



Assessing the Risk and Child Protection and Sport

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INTRODUCTION

The *2006 Accord for the Protection of Children in Scottish Sport* is a framework intended to support organisations to implement policies, procedures and practices to keep children safe in and through sport.

Since December 2007, it has been a condition of investment by **sportscotland** that all governing bodies of sport sign up to the *2006 Accord*. **sportscotland** and CHILDREN 1ST, through the Child Protection in Sport Service, are working together to support organisations to develop and implement action plans to achieve the outcomes of the *2006 Accord*. This support includes the publication of a range of guidelines on key areas of the *2006 Accord*.

The *2006 Accord* encourages organisations to assess risks regularly in the context of their sport and to take action to eliminate or manage risks. The framework in this guide will support organisations to do this. Any action identified as a result of the risk assessment should be included in your organisation's *2006 Accord* action plan.

Child welfare and protection is only one aspect of an overall safe environment. The aim of this guide is to help you identify and manage risks relating to the welfare of children and to protect them against harm, abuse and exploitation. It also aims to help you identify measures that will help staff and volunteers to feel valued, supported and confident when working with children in sport. **It does not contain guidance on health and safety, safety issues in relation to facilities or equipment, or technical matters relevant to specific sports.**

This guide contains:

- ◆ Guidance on how to go about assessing risk.
- ◆ Areas where there may be potential risks to children or staff/volunteers. These have been identified from research, cases where children have actually been harmed and public inquiries.
- ◆ Recommended good practice to manage certain areas of risk.
- ◆ A risk assessment template to get you started.

Because of the range of sporting bodies and activities, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive guide covering every possibility. You should use this guide to prompt your thinking about your own organisation and the activities/situations unique to your sport. Wherever necessary, seek professional advice from your national governing body, an insurance broker or the Child Protection in Sport Service.

Note:

For guidance on assessing risk in recruitment and selection, see *Creating a Safe Environment for Children in Sport, Procedure for the Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteers in Child Care Positions* (2006).

For guidance on assessing risk posed as a result of poor practice or misconduct, see *Creating a Safe Environment for Children in Sport, Guidelines on Disciplinary Issues Relating to Child Protection Concerns*, Child Protection in Sport Service (2008).

WHAT IS RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in the context of your activities, could cause harm to other people, so that you can identify and decide whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

Why Bother?

- ◆ To make sure children are safe
- ◆ To protect your staff and volunteers
- ◆ To make sure you comply with legislation
- ◆ To reduce or remove liability
- ◆ To give your sport a good reputation

What Does the Law State?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 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, welfare and development.

What Does All This Mean in Practice?

Put simply, when children are taking part in our activities we have a responsibility to make sure they are safe from harm. We fulfil this duty by:

1. Accepting we have this duty.
2. Agreeing policies, procedures and practices which tell us what action we need to take in order to keep children safe from harm.
3. Telling all relevant persons about safe practices; for example, through training.
4. Putting them into PRACTICE.
5. Ensuring they are being followed and reviewing them.

We can't be expected to eliminate every possible risk. We don't want to wrap children in cotton wool or have so many procedures and so much paperwork that staff and volunteers are prevented from carrying out their roles, or worse, put off altogether.

A risk assessment should be a benefit to your organisation by allowing you to focus on the things which are important. By doing what is 'reasonable', you will give people the confidence to know they are following good practice, and, therefore looking after themselves too. This guide will help you to identify what is reasonable.

