

Plan for Safety

Risk assessment preparation

The best way to have a successful activity is to plan so that risks are identified and avoided or minimised. These initial checklist questions will help you to move through the planning process, identify risks in advance, and take the necessary actions for the success of the activity.

- Have we defined broadly what we want to achieve and gained the backing of decision makers?
- What do we want to ask, and who are we asking?
 - What is the age/demographic of the group?
 - What level of engagement is appropriate for this group?
 - What is the implied promise attached to this level of engagement?
 - What information is required for parents to be informed and give consent?
 - What information is required for children to be properly informed and give consent?
 - What tools are required for this engagement?
- How will we gather the information, and how will we make this a safe activity for all?
- Who will be involved in gathering the information?
 - Have they been screened, trained and approved to work with children in the church?
 - What additional briefing and/or training is needed so that these people are well prepared to introduce and conduct the conversation with participants?
- How do we intend to use the information we gather, and who will it be shared with?
- How will we keep participants and decision makers informed, during and after the consultation?

Risk assessment process

1. Use the **Example Risk Assessment** to list potential risks and determine what could go wrong.
2. Check the **Likelihood Descriptors** and decide how likely the potential risk will happen.
3. Check the **Consequence Descriptors** to identify the consequences of the potential risk.
4. Check the **Risk Matrix** to identify the levels of risk.
5. Check the **Actions to Take** to find what you need to do to keep the activity safe.
6. Have an emergency response prepared if something does go wrong.

Feel free to seek guidance and support from the Risk Team in your Synod, or in another Synod if there is no one available at the time. (See page 8 for contact details)



Example risk assessment for engagement with children

Activity: face-to-face conversation with 9 – 11-year-old children attending a Church activity about what they think and feel about the activity.

| Risks <i>What could go wrong?</i> | Likelihood <i>Check the 'descriptors'</i> | Consequence <i>Check the 'descriptors'</i> | Risk level <i>Check the 'risk matrix'</i> | How to reduce risk <i>Check the 'actions to take' before completing this section</i> |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Person conducting conversations is not safe to work with children | Possible | Major | High risk | All volunteers are screened (including Working with Children checks) and approved |
| Person/s conducting conversations acts inappropriately towards children | Possible | Major | High risk | All volunteers are trained, work in pairs, sign code of conduct (acknowledging the Church's zero tolerance to harm approach) and overseen |
| Person/s conducting conversations does not listen to what the children's points of view are | Possible | Negligible | Low risk | Volunteers are skilled for the task and well briefed on the purpose (see Tips for using this listening approach with children) |
| That a child discloses in group setting, that they are being sexually abused | Possible | Moderate | Medium risk | Volunteers are aware of how to do 'Protective Interrupting' (see Tips for using this listening approach with children) |

Use additional rows to work through other risks in your setting, or for different activities

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Risk assessment matrix

Likelihood descriptors

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| 1. RARE | May occur only in exceptional circumstances. It is theoretically possible but increasingly unlikely. |
| 2. UNLIKELY | Is not likely to occur in normal circumstances. You have heard of it happening somewhere once. |
| 3. POSSIBLE | Could occur at some time. You have heard of it happening from time to time. |
| 4. LIKELY | Will probably occur in some circumstances. It might happen on a handful of occasions in your experience. |
| 5. FREQUENT | Can be expected to occur with some frequency. It is not a surprise when it happens. |

Consequence descriptors

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|---------------|---|
| 1. NEGLIGIBLE | <p><i>The consequence is negligible if any of these factors apply:</i></p> <p>Child: Very little impact to the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child, with the child feeling only a bit worried, temporarily upset, and/or very minor or no injury.</p> <p>Organisation: There is a very limited chance of reputational impact. It does not make the news.</p> |
| 2. MINOR | <p><i>The consequence is minor if any of these factors apply:</i></p> <p>Child: Minor impact on the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child, with the child feeling minor anxiety, requiring first aid, follow-up and/or support.</p> <p>Organisation: There is only a low reputational impact. There is only very limited news coverage.</p> |
| 3. MODERATE | <p><i>The consequence is moderate if any of these factors apply:</i></p> <p>Child: Moderate impact on the emotional or physical wellbeing or safety of the child, with the child feeling moderate anxiety, requiring follow-up support and/or medical treatment.</p> <p>Organisation: It may have some reputational impact. This may include public embarrassment and moderate news coverage.</p> |
| 4. MAJOR | <p><i>The consequence is major if any of these factors apply:</i></p> <p>Child: Significant impact on the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child, with the child feeling overwhelmed, requiring police intervention, paramedic or comparable medical/hospital treatment, child is separated from primary care provider, and/or child might be traumatised.</p> <p>Organisation: May have major reputational impact. This may include public embarrassment, high news profile and third-party actions.</p> |
| 5. SEVERE | <p><i>The consequence is severe if any of these factors apply:</i></p> <p>Child: Hospital admission is required, or significant, severe and ongoing impact on the emotional wellbeing or safety of the child.</p> <p>Organisation: May have very severe reputational impact. This may include public embarrassment, high widespread multiple news reports and third-party actions. A fatality or permanent disability to one or more people.</p> |

Risk matrix

| | | Consequence | | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|--------|----------|---------|---------|
| | | Negligible | Minor | Moderate | Major | Severe |
| Likelihood | Frequent | Medium | Medium | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| | Likely | Medium | Medium | High | High | Extreme |
| | Possible | Low | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| | Unlikely | Low | Low | Low | Medium | High |
| | Rare | Low | Low | Low | Medium | Medium |

Actions to take

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|---------------------|---|
| Extreme risk | Activity must not proceed as planned. Final approval must be provided by the appropriate Executive responsible for Child Safety Implementation within the Synod after steps are taken to reduce the risk. Identify additional risk control measures then contact Risk and Insurance team for guidance and to request approval to proceed. |
| High risk | Activity can only proceed if more risk control steps are taken to reduce risk. All steps taken must be documented and review of effectiveness of the controls should happen after the event. |
| Medium risk | Activity can proceed with risk control steps in place. All steps taken must be documented and review of effectiveness of the controls should happen after the event. |
| Low risk | Activity can proceed. Routine management procedures should still be in place to minimise the risk of even a minor incident occurring. |

Tools for listening – toolkit contents:

Tools for listening: explanatory booklet, and downloadable tools:

1. Foster Genuine Engagement
2. Plan for Safety
3. Tips for Listening
4. Posters
5. Feedback Sheets