

Risk Assessment Management Standard

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Scope

This standard applies to all departments, services, schools and branches carrying out activities on behalf of the National Autistic Society (NAS). This standard sets out the NAS arrangements for the completion of health and safety risk assessments and the risk escalation process

This standard is part of a suite of documents outlining the core health and safety management standards and arrangements. Topic specific arrangements can be found on the health and safety pages on [SharePoint](#).

A checklist is provided at Appendix A for operational managers to identify the key actions required to comply with this policy.

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1 Introduction

The National Autistic Society (NAS) recognises the legal requirement to provide safe places of work and safe systems to reduce the risk of harm to staff, volunteers, the people we support and others who may use our buildings or services. This document sets out the arrangements for identifying, assessing, documenting, communicating, managing and escalating risks.

Risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork but is about identifying sensible measures to control risks in the workplace. You are probably already taking steps to manage risks and the risk assessment process will help you to decide if you have considered everything that you need to. If you are embarking on something new you will need to risk assess at the design stage to ensure you have all the necessary risk controls in place before the activity takes place.

The risk assessment process will help you to identify where other regulations might apply i.e. if your activity involves hazardous substances you may need to consider the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations, if your activity involves an element of manual handling you may need to consider the Manual Handling Operations Regulations. Topic specific management standards are available on SharePoint to help you with any additional risk assessments required under specific regulations.

Risk assessments will also provide you with information to identify training needs, equipment and other resources required to do the job and provide you with sufficient information to create or review Safe Systems of Work for work activities.

Safe systems of work include all of the arrangements you have in place to reduce risk of harm to you, the people you support and others. Examples of safe systems of work include: Support plans, manufacturer instructions, standard operating procedures, 'how to' guides, training programmes, equipment specifications, method statements and monitoring arrangements such as checks that need to be made – anything that sets out the safe way to work.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Health and Safety Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities for health and safety. Responsibilities specific to risk assessment are outlined below:

2.1 Directors are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that managers under their control are managing health and safety risks in accordance with this policy
- Ensuring that actions identified during the risk assessment process are documented and acted upon
- Ensuring that action plans are monitored until actions are complete or escalated
- Directing the risk assessment process to ensure that adequate resource and attention is given to reducing risks to a tolerable level
- Act to ensure the effective and timely management of corporate risks within their area of control

2.2 Managers (including volunteer managers) will:

- Act to manage the risks under their control
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out and documented
- Ensure that appropriate preventive and protective measures are identified, introduced and monitored in order to maintain their ongoing effectiveness
- Ensure that all employees are made aware of risks that may affect them
- Ensure that the assessments completed on their behalf are suitable and sufficient. This is particularly important when managers delegate the responsibility for carrying out risk assessments
- Ensure that they have an adequate number of trained risk assessors available to carry out the assessments that may be required in their area of responsibility

- Ensure that trainee risk assessors are adequately supported through the training process and thereafter
- Maintain a list of local risk assessments. A template is available (Appendix B) and on SharePoint.
- Ensure that all risk assessments are reviewed:
 - In line with the risk management timeframes set out in Section 4.4 of this standard
 - As set out in the 5 steps to risk assessment guide on SharePoint
- Managers must co-operate with other employers where offices and sites are shared – this is to share information about risk and any necessary control measures. This also applies to contractors visiting NAS and NASAT sites. Arrangements must be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort or conflicting information
- Where managers are unable, for any reason, to adequately reduce health and safety risks they must escalate the risk in line with section 4.4

2.3 Risk Assessors

Risk assessments must be carried out by competent assessors with a blend of training and experience as follows:

- Successful completion of the NAS Risk Assessment training and associated project work
- A knowledge of the site/activity/individual
- An understanding of relevant current best practice
- Awareness of the limitations of their own experience and knowledge
- Ability to identify when they need to seek advice from people who have industry or subject expert knowledge
- The willingness and ability to learn from the risk assessment process to build on existing experience and knowledge
- An ability to act as an independent and impartial assessor. It is important that risk assessors identify suitable control measures to reduce risk without being influenced by the availability of resources. It will be the role of managers to demonstrate that they have reduced risk 'so far as is reasonably practicable' and in line with any absolute duty.

