

Case Study

The purpose of risk management

The essence of risk management is dealing with uncertainties and reducing or removing risk factors. It is *not* about eliminating, avoiding or removing all risk.

Risk management should be:

Comprehensive – covering every aspect of the organisation.

Continual – not just a one-off exercise, but something that is maintained and updated.

Built-in – not an add-on, but integrated into all operations and systems.

Suitable – there is no ‘one size fits all’ but principles, policies and practices that can be adapted to any kind of organisation or activity.

Proportional – keeping a sense of perspective and proportion between benefits and risks.

The process of risk management has three main stages.

1. **Identify risks** – have a good look at what you do, where you do it and who with, and spot what could go wrong
2. **Analyse the risks** – decide how serious and likely the risks are
3. **Control the risks** – do whatever you think is necessary to reduce the chances of things going badly wrong

What should our approach be?

Volunteer risk management systems need to be relevant for the organisation and the particular issues and risks they have to deal with in their area of work. However, there are six common elements that emerge from most volunteer-involving situations and which need to be considered.

- **Screening**
- **Induction and training**
- **Risk assessment**
- **Record-keeping**
- **Review**
- **Insurance**

Adapted from Risk Toolkit, Katharine Gaskin

Case Study

The Tea and Toast Drop-in

Run entirely by volunteers, the Tea and Toast Drop-in has been providing a space for local homeless and vulnerable individuals to access hot drinks and a simple meal every week on a Tuesday afternoon for over 15 years.

The drop-in operates out of a town centre church hall and the volunteers mostly have links to the church. Sometimes, the organisers arrange for representatives from other voluntary and community groups to come along and talk to the clients. Examples include; the local hostel, the Salvation Army, Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability Partnership and Drugs and Alcohol services etc. The idea is that those accessing the service may also be able to find out about other support that might be available for them, relating to their particular circumstances.

Activity:

Work through each of the six common elements and discuss what you would need to consider as the Volunteer Manager, in terms of managing risk with this scenario:

Element	Considerations
Screening	
Induction and training	
Practical risk assessment	
Record-keeping	
Review	
Insurance	