impact				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood	Very Likely	LOW MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	Likely	LOW	LOW MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM HIGH	HIGH
	Possible	LOW	LOW MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM HIGH	MEDIUM HIGH
	Unlikely	LOW	LOW MEDIUM	LOW MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM HIGH
	Very Unlikely	LOW	LOW	LOW MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

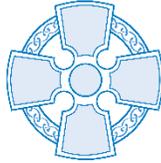
### Dynamic Risk Assessment

A dynamic risk assessment is a continuous process of analysing an environment to identify hazards and remove or mitigate risk while completing a task. Dynamic risk assessments do not replace formal written risk assessments but provide a complementary process to identify hazards that could not be anticipated when the initial risk assessment was undertaken or that change or evolve during the activity. Dynamic risk assessments provide a flexible tool for adapting to changing environments and developing threat. Immediate action can be taken to eliminate or reduce the threat identified by the dynamic risk assessment and the formal written risk assessment can be updated as necessary to reflect the new information.

**Church in Wales Risk Assessment Template**



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**RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

Risk Assessment for: .....

Church and Ministry/Mission Area: .....

Completed by: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

<b>HAZARD</b>	<b>What could happen?</b>	<b>Who could be hurt?</b>	<b>Mitigating Factors</b>	<b>Level of Risk (likelihood vs impact)</b>	<b>Action already taken to minimise risk</b>	<b>Additional action needed to manage the risk<sup>1</sup></b>

Review Date: .....

<sup>1</sup> it is important to identify who will take the action to minimize the risk and the date by when the action will be completed and to note when done