Risk assessors must involve people who may be affected by the risks. This includes:

- Staff members who carry out the particular work task and/or
- Health and Safety Representatives (H&S Reps) and/or
- Health and Safety Coordinators and/or
- The people supported by NAS or their representatives (this is particularly important when completing risk assessments for positive risk taking)
- Volunteer managers

2.4 Health and Safety Coordinators and Business Managers

Health and safety coordinators and Business Managers may be delegated the responsibility to coordinate the local risk assessment completion and review process. It is expected that they will:

- Ensure that risks rated medium or above are presented and discussed at local Safety Action Groups (SAG)
- Ensure that the minutes of each SAG clearly shows the detail of any significant risks to include the risk owner, interim arrangements and any progress being made to manage the risks. To record 'NONE' where no significant risks are identified.

2.5 Health and Safety Representatives (H&S Reps) are encouraged to:

- Attend the risk assessment training so that they can understand the risk assessment process and develop risk assessor skills
- Participate in the risk assessment process and share knowledge about tasks and workplaces being assessed or reviewed – Participate in risk assessment workshops and site inspections
- Represent the staff group as part of the risk management process
- Act as a role model and follow the arrangements in place to reduce risks in the workplace
- Support and assist employees to understand why certain control measures (arrangements) are in place

- Examine and contribute to the risk assessment process in an open and constructive manner
- Report concerns which they believe may present risks to staff and others
- Raise concerns on behalf of staff

2.6 Employees and Volunteers are required to:

- Comply with any control measures established for health and safety at work – This means that you need to follow the safe systems of work generated by the risk assessment process
- Cooperate with the risk assessor in providing information and in some cases demonstrating a task that may be unfamiliar to the risk assessor. This is so that the assessments are relevant and reflect working practice
- To report any concerns with the arrangements to their line manager, volunteer manager or Health and Safety Representative

2.7 National Health and Safety Team will:

- Provide specialist support, advice and guidance
- Develop and review the risk assessment policy arrangements, supporting documentation and training material
- Monitor information sources to identify key risks or themes where specialist support may be required
- Act to escalate significant risks, trends or themes to key stakeholders

3 Risk Assessments

In order to reduce injury or ill health we need to identify, understand and analyse the risks and then put risk control systems and procedures in place to reduce the risks that we can anticipate. Risk assessment is the first step to identifying what you might need to do to keep everyone safe and well. We have a duty to protect our staff, volunteers, the people we support and anyone who may be exposed to risks from our buildings or services.

Risk assessments must be 'suitable and sufficient' to satisfy legal requirements. If your risk assessment includes the following elements it is likely that your risk assessments will be 'suitable and sufficient';

- A proper check was made – using the five steps to risk assessment will ensure you have taken steps to ensure a 'proper check' was made – see Appendix C
- Reasonably foreseeable risks have been identified – This is achieved by seeking input from people who have a knowledge of the place, the task, the equipment or the people involved. Identify hazards and risks that should be obvious to the general public (common knowledge) and people who carry out the same type of work (industry knowledge). You may also need to ask a subject specialist for advice or guidance (expert knowledge).
- Significant hazards are documented together with who and what could be affected
- Precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is tolerable
- Employees and/or their representatives (H&S Reps) have been involved in the risk assessment process
- Other people who might be affected have been involved in the process
- Risk assessments must not be completed in isolation
- Risk assessments to be signed off by a person who did not complete the risk assessment – This step serves as a double check that all risks have been identified

Risks and associated arrangements to keep everyone safe can be identified by carefully considering:

- The places where we work
- The work activities that we do (including branch activities)
- The people we support

The following sections provide guidance on how to go about completing these assessments:

3.1 The places where we work:

A number of workplace risk assessment templates are provided for you to review your local risk control measures relating to the internal and external elements of your building(s).

The risk control elements listed in these templates are generic and if you use them you must edit them to reflect local arrangements.

Note: Completed workplace risk assessments can be used to evidence compliance with elements of the online health and safety audit.

