

Health, Safety and Welfare and Young People

What is “Health and Safety?”

A serious approach to Health, Safety and Welfare is a fundamental part of building a safe environment for young people, volunteers and staff. All organisations have a duty of care to avoid causing harm to volunteers, service users and the public. It is essential that everyone involved with the cadet unit, including volunteers and the young people themselves, are aware of their responsibilities and understand how to put their groups health and safety policy into practice.

A health and safety policy should include:

- Stating the requirements the group is legally obliged to implement (e.g. insurance) and who these cover (i.e. volunteers as well as staff).
- The need for ALL to take reasonable care for their own health, safety and welfare and that of others.
- Designating particular staff to certain roles within each Unit (e.g. H&S officer, Fire Officer, First Aid officers) and detailing what they are responsible for.
- A statement regarding drinking/smoking/illegal drug use in and around the premises. **See *National VPC guidance on positional statements for this.***
- The implementation of the child protection policy (including recruitment and selection of volunteers). **See *the National VPC Safeguarding and VPC Safer Recruitment Policy for more guidance on this.***
- The use of consent forms and volunteer/staff information forms.
- The use of risk assessments for all activities.

Risk Assessment

What is a risk assessment?

The [HSE's](#) definition of a risk assessment is:

"...a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm...."

A risk assessment is a vital element for health and safety management and its main objective is to determine the measures required to comply with statutory duty under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) and associated regulations by reducing the level of incidents/accidents.

Why do a risk assessment?

A risk assessment will protect your leaders and cadets, as well as complying with law. As for when to do a risk assessment it should simply be conducted before you or any other person conduct any activity, event, connected in any way to the Cadets. This should also include any activities, events, inside or outside, that are different to your normal meeting space. Risk assessments can also be completed on certain groups of young people and or individuals, this is specialist so please do contact your Force Health and Safety Department or the [National Safeguarding Manager](#) for additional guidance or signposting.

A Leader should always take the lead in undertaking a risk assessment (please liaise with your Police colleagues) however we also recommend that where ever possible you encourage/enable young people to take part also. This ensures they are bought into the requirements and possible restrictions the assessment may raise but also encourages them to always consider risk assessment and HS in planning their activities. The leader should also attend risk assessment training so they are able to recognise risks and hazards and be able to correctly manage risk. (contact your Force Health and Safety Department)

How to do a risk assessment

There are no fixed rules on how a risk assessment should be carried out, but there are a few general principles that should be followed.

Five steps to risk assessment can be followed to ensure that your risk assessment is carried out correctly, these five steps are:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

Step 1: Identify the hazards

In order to identify hazards you need to understand the difference between a 'hazard' and 'risk'. A hazard is 'something with the potential to cause harm' and a risk is 'the likelihood of that potential harm being realised'.

Hazards can be identified by using a number of different techniques such as walking round the workplace, or asking your employees.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Once you have identified a number of hazards you need to understand who might be harmed and how, such as 'cadets in the meeting place', or members of the public.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures

After 'identifying the hazards' and 'deciding who might be harmed and how' you are then required to protect the people from harm. The hazards can either be removed completely or the risks controlled so that the injury is unlikely.

Step 4: Record your findings

Your findings should be written down it's a legal requirement; and by recording the findings it shows that you have identified the hazards, decided who could be harmed and how, and also shows how you plan to eliminate the risks and hazards.

Step 5: Review your assessment and update as and when necessary

You should never forget that few environments/building stay the same and as a result this risk assessment should be reviewed and updated when required.

Good Practice

A weekly meeting risk assessment needs to be completed for each venue where a cadet weekly meeting is held. This is normally completed by the VPC Co-ordinator but can be completed by anyone, so long as it is quality assured by someone who has completed risk assessment training. It must incorporate all activities that Cadets will participate in at a weekly meeting.

If any Cadets have **Specific needs** then a separate risk assessment may be needed for them and stored on their VPC record. This risk assessment must be refreshed at least annually. All appropriate leaders and young people should be made aware of the contents and requirements of any risk assessment.

Risk assessments must be refreshed at least annually or sooner if this is as the Force dictates.

Insurance

A copy of your Public Liability Insurance should be available for anyone to see if asked. Insurers should be made aware of the activities that your cadets are undertaking. They should also be made aware of any outdoor activities or overnight

trips. It is important that your insurance providers are notified if you have cadets who have previously self-harmed or attempted suicide. All the Insurance paperwork must be refreshed annually or if the venue or circumstances of the make-up of your unit changes.

Health and Permission Form

- Every cadet attending must complete a Health and Permission form that covers them for weekly meetings for the year. These should be reviewed every year to keep information up-to-date
- The form can be completed online through Marshall. (or other cadet management tool)
- If completed in hard copy, the form must be scanned and uploaded on to Marshall. (other cadet management tool used)
- Cadet leaders must also complete one so that you have their health and emergency contact details if needed.

Mental well-being

- **Positional statement of VPC**
- Mental well-being can be described as a combination of how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life and independence). It is something that affects everyone, old and young, and anyone can experience good or poor mental well-being at any point in their lives.
- Mental health issues take many forms. They vary in terms of; strength; frequency of re occurrence; constant or intermittent; leading to occasional crisis or maintain a steady state over many years. Some (but not all) people with a mental health problem can be at risk as they develop negative potentially harmful coping strategies e.g. anxiety attacks, self harm or attempted suicide. There is a small risk in terms of violent behaviour it is more likely that others will become distressed because they do not know how to help their friends or colleagues.
- We recognise VPC has a legal duty under the Equality and Diversity Act to ensure accessibility for all, but also that the cadets provides opportunities for young people to get together, build connections and friendships, and provide peer support among themselves. This can help to build tolerance and empathy amongst young people and can be particularly powerful for groups of young people known to be at higher risk of developing mental health problems.
- We embrace all cadets with mental health issues, and seek to encourage all to talk to their leaders around how we can better support them in their cadet journey
- Supporting young people/adult with mental health issues or the risk of others is seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. neglect, emotional/psychological abuse and bullying), no matter where this risk evolves.

