

**Risk Assessment Guidance**

***Safeguarding Risk Assessments***

**Risk Assessments can be defined as the systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.**

**In the content of safeguarding within grassroots football this means reducing risks that people pose to others and those risks to which people are exposed, on behalf of children and adults at risk, who may not see or want to see that they are at risk.**

***Why bother with a Risk Assessment?***

Planning an event can be time-consuming and challenging when much of the work needs to be carried out by volunteers. Taking shortcuts with the safeguarding risk assessment may seem like a tempting option. However, there are significant benefits to completing the risk assessment thoroughly.

***Improved Safeguarding Practice***

Completing thorough safeguarding risk assessments will encourage staff and volunteers to take a holistic view of events and use their professional judgement, knowledge, and experience to safeguard children and vulnerable adults effectively.

Staff and volunteers will develop their awareness of the risks to children and adults at risk.

***Embedding Safeguarding within the Culture***

Where effective safeguarding risk assessments are the norm, safeguarding awareness becomes naturally embedded across all areas of work.

Completing and following thorough on the actions identified in a safeguarding risk assessment will help the event to run smoothly and will demonstrate to parents and others that your club is a responsible organisation where participants are treated with respect and care.

Participants will be able to enjoy football in an environment where they feel safe.

***Event Types***

As someone with safeguarding responsibilities you are responsible for risk assessing all kinds of events involving young people and adults at risk within your club (matches/tournaments/festivals/presentation event)

Below are examples of a few possible events that your club may host.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Face to Face | Virtual |
| External events at venues where U18’s will be present | E-Sports hosted by a club |
| Wildcats events | Online disciplinary hearings where U18’s are involved |
| CPD events for youth coaches | County FA/Club online meetings with U18’s involved |
| Disability Tournaments |  |

***Remember***

No event can be entirely safe. If there was a safeguarding incident at your event you must be able to say that everything that could be put in place was put in place.

***The Risk Assessment Template***

***Section 1***

***Section 1a General Information, Policies and Consent***

The initial area of the risk assessment template gives information about the event, persons responsible and emergency procedures. It is important that every area of this information is completed. Failure to do so could leave a person at risk as information is not easily available.

***Risk Assessment Distribution List***

The first section to complete is the distribution list. This must include all adults who will be involved in the planning of the event and who will be running the event on the day. It must also include anyone who needs to approve the safeguarding risk assessment.

***Up to Date Information***

Check that contact details are up to date and ensure that they are re-checked before the event goes ahead.

***Accuracy***

Double check that mobile numbers and email addresses have been entered accurately and be precise when entering location data.

***Section 1B – Policy Checklist***

Within the risk assessment document there is an area which identifies any policies that will be followed prior to and during the event. If a policy is noted here, it is important that it is attached/saved within the risk assessment.

***Version Control***

Before adding any policy, check that it is the current version and is applicable to the event. Use the Yes/No option in the template to identify which documents or policies are used with the risk assessment.

***Attachments***

Any documents referred to in this section should also be attached/saved with the risk assessment. This includes documents such as parents and carers permission forms and registration forms with participants’ needs.

***Data Protection***

The documents containing personal details should be destroyed in accordance with data protection legislation after the required time, but a blank copy of any document should be kept with the risk assessment to ensure a reference is available if another similar event takes place in the future.

***1c Consent***

Parents/carers must be briefed on the event/activity and have given written consent for their child to participate. This should include separate GDPR consent from the parent/carer for any use of photographs/films taken at the event/activity. Legal parent/carer are responsible for informing the event organiser of any changes as they occur.

It is important that consent forms are completed fully, with as much details as possible. Failure to do so could result in the safety and welfare of a child being compromised.

***Section 2***

To complete Section 2 of the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Template, it’s likely you will need to visit the site of the event.

It is helpful to carry out a visit with someone else to complete a risk assessment as this will help to identify more risks and therefore, more mitigations.

***About the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Process***

The safeguarding risk assessment process is show in diagram below.

In Section 2 of the Risk Assessment Template, you will notice that each of the column headers corresponds to a stage of the process.



***What is a risk?***

A risk is the likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffer adverse effects if exposed to a hazard. In the context of safeguarding, the focus of the risk judgements will be likelihood and consequences of abuse or neglect.

***What is mitigation?***

A mitigation is a process or measure which is put in place to manage, minimise, and prevent risk.

You will notice that Section 2 of the Risk Assessment Template is divided into 8 sub-sections.

***Section 2a Consent***

Parents/carers must be briefed on the activity/event and have given written consent for their child to participate. This should include a separate GDPR consent from the parent/carer for the use of photographs/film taken at the activity/event.

***Section 2b Suitability of Staff and Volunteers***

The club must review all staffing ratios, define lead/support roles and identify supervision of under 18’s who volunteer at activity/event.

Clear guidance regarding staff conduct and compliance must be issued, including a signed Cde of Conduct. Clarity must be provided on acceptable or unacceptable practice.