- Office Workplace Risk Assessment - (HS-0310)
- Residential Workplace Risk Assessment - (HS-0311)
- Schools Workplace Risk Assessment - (HS-0312)
- Supported Living Workplace Risk Assessment - (HS-0313)
- Supported living – A pre-visit checklist for assessing and recording hazards which may present risks to staff visiting people in their own homes

A guide on how to use these generic risk assessment templates is available at Appendix D

3.2 The activities that we do:

- Activity risk assessments will serve to identify hazards and risks from the activities carried out by staff and volunteers and the equipment or substances that are used.
- Risk assessments must also assess the risks for any outputs or by-products such as goods for sale, by-products or waste
- The five steps to risk assessment document sets out the principles of risk assessment – This can be found at Appendix C and on SharePoint
- Some hazards and risks identified during the risk assessment process may prompt further risk assessments such as work at height, hazardous substances, manual handling, etc.
- All of the risk assessment information will assist you to check and confirm that you have sufficient arrangements in place and will also service to direct you to where you need to edit, create or closely monitor safe systems of work
- A risk assessment template is provided at Appendix E and on SharePoint

3.3 The people we support:

- Support assessments and plans will be completed to identify specific arrangements for individual people we support. This information must be used in conjunction with the work activity risk assessments to identify where additional risk control measures may be required to reduce risks to individuals, staff and others undertaking certain activities.

Positive risk taking:

- There may be times when the positive outcomes for an individual will require a positive risk taking approach. The rights of the individual will be taken into account and a person centred approach will be adopted
- Managers must ensure that specific risk assessments are completed for positive risk taking activities in order to demonstrate that the benefits outweigh the risks
- Supported individuals should be fully involved in the risk assessment process if possible
- A user-friendly method may be needed in order to facilitate meaningful input. One of the forms that may help is provided at Appendix F. Consideration should always be given to the medium which best matches the person's ability and understanding to produce information that is meaningful to them – You can apply the principles of risk assessment to the means of communication that suits them best. The main factor is to ensure that you have covered the 'five steps to risk assessment' - Appendix C
- Where an individual is not permitted to carry out an activity because it has not been possible to introduce effective control measures then this should be carefully explained to the individual or their representative and be fully documented. Opportunities for review should be considered. You can contact health and

safety to assist the process and advocates should be sought where possible. It should be noted that the final decision about risk taking will rest with the NAS.

4 Risk Management

It is important that all risk assessments are suitable and sufficient and that the detail in a risk assessment is proportionate to the risk.

Although there is no statutory requirement to document trivial risks it is NAS policy to document and retain risk assessment documentation so that it can be produced if required to demonstrate that risks have been considered and were assessed to be trivial.

4.1 Permit to work

A permit to work is a strictly applied set of rules and checks which may be required for high risk works such as roof work, hot works (naked flame) and working in enclosed spaces (risk of oxygen depletion).

Permit-to-work arrangements will usually relate to building and maintenance work but may be used to manage short-term arrangements for other activities that present moderate risks or above - see Permit to Work Policy for more information.

4.2 Reducing risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'

Information for managers: Risks must be reduced to comply with any absolute duty and where no absolute duty exists it will be necessary to reduce risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. You will need to make a judgement on whether further 'investment' is required to reduce the risk any further i.e. cost in terms of time, effort, money and inconvenience.

If you decide that the 'cost' of taking further action to reduce risk is disproportionate to the level of risk reduction achieved you will need to demonstrate how you have come to this conclusion. You are advised to document how a judgement has been made as you may be required to provide evidence of your decision-making following any loss event or you are asked to produce evidence by an inspector.

Please note: You cannot avoid your legal duty to invest in safety arrangements where a duty exists under specific legislation. Examples include;

- (a) The requirement to provide training under the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974. If training is identified as a risk control measure for an identified risk then it must be provided
- (b) The requirement to assess the risks and implement risk control measures before any hazardous substances are used at work under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).
- (c) plus many more....

Please contact healthandsafety@nas.org.uk if you need any advice or guidance to identify if you have reduced risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable' and in line with any applicable statutory requirements.

4.3 Risk matrix

The NAS has used a 3 x 3 matrix to assess health and safety risks and will be moving to a 5 x 5 matrix over the next 12 months See Fig. 1

		Likelihood				
		1	2	3		
Severity	1	1	2	3	Low	
	2	2	4	6	Med	
	3	3	6	9	High	

Fig. 1 - The 3 x 3 matrix

IMPORTANT CHANGE: A 5 x 5 Matrix will be used for any new risk assessments completed from 1st September 2019. See Fig.2

Harm / consequence / impact						
5 Catastrophic		17	22	23	24	25
4 Major		12	18	19	20	21
3 Moderate		6	13	14	15	16
2 Minor		2	8	9	10	11
1 Minimal/Insignificant		1	3	4	5	7
	Likelihood	A Rare/ Remote	B Unlikely	C Possible	D Likely/probable	E Almost certain

Fig.2

Transition arrangements will be in place to facilitate the transition from a 3 x 3 matrix to a 5 x 5 Matrix over a 12 month period.

