#TeamWilder Community Toolkit: Managing Risk.

We all want to stay safe and well when making a difference to wildlife. While managing risk is a topic many are daunted by, it doesn't have to be difficult and it's important to get it right to keep everyone safe from harm. This toolkit will guide you through the basics of managing risk with your community group.

Contents:

1. Health and safety best practice

Health and safety in a community group means how you and your group think about the welfare of volunteers, members, participants, and the general public. It is about working together as a group to make sure you have done everything you can to prevent avoidable accidents and protect people from getting hurt.

When you are planning activities, meetings, or events, discuss within your group steps you can take to avoid people getting hurt. It is useful to consider:

- **the location the activity will take place** - are there any hazards that you could remove or warn people about?

- **who will be taking part** - do the participants have any particular needs that would make them more likely to hurt themselves?

- **the equipment you will be using** - are there checks you could do to make sure that the equipment is in good working order? Do people need any particular skills or knowledge to enable them to use it safely?

- **the activity itself** - is there anything about the activity you are running that could lead to someone becoming injured? Could you change the activity to reduce this risk, or give people information that will help them to keep themselves safer?

Write down the decisions you make so that you can refer to them later. If the unthinkable does happen and someone has an accident, you need to provide evidence that you have taken care to

avoid people becoming injured, so having a written record of your decisions can help. The best way to record this information is in a **Risk Assessment** – details on how to do this are covered in this toolkit and in our **Example Risk Assessment**.

It is important to have a plan for what to do if things do go wrong. Think about what could happen and make sure everyone in your group knows what to do in those situations.

Ask your members of your group to confidentially share any medical conditions that others need to be aware of, e.g. Does anyone carry an epi-pen or an inhaler?

More information of Health and Safety for community groups can be found here. **www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/health-and-safety/**

The law:

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 protects people doing paid work, but it's also strongly recommended that groups with volunteers follow the rules too. This means providing:

- Safe equipment
- Safe substances
- The right information and training
- A safe place to work

2. Insurance (this is not formal advice)

As a #TeamWilder participant you are not covered by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's insurance. It is your group's responsibility to insure yourselves and to ensure you have sufficient public liability insurance for the tasks you plan to carry out.

Insurance cover has two aims:

- **It helps you and your group members if something goes wrong.**
- **It helps members of the public if something goes wrong.**

Of course, insurance on its own won't stop things going wrong – that's what 'risk assessments' and 'risk management' are for.

If you don't have any insurance, you should be aware that you might be in trouble if something goes wrong, even if you tell everyone that they are working at their own risk.

It's always worth checking if another organisation's insurance might cover you. If so, it's up to you to ensure the cover is adequate for your needs and to share your risk assessment with them.

Your local council might also cover you with their insurance. Speak to them to find out what they need, and what they will cover.

There are different types of insurance - use this checklist to help you understand what you might need:

- Do you have volunteers, or do you interact with the public? You will need 'Public Liability Insurance' (PLI)
- Do you have employees? You will need 'Employer's Liability Insurance'
- Do you have cars or other vehicles? You will need motor insurance.

It is less likely you will need these other types of insurance:

- Do you have a board of trustees? You might need 'financial and administrative liability.'
- Do you have buildings and contents which need protecting? You will need 'material damage insurance' or 'buildings and contents insurance.'
- Do you hire out your premises to other groups? You will need 'hirers' liability insurance.'
- Do you deal with money? You could need 'money/financial insurance.' Can your organisation run if your building is damaged? You could need 'business interruption insurance.'
- Might you need legal help? You would need 'legal expenses insurance.'

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has lots of help at: **www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/operations/insurance**

Remember: it's quite simple to set up insurance, and often it's reasonably cheap. It can be a legal requirement to have insurance, so don't try to avoid it.

3. What to consider about safeguarding

Safeguarding is about ensuring everyone is kept safe from abuse and neglect and we take all reasonable steps to protect the people in our care. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All organisations have a duty of care and a legal responsibility for safeguarding their employees, volunteers, visitors – anyone that the organisation has contact with. Safeguarding applies to everyone and is about creating an organisation which actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse, and neglect – and responds promptly if there is an issue.

