

Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy for Scottish Football – Referee Associations

PREVENTION PLANNING

This Practice Note applies to all members and sets out the best practice in relation to risk assessments for Referee Association activities and events.

Prevention planning is considering all the risks associated with running a Referee Association activity and planning and managing the risks by putting in preventative measures to minimise them. Prevention planning may take the form of various assessments but for day to day activities or one off events this will involve conducting a risk assessment as part of planning and organising the activity or event.

Referee Associations organising activities that include children and young people have a duty to undertake a risk assessment of the environment in which they are operating, the activity itself and the group to ensure that the group's requirements are met. Potential areas of risk should be identified at the planning stage and should be recorded in writing. Safeguards should then be put in place to manage the risks identified. Depending on the nature of the event, activity or trip the risk assessment may be an ongoing process as unexpected situations can arise.

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is an important step to ensure the safe delivery and involvement of everyone participating in football activities, in any capacity e.g. as a referee, a player, a coach, a spectator, a volunteer etc. Completing a risk assessment allows those running day to day football activities or a specific event or activity to focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause significant harm.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to other people so that the risks are identified and an informed decision be made as to whether enough precautions have been taken or more should be done to prevent harm.

Why is a risk assessment necessary?

The *Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy Statement* declares that the Referee Association will act in the best interests of young people and promote children's rights, including the right to be protected from harm and abuse. To do this effectively, those working with children and young people must first be aware of the areas of risk and be able to adequately assess these risks.

By doing this members will be:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• making sure children and young people are safe• protecting members of the Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• making sure that the Association complies with legislation• reducing or removing liability• giving the sport a good reputation
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What does the law state?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that all children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation at all times. Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that if you are 16 or over and have children in your care or control then you must do what is reasonable in all circumstances to safeguard their health, development and welfare.

Carrying out a risk assessment

Step 1 – Identify potential risks

Think about who or what might cause harm to young people taking part in the activity or event.

In preparation for an activity members must consider the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the nature of the activity?• Where will the activity be carried out?• What are the potential risks?• Who may be at risk?• Will the group be mixed?• What will the age range be?• Are there special needs within the group?• How do you control the risk?• What actions need to be carried out to do this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the experience and qualification levels of the coaches and/or volunteers?• Is a First aider present? A qualified First Aider with a First Aid kit must be present for all activities• How will children be supervised? Children should be properly supervised at all times, always with a satisfactory ratio of adults to children
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Step 2 – Identify who might be harmed and how

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When identifying who might be harmed and how try to be specific. For example, during a training event a young referee may sustain an injury. In this example, the possibility of an injury has been identified as a potential risk and this step allows for further consideration as to how this risk can be reduced and responded to in the event it does arise.

Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Evaluating risks includes considering how likely it is that harm could occur and how serious would it be. This is often described as ‘rating’ risk. Risk should be evaluated for likelihood and impact and a risk rating given for each. An example of rating is:

High:	could occur quite easily	High:	could cause significant harm
Medium:	could occur sometimes	Medium:	could cause moderate harm
Low:	unlikely, although conceivable	Low:	could cause minimal harm

In the example above of the young person being injured during a training session the evaluation may be High/Low to Medium. This would show that the risk ‘could occur quite easily’ but would cause minimal to moderate harm. Once the risk has been evaluated a decision can be made on what action should be taken. It is up to the Referee Association as to what action should be taken and this will include understanding that the law expects the Referee Association to do what is reasonable in all the circumstances.

For each risk assessment a risk owner should be assigned. The risk owner will assess what current controls are in place to reduce the risk, what future actions must be done to reduce the risk and what else they need to do about the risk.

The risk owner should consider the following:

1. Can we eliminate the risk altogether?
2. If yes, what do we need to achieve this?
3. If no, what can we do that will allow us to manage the risk so that it becomes an acceptable level of risk?

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4. Who will manage this risk?

If the assessment of risk is that there is a high likelihood of occurring and a risk of significant harm and safeguards cannot be put in place to reduce the likelihood or harm then the activity should not go ahead.

Step 4 – Record your finding and act on them

It is helpful to record the result of your risk assessment. The benefits of recording are:

- It shows everyone involved that you take this seriously and that you value their involvement; and
- It will be helpful in the future when you look back to review what action is identified.

Keep it simple. If there are a number of actions required, tackle the important ones or those which are rated 'high' first. Agree timescales for addressing the other actions and who will be responsible.

Step 5 – Monitor and review

After the event/activity/trip review how it went:

- Were the controls effective?
- Were the actions effective?
- What can we learn?

Ask the young people who took part in the activity or event and other members who were involved as to what would be realistic and work in practice for future activities and events. Where appropriate, young people should also be consulted at the planning stage as they may be able to highlight risks which have not been considered by the adults involved.