It is expected that all risk assessments will align with the 5 x 5 matrix by 1st September 2020.

The matrix can be found at Appendix H and on SharePoint

4.4 Risk authorisation and management level:

Risk ratings identify the level of risk ownership and escalation. Interim arrangements may be required to manage residual risks until such time that formal arrangements are in place and embedded.

A system of risk management escalation is used by the NAS to identify and manage risks. Each level of management has a responsibility to ensure that risks are recognised and managed effectively. Risks must be authorised, monitored and escalated as indicated in the table below which sets out the level of risk, risk ownership and escalation for the current 3 x 3 and new 5 x 5 matrices:

3 x 3 Matrix	1	2	3-4	6	9
5 x 5 Matrix	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21 – 25
Risk level	LOW	MEDIUM	MODERATE	HIGH	SIGNIFICANT
Action required	Additional controls to be considered	Additional controls to be actioned	Additional controls to be actioned	Additional Controls to be actioned	Cease activity
Action deadline	-	6 months	3 months	1 month	Immediate
Sign off by (risk owner)	Local Manager	Business / Service Manager NASAT - Local Governing Body	Principal / Area Manager	National Lead Safeguarding / H&S	Director / H&S
Monitoring of risk by:	Local	Business / Service Manager	Principal / Area Manager	National Lead Safeguarding / H&S	Director / H&S
Send risk assessment to healthandsafety@nas.org.uk	No	No Discuss at SAG	No Discuss at SAG	Yes	Yes
Review	Annual	6-monthly	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly

If your service does not have the 'risk owner' structure above please notify healthandsafety@nas.org.uk - a member of the health and safety team will contact you to identify the escalation arrangements for your team/service.

4.5 Risk register (local and national)

A list of work activity risk assessments should be documented at a local level – The list will identify the current risk rating and risk ownership. A template is provided at Appendix B for this purpose.

The local risk register should be available to staff and be tabled for discussion at local Safety Action Groups.

5 Training

All staff and volunteers receive hazard and risk information at induction.

Risk assessors and people who are responsible for signing risk assessments must be competent. In order to be deemed competent they need to have the right skills, knowledge, attitude, training and experience (SKATE). Sometimes these qualities can be achieved by several staff working together with a risk assessor coordinating the process.

Risk assessor training is accessed via your learning and development manager. Training is delivered as a face-to-face learning opportunity followed by a risk assessment project before risk assessors are authorised to complete or coordinate risk assessments in practise. Assessors are encouraged to work with others to develop their risk assessor skills. It is an expectation that managers will support assessors until they feel confident to undertake this task.

Managers are expected to undertake Risk Assessment training - this is a compulsory pre-qualification in advance of attending the Health and Safety for Managers training. The Health and Safety for Managers training includes a session on risk assessment to consolidate learning.

Refresher training must be undertaken every three years or sooner if required.

6 Monitoring and Review

Questions to assess compliance with this management standard are included in the health and safety self-audit process.

The health and safety team will act to monitor compliance with this management standard.

Managers are expected to monitor local arrangements and satisfy themselves that risk assessments follow the five steps to risk assessment set out in Appendix C.

This management standard will be reviewed every three years or sooner in the event of significant change.

7 Glossary

Action Plan	A risk management action plan provides a programme showing how, when and by whom measures are to be introduced to control identified risks.
Generic Risk Assessment	This can also be referred to as a “model” assessment. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 allow the use of this sort of assessment where it is known that there are core hazards and risks associated with similar workplaces or activities. They save a lot of duplicated effort but must be used with caution.
Hazard	Anything with the potential cause harm
Risk	The likelihood and severity of a hazard causing harm
Risk Assessment	An evaluation of risks arising from hazards conducted in order to establish the preventive and protective measures necessary to enable work place and work activity health and safety risks to be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.
Risk Management	In the context of health and safety, risk management deals with the proactive minimisation of health and safety risks to those who could be affected by a hazard.