A safeguarding policy is often a requirement when applying for funding. You should appoint a responsible person and write a short safeguarding statement, which all your key group members are aware of. There are many examples online, but your statement should be relevant to your organisation. If your group works under the umbrella of another organisation, such as a parish council, village hall or church, then they will already have this in place, you simply need to ensure you are aware of how it applies to your group's activities.

If your group works directly with children, young people, or adults at risk then you must have a more comprehensive document, which details procedures for working with vulnerable groups, and provides appropriate checks and training for anyone working closely with these individuals.

4. Using tools safely

Before You Start:

Remember to complete a Risk Assessment before you get to work! We've created an example to help you write yours which can found be at the end of this toolkit.

Check with your group how familiar they are with the tools they are using and ask those that are experienced at using tools to show others how to use them. We always recommend giving a tool talk to your group, particularly if you have members who have not worked with you before and you are unsure of their knowledge.

Ensure all members of your group have correct personal protective equipment such as gloves and steel toe-capped boots if necessary.

When introducing tools to groups:

1. **Gather** your group together to ensure they can hear you

2. **Introduce** each tool

3. **Demonstrate** safe use

It is important to go through this structured process to build up appropriate respect, understanding and handling of the tool, in the following sequence:

Introduce the tool, its use and the PPE required → Describe the tool and its parts → Discuss transporting and passing the tool → Explain how to hold the tool and material safely → Demonstrate safe usage technique → Explain how to store and maintain the tool

5. Risk Assessments

You do a risk assessment before you do anything, and you probably don't even realise you're doing it! It just refers to what you think about before you do something.

You'll do them all the time – before you cross the road, for example. A risk assessment that you don't write down, and just do in your head, is called a "dynamic risk assessment".

The other type of risk assessment is a "formal risk assessment". You write these down and keep them as a record. **We're created an example to help you write yours – this can be found in our resources for communities.**

Everything has some kind of risk, so don't worry if your activity has risks. The risk assessment will help you work out what those risks are, and what you can do about them.

Writing a risk assessment doesn't have to be complicated or onerous. The most important thing is that safety has been considered and communicated before starting an activity.

The risk assessment should address:

- What are the risks?
- Who might be harmed?
- How can risks be minimised?
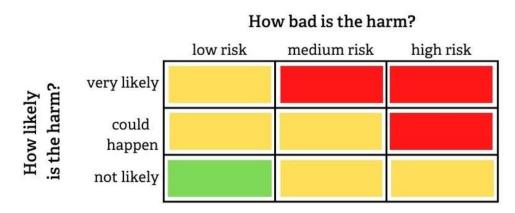- Is it safe to do the activity with the risk mitigations in place?

Hazards and risks:

A hazard is something that could cause harm.

A risk is the chance that the hazard will cause harm and how serious that harm could be.

A risk assessment looks at all the hazards and works out how harmful they are. It also works out how likely it is that the hazard happens. A hazard that is both very likely AND very harmful would be too dangerous to do.

We use a "matrix" to score hazards. These can have a different number of boxes, but here is a simple version:

If something is high risk (might kill you) AND very likely – the box is red.

If something falls in the yellow boxes, then you need to decide whether you can make the risk less likely, or the harm caused smaller.

The things you put in place to make the risk less or the harm smaller are called "control measures".

Here's an example:

A group wants to clear a patch of wasteland. They do a risk assessment. They find out the risks are nettles and using chainsaws.

How likely are nettle stings? Very likely. How harmful are they? Not very harmful. But because they are so likely, they fall into a red box on the risk assessment matrix. So, the group puts a control measure in place – they give everyone gloves. Now, everyone is much less likely to be stung.

What about the use of chainsaws? The group has one chainsaw. What's the harm? This could be very harmful indeed. But how likely is it to cause harm? The group see that only one person is allowed to use a chainsaw and they have been properly trained. They have all the right safety equipment. This means the likelihood of anything going wrong is very low indeed, as long as all the rules are followed.