***Section 2c Venue***

The following areas must be taken into account: -

* Site boundaries: public access; roads; location of facilities.
* Access to toilets, including supervision and access.
* Drop off/pick up arrangements.
* Emergency Action Plan.
* Changing rooms and shower facilities.

***Section 2d Reporting Incidents and Concerns***

Clear procedures for referring safeguarding concerns and managing allegations against staff are in place.

Children and parents/carers must be given the Club Welfare Officers contact details and the details on how to raise concerns.

***Section 2e Medical***

This section must include: -

* Local hospital and first aid arrangements.
* Relevant medical information in respect of participants.
* Emergency contact details for participants.
* Managing injuries (training, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)).

***Section 2f Playing Environment***

This section should include a consideration of risks in relation to the pitches, the format of the activity/event and the spectators.

Who is responsible for ensuring the playing area is suitable and clear of health hazards?

Make sure the goalposts are checked, pitches are correctly marked, and Respect barriers are in place. If goalposts need to be moved, ensure this is only done by adequate number of adults.

***Section 2g Other***

This area can be used to include any specific needs not covered elsewhere.

***Section 2h Risk Assessment Approval***

Each risk assessment should be reviewed by the club welfare officer, along with the event organiser and other relevant event leaders within the club.

Once the final version has been agreed, it should be signed off by the club welfare officer.

The risk assessment should be retained for reference and details of any subsequent changes should be logged.

***Identifying Areas of Concern***

Areas of Concern is the first column to complete.

Some typical areas of concern have been listed on the template for you but you should add to these as you complete your assessment.

No area of concern should be deleted. If the area is not applicable to your event, then you should complete the section as ‘not applicable’.

***Defining the Safeguarding Risks***

The second column to complete is entitled: **Risk to young people or adult with a disability or at risk**.

When thinking about the specific risks, ask yourself, ‘What is the risk to a young person if……?, then add your answers to the risk column. e.g: -

* Parent/carer may not be aware of the event and therefore the young person’s/adult at risk’s location.
* Young person/adult at risk may not be fit to participate.
* Unaware of medical information relating to the young person/adult at risk.
* No parent/carer information in case of an emergency.

The risks you are assessing are only those within the area of your responsibility i.e. the event itself.

Your responsibility starts when the young person or adult at risk arrives to your event or unless you are travelling as a team or group to an event.

You may wish to inform parents/carers of possible risks for them to consider when travelling to the event location.

***Assessing the Level of Risk before Mitigation***

Once you have listed all the areas of concern in Column 1 and the risks in Column 2, you should assess the level of risk in Column 3 as either high, medium or low.

There are no hard and fast rules in determine which category a risk may fall into. Risks that may be medium in one context may be high in another.

***High Risk (Red)***

**A high risk (red) is one which is rated critical or significant enough to warrant immediate action. Any risk of physical or psychological harm to a young person or adult at risk must be rated as high.**

**An event must not go ahead if a risk cannot be mitigated for high to medium or low.**

***Medium Risk (Amber)***

**Where a risk is rated as medium (or amber), the management responsibility must be specified, and senior management may need to be informed.**

***Low Risk (Green)***

**A risk can be rated as low (green) if it unlikely to happen or can be managed by routine procedures.**

***Key Points on Risk Rating***

* Consider each risk within the context of your event.
* If you have identified a risk, it will not be low until mitigation has been put in place.
* Consider all the factors you feel have contributed to the risk. Multiple factors are likely to raise the level of risk.
* The likelihood of a situation arising will also elevate the level of risk. For example, young people will need to go to the toilet where the risk is High, but the playing area has limited public access and is easy to control so the risk is lower.
* Mitigation should reduce the risk but will not always reduce it to low. High risk areas such as toilets are likely to be at best Medium even after mitigation has been put in place.
* A review of your event may signpost you to categorising the risks differently next time.

***Assessing the Level of Risk after Mitigation***

Once mitigations have been put in place, you are ready to reassess the risks and enter your assessments in Column 5 of the template, entitled Risk after Mitigation.

The risk level after mitigation ***must be lower*** than the previous risk level. If not, then your mitigation is not strong enough and you need to revisit that area.

A risk level may be Medium because you cannot rely on every participant following the rules. If you have any area after mitigation rated as Medium, it is important to review this area during and after the event to see if it can be lowered for the next event.

***If a risk rating remains High even after mitigations have been put in place, the event should not go ahead.***

***Safeguarding Risk Scenario***

*You have been asked to carry out a safeguarding risk assessment of an event which will include a photoshoot with young children.*

*What would be the risks to young persons or adults at risk attending this photoshoot?*

See points below that should be taken into consideration: -

* No parent/carer consent for the photoshoot
* Location for the photoshoot is inappropriate
* Staffing ratios for the event are insufficient
* Photographer may not be suitable for working with children/adults at risk
* Risk of children or adults at risk being manually handled by the photographer
* Published images may allow young people to have their location identified
* Unauthorised use of images
* Children/adults at risk may be identified and contacted by someone with restricted access to them
* Children/adults at risk appearing on social media outlets may be subject to abuse
* Children/adults at risk could be subject to inappropriate verbal or physical abuse

***Mitigating the risks at a photoshoot***

The risks at a photoshoot are high but these can be significantly reduced with good preparation.

