

Risk Assessment

an overview

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This overview is not a definitive guide to Risk Assessment it sets out to explain the system and help the lay person to work their way through the process.

A risk assessment is a process which helps organisations like U3As identify potential hazards and manage the risks associated with their activities.

It concerns the people, where the activities take place, the activities which are undertaken and it puts measures in place to keep people safe.

1. The Health & Safety Executive website explains the detailed process for controlling health & safety risks in the workplace and it lists the process as follows:

2. Steps needed to manage risk:

Risk management is a step-by-step process for controlling health and safety risks caused by hazards in the workplace.

You can do it yourself or appoint [a competent](#) person to help you.

- [Identify hazards](#)
- [Assess the risks](#)
- [Control the risks](#)
- [Record your findings](#)
- [Review the controls](#)

The best person to write a RA is the U3A group convenor, who is the person that actually knows what activities they want to undertake. They may need help from the Groups Leader or Team or other competent person.

Risk Assessments are public documents and should be shared with anyone involved in the activities.

Risk Assessment Matrix

This is a simple tool which helps assessors to quantify the Risks and Hazards

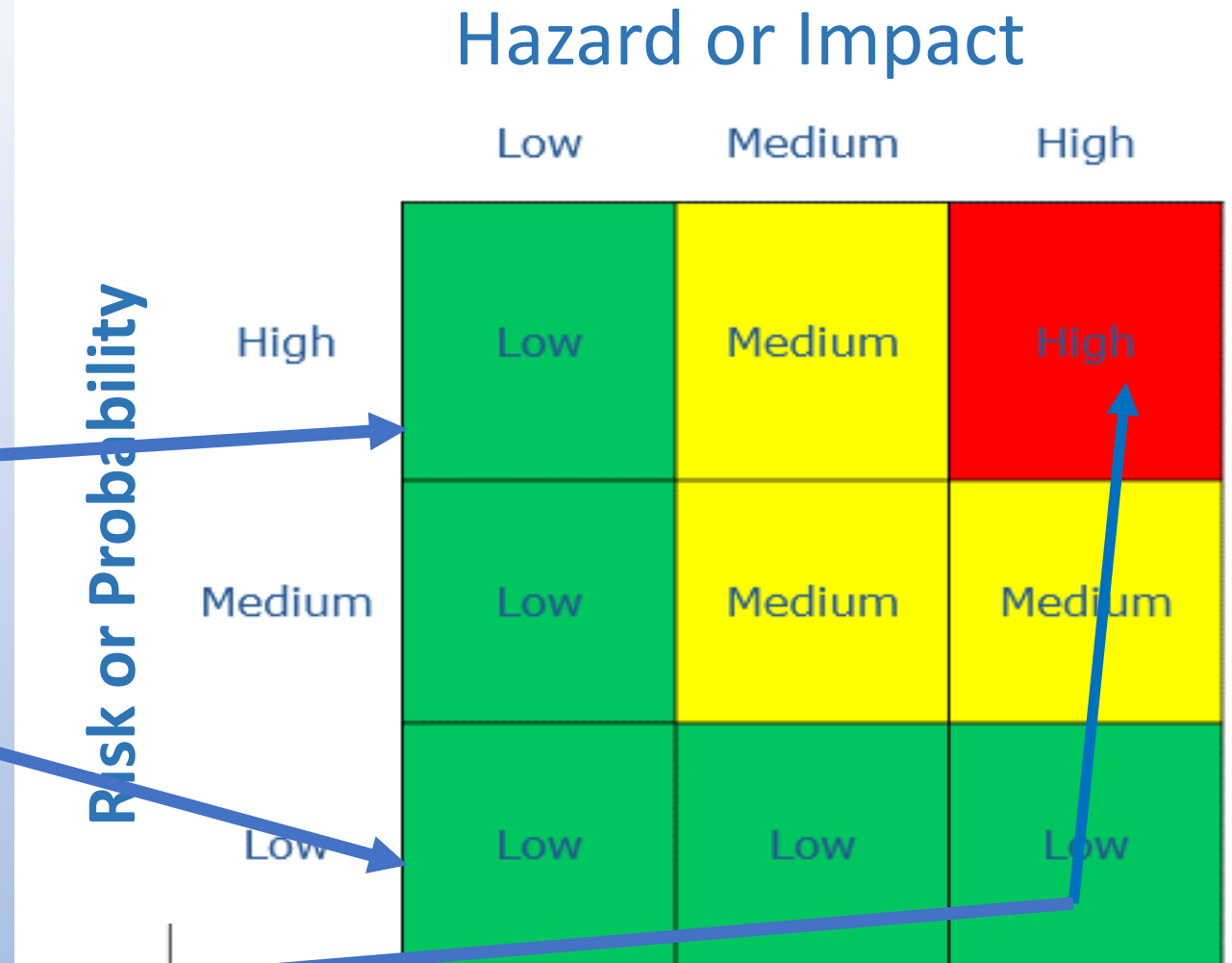
		Hazard or Impact		
		Low	Medium	High
Risk or Probability	High	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Low