The paperwork:

Keep copies of your risk assessments. Make sure they are dated.

Do you have someone who is responsible for health and safety? It can be useful to have trained first aiders, too. If you have a written Health and Safety Policy, this can be very useful when you're applying for funds or want to hire premises. Review your policy every year.

Keep an "accident book". If someone is hurt, write it down, with details about how they got hurt, and what treatment they had.

Keep a list of all your equipment and keep the manuals. Think about what training people need to use the equipment and write it down. Make sure you tell people how to use the equipment safely and keep a record of that.

Some substances, like paint thinners, are dangerous. You'll need to use them properly and store them safely. This comes under a rule called "Control of Substances Hazardous to Health" (or CoSHH) and you can find more information from the **Health and Safety Executive. https://www.hse.gov.uk/**

If you provide food and drink at an event, you must make sure it's safe to eat and complies with the **Food Safety Act.** Also see our information about Insurance for Groups.

6. Data Protection (GDPR)

Data protection law applies to personal data, whether it is stored electronically or in paper format. Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual, such as a name and email address.

When setting up a new group, data protection can feel litigious and overwhelming, but there are a few basic guidelines you can follow to keep your group and your participants safe. In general, you should always treat personal data as confidential, to be used for specific purposes only, and to be stored securely when not in use.

1. **Collection of data:** If you wish to collect details of those attending your meetings or events, you must include a simple 'Data Protection Statement' on the form which they fill in, which explains why you are collecting their data and how you will use it. You must only collect the basic information you need, e.g. contact details to keep people informed about future events and meetings. You cannot pass this data on to third parties (including other local groups) without explicit permission.
2. **Storage of data:** Data must be held securely (e.g. in a locked drawer or password protected document). Try to avoid storing data in multiple places, as it can become difficult to maintain it accurately.
3. **Accuracy of data:** Ensure data is kept up to date (e.g. if someone tells you of a change of name and would like their details amended).
4. **Removal of data:** Personal data should only be used and stored for as long as it is required for the purposes it was collected for and deleted when no longer required (e.g. if the group disbands, then the mailing list should be destroyed).
5. **Reviews of data:** Regular reviews are important, to check on accuracy of the data and the continued need to retain it. Keep a dated record of this activity.

7. Taking photos and obtaining consents

Photographs are covered by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) so you must always ask permission to take photographs of a person or their property such as their house or car. If you are going to share the photos on social media or send them to us to include in a case study you must get them to complete a consent form for photos, videos, and recordings – **this can be found in our case study template.**

Consent is when someone says yes. They must know what they are saying yes to. And they must say yes freely – you cannot make someone say yes.

If your group is well known to you, you may have agreed that everyone is happy for photographs to be taken, but make sure you ask any newcomers to your group. It's good practice to record this in some way. For use of photos within your group you don't need a written statement to record consent. A "clear affirmative action" can be:

- a filmed consent
- a spoken consent in front of witnesses who write it down

You must tell them what the photo, video or recording will be for. You must tell them it could be used forever (we call that "in perpetuity" on our consent form. This includes using photos on our website or social media platforms). They might not say yes to all these reasons, so make sure you and they know exactly what they have said yes to.

If you are using our photo consent form, make sure the subject understands what they are signing.

Ideally, give a copy of the form to the subject – they can take a photo on their phone, or you can do so and send it to them.

Take a photo of the consent forms and send them to us when you send us your images – more information on how to share what your group is doing can be found in our **#TeamWilder Community Toolkit: Sharing Success.**

Children under 18:

The NSPCC says that children should be asked to give consent as well as their parent or legal guardian. They might say no because they do not want to have their images taken or there could be other reasons such as child protection issues (the child might be in the looked-after system, or at risk) or there might be wider religious or cultural reasons. They don't have to share their reasons with you. Even if the child's parents or carers say yes, if the child says no, you must respect the child's decision.

You must be aware of the risks of sharing images of children online. Before taking any photos or film of identifiable children, ask yourself if it's really needed.