

WARA POLICY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

There are legal requirements as well as ethical and humanitarian reasons for having a policy on health and safety. Both within and outwith the Community Centre we carry out a number of activities and all need to be considered in the light of possible risks to the health and safety of those involved. Failing to carry out such assessments of risk can have consequences such as Improvement and Prohibition Notices, Prosecution, Civil Claims for damages, poor morale and adverse publicity.

Risk assessment is a structured, pro-active process used to determine the risks to employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors who are present in our work or activity/event environment. Risk assessment may be defined as the logical identification of hazards, the judgement of risks arising from those hazards and suggestions about how the risks may be controlled.

A hazard is anything that has the ability to cause harm. A hazard need not be high risk, but we need to have in place the following:

- Workplace precautions
- Safe systems of work
- Properly trained and competent staff and volunteers
- Effective contingency plans.

By systematically identifying hazards to health and safety and making an objective judgement of the likelihood of harm arising from any such hazards, we can make suggestions about how to avoid or mitigate the risk.

Following risk assessment and putting into place such measures as are necessary, we will continue with active monitoring, further assessment and reactive monitoring.

We will make our committee members, volunteers and centre hirers/users aware of our policy.

WARA January 2004

RISK ASSESSMENT

We all carry out risk assessment without necessarily aware of it. Before standing or stepping into a road, we ensure that it is safe to do so and we certainly would not allow a child to step into a road without assessing the risk to safety. In the latter case, we consider those who are not able or in a position to assess risk for themselves.

We must keep an open mind in assessing risk. What is not seen as a risk to us may well be a hazard to more vulnerable people. We need to use all five of our senses – sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, although there are times when tasting could prove problematic! We must think of the context considering young, old, disabled, pregnant or otherwise vulnerable groups.

The following are steps involved in Risk Assessment:

- Identify significant hazards
- Consider them in context – severity, those affected, probability
- Evaluate existing controls
- Evaluate the risk
- Recommend further controls if needed and develop an action plan.

Evaluation of risk involves:

- Probability – how likely is it?
- Severity – how bad is the worst outcome?
- Numbers exposed – how many?
- Frequency – how often?

Issues to consider include inappropriate behaviour, misuse of drugs or alcohol, child protection, wet floors, electrical equipment, hygiene, vermin, infestation, reduced efficiency, increased risk of injury or ill health, stress, poor morale, fire or blocked exits, sharp edges, corners, equipment, insurance cover, security.

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