**What can I do before the event?**

1. Ensure written consent is received from parents/carers or, in case of adults at risk, by an appropriate adult.
2. Employ/engage with a photographer who has had appropriate safeguarding checks and set out boundaries
3. Provide a contract agreement for the photographer that stipulates:

* No manual handling of the children/adults at risk
* Location settings on the camera should be set to ‘off’
* Only the County FA can publish any photographs from the shoot in any medium
* The photographer should not be able to publicise their attendance at the event
* The photographer must read and sign a prepared Code of Conduct
* The County FA works with specific safeguarding procedures (these to be shared) and has the authority to suspend the shoot if it is felt that these procedures are not being followed

1. Identify the location of the shoot and visit prior to the event to ensure its suitability. If required, complete an additional location risk assessment.
2. Identify the number of children attending and determine staffing ratios and ensure the correct number of staff attend
3. Inform parents how the club will use the images and that the images will be the property of the club and should not be reproduced

**What do I do during the event?**

1. Do not allow any child/adult at risk to participate in the shoot if you do not have written consent for them to do so
2. Ensure children/adults at risk are appropriately clothed for the shoot and conditions
3. Ensure sufficient staff are present throughout and oversee the shoot and accompany the photographer when moving from area to area
4. Remind the photographer of the signed agreement and Code of Conduct
5. Provide a briefing to the children/adults at risk on the clubs use of the images

***Section 2d Reporting an Incident***

You will notice in section 2d, Reporting Incidents / Concerns, is slightly different than the other sub-sections.

This is the section where you need to include clear instructions on how specific types of concern should be dealt with, should they arise during the event.

It should also include the relevant contact details required to report incidents.

***Section 3 Reviewing the Event***

You should consider your risk assessment to be a live document. It should be used throughout the event with notes made at the time, rather then some days later when incidents or problems may not seem so important.

A post activity review of all areas of your risk assessment should be completed to ensure that any problems or concerns that were identified during the event can be addressed and modified for the next risk assessment and event.

It is good practice to note who is responsible for each area of the risk assessment template. If there are administration staff devising the proformas and collating the completed forms, then it will be easier for them to review this specific area, noting any good practice or issues. After the event and during the review stage, each ‘person responsible’ can inform the risk assessment reviewer of their considerations.

A review should take place no more than 7 days after the event. Where there are are serious issues, these should be shared as soon as possible with staff who may be completing risk assessment for similar events.

A good review of the risk assessment includes not only issues but also areas of good practice, ensuring staff completing future risk assessments can benefit from it rather than trying to start from scratch.

***Other Considerations***

A spreadsheet of all risk assessments should be accessible to all club officials. Dividing the risk assessments into groups will make comparisons easier. For example: -

* Age of participants (U10 competitions / U16 competitions)
* Location (Club Site / School Site)
* Specific Event (Tournament / General matches / Festivals / Presentation events / Disability event)

Standard risk to young people/adults at risk are generally constant but you must be careful not to ‘copy & paste’ to save time, as you may be duplicating an error or incorrect risk area for your event.

Future risk assessments for similar events should consider good practice and reviews on previous risk assessments. Avoid simply changing the title of a previous risk assessment. For example, the ‘2021 Tournament’ should not just be titled the ‘2022 Tournament’ and used without considering the previous review. You could miss mitigation that did not work or areas of good practice that would make your job easier. Additionally, as risks constantly evolve, so the mitigation strategies must do so too.

Your risk assessments you complete are not a confidential document, although associated documents (permission forms etc.) are. The risk assessments should be shared with anyone who is involved in organising, staffing, or attending the event. Doing this ensures that if issues occur, there are no excuses about lack of knowledge concerning what has been put in place to mitigate risks and what the responsibilities of your club officials are.

***No event can be entirely safe. If there was a safeguarding incident at your event, you must be able to say that everything that could be in place was put in place.***

***Concluding Points to Remember***

* Completing a safeguarding risk assessment takes considerable thought and time
* Identifying risks is best done at the venue and with more than one person where possible
* The risk assessment is a live document. Take a copy of the risk assessment to the event and add notes when something arises that you hadn’t considered or when something works particularly well
* Not all risks start as high but once mitigation is applied all risks should be reduced
* If a risk remains high after mitigation, ***the event must not take place***
* Your risk assessment should be reviewed within 7 days of the event
* Football must be safe and enjoyable for all. Safeguarding the vulnerable and allowing them to play without fear or incident is the duty of everyone involved. Having a comprehensive and robust risk assessment ensures you have played your part.