Using the Risk Assessment Matrix

Example of a plotting a hazard

An extension lead across the floor to a computer

1. If the both the cable and the carpet were black the risk of tripping over it could be High i.e. the top left corner
2. If this was behind the desk where only the speaker had access and the cable was white it might move the risk to low i.e. the bottom left corner of the matrix
3. However if the cable on the floor was at the top of a staircase the risk of tripping might be the same but the impact would be significantly higher and the Hazard would move into the top righthand **Red** square
4. The task would be to reduce both the impact and the probability so that the hazard plotted in the bottom left again.



Using the Risk Assessment Matrix

Covid 19 as a hazard would sit in the High Risk/ High Impact **RED** square

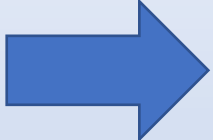
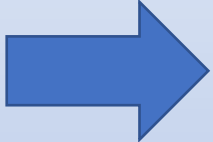
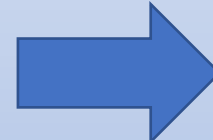
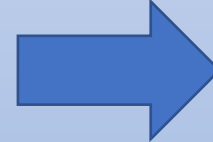
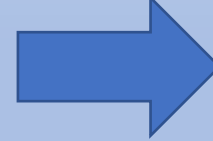
Our responsibility is to carry out a Risk Assessment that would identify those actions we could take to minimise the risks:

Following Government Guidance these steps might include :

1. Asking participants to wear face masks
2. Using a Covid secure venue
3. Limiting numbers and then spacing attendees following social distancing advice
4. Ensuring attendees bring their own sanitiser
5. Not serving refreshments
6. Ensuring that attendees assess their own vulnerability before deciding to attend.

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Risk or Probability	High	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
	Low	Low	Low	Low

The Steps of Risk Assessment

- Step 1**  Identify the Hazards
- Step 2**  Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3**  Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Step 4**  Record your findings and implement them
- Step 5**  After activity review your assessment and update if necessary

Step 2 decide who might be harmed and how. (Assess the Risks).

- In our case U3A members who take part in our activities.
- We also need to be aware of individual vulnerability
 - We can minimise the risks to members but cannot take responsibility for their contacts and families
 - Hence the idea of having individual checklists so that members can consider whether they should take part in activities or not.

Step 3 Evaluate the risks. (Control the Risks).

- We are not experts in Covid risk so we rely on the advice from the NHS, Government and of course the Third Age Trust.
- We need to consider the venue itself is it and their staff behaving responsibly? Is it “Covid” secure?
- We need to consider the activities we are undertaking, does it involve social interaction or use of common equipment. If so, that activity may need to be precluded.

Step 4 Record your findings and implement them

- The Risk Assessment is the record to be kept on file and shared
- Make sure everyone knows what is expected of them behaviour including social distancing – PPE etc

Step 5 Review and Update

- Is it working?
- Are members following the advice in the RA or are they being cavalier?
- Is there anything that you missed that you could add to make the next activity safer.

Personal Protective Equipment - PPE

- PPE is normally a last resort. i.e. one would do everything one could to eliminate the risk before using PPE.
- With Covid 19 that is not possible, PPE is required to eliminate or minimise the remaining risk.

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