

## Risk assessing in practice

You think that there are significant risks attached to the social action you have planned. What do you do?

A good starting point is to walk around the place where young people will be carrying out social action and look for any hazards (things that may cause harm), such as tripping, falling or lifting.

Remember psychological hazards – such as verbal abuse – can have an impact on people's mental health.

Then think about the risk, which is the chance, high or low, of somebody being harmed by the hazard, and how serious the harm could be.

Think about how accidents could happen and who might be harmed. Ask people who have done similar activities what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious to you and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks.

Concentrate on the real risks – those that are most likely to cause harm. Consider the measures you are already taking to control the risks and ask if you have covered all you need to do. Your efforts to assess and control risks should be in proportion to the degree of risk involved in the activities.

Once you have identified the risks and what you need to do to control them, you should put the appropriate measures in place. Can the task be changed to reduce a risk? Is there any instruction or training that is needed for a particular task? If it helps you to manage the risks and tell people what they need to know, then do write your findings down. For most people this does not need to be a big exercise – just note the main points about the significant risks and what you concluded.

If social action is being carried on outside, think about the activities in relation to the public or the weather for example.

You should have contact details of parents/carers and any details on medical conditions. It is worth monitoring any significant risks once young people are carrying out social action. Listen to what they say about any risks they may have faced. Anything you were not aware of? Are there any control measures you need to change? This way your risk assessment stays up-to-date.