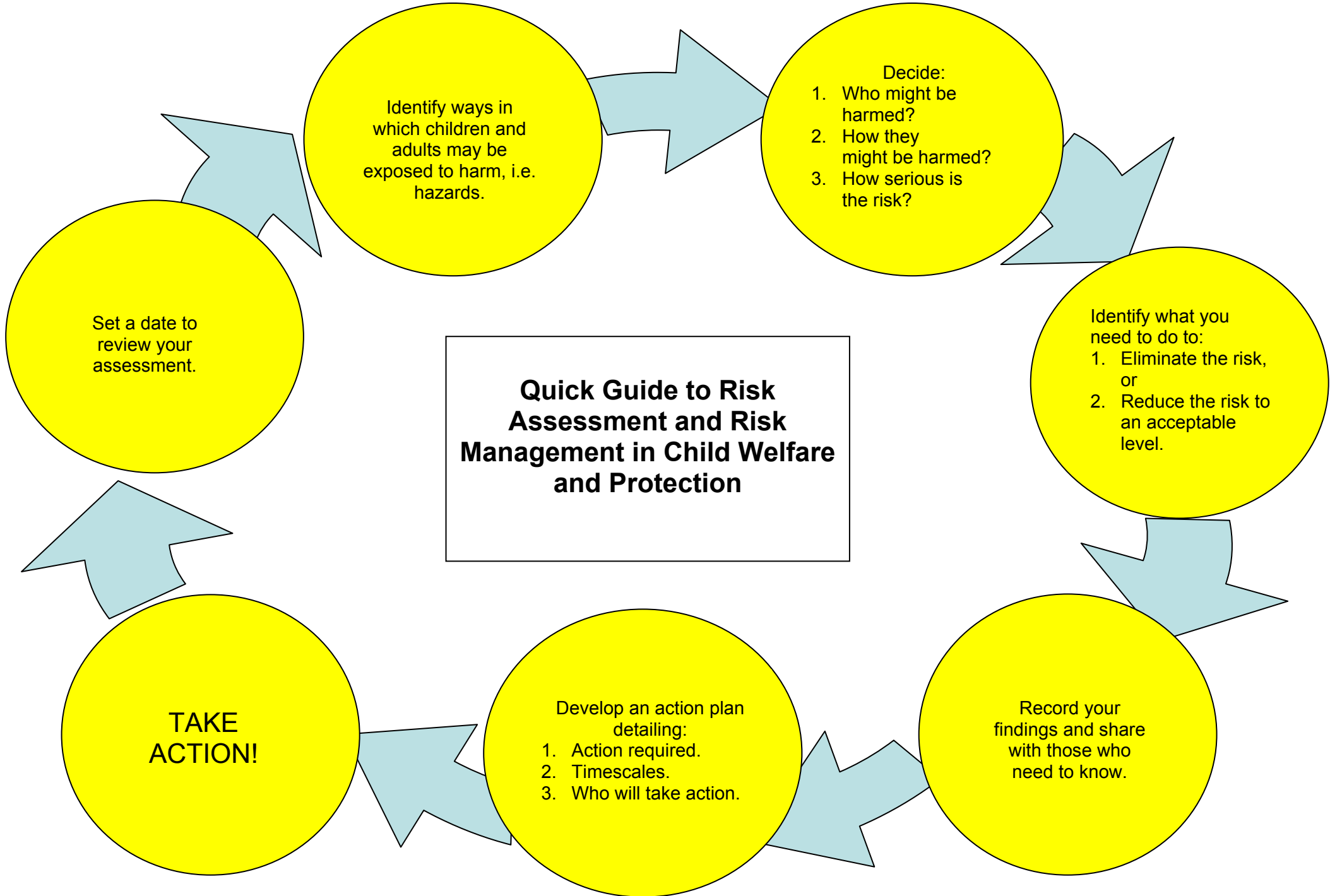
SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

HAZARD Any situation or any practice which might cause harm.

HARM Includes harm which is not physical. A child may be harmed in a number of ways; for example, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, intentional/inappropriate restraint, harassment or bullying, carelessness which amounts to neglect or failure to attend to essential health and safety requirements.

RISK The chance that someone could be harmed, and an indication of how serious the harm might be.

Quick Guide to Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Child Welfare and Protection



CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

STEP 1 IDENTIFY WAYS IN WHICH CHILDREN AND ADULTS COULD BE HARMED, I.E. HAZARDS

First you need to work out how children, staff/volunteers could be harmed. This could be through:

- ♦ The general failure of the organisation to meet its responsibility to keep children safe.
- ♦ Failure to ensure that those who work or volunteer with children are suitable to do so.
- ♦ Failure to ensure that all activities and events are safe for children and young people.
- ♦ Failure to take action to help a child who discloses they are being harmed or abused outwith sport.
- ♦ Failure to take action to address the harmful or potentially harmful behaviour of someone within sport.
- ♦ Failure to provide information or training to staff and volunteers who are part of the organisation.

How will you identify other hazards in *your* sport or organisation?

- ♦ Ask staff and volunteers. Asking others will give you a broad and objective perspective rather than relying on one person's knowledge and experience.
- ♦ Ask parents/children.
- ♦ Have a look back over any incidents or issues which have arisen or been reported.

STEP 2 DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW

For each hazard identified decide *who* might be harmed and *how*. Try to be as specific as you can; for example, if there are no seatbelts in the minibus passengers may be injured if there is an accident.

Think carefully about the people involved in the activity. Young children are generally more dependent on adults, and athletes with a physical or learning disability may require special assistance during activities.

Are there other special considerations in your sport or organisation?

STEP 3 EVALUATE THE HAZARDS AND DECIDE ON PRECAUTIONS

When you know what the hazards are you need to consider the risk i.e. how likely it is that harm could occur and how serious it would be. This is often described as 'rating' risk. For example,

High:	could occur quite easily
Medium:	could occur sometimes
Low:	unlikely, although conceivable

It is up to your organisation to decide what action you will take, but remember that the law expects you to do what is *reasonable*. The Child Protection in Sport Service's *Creating a Safe Environment: Child Protection Guidelines for Governing Bodies*

(2006) contains recommended good practice, guidance and sample procedures on each of the areas covered in the framework on page 9. This recommended good practice could be regarded as reasonable.

Start by identifying what you currently do. Then compare this to the recommended good practice. Is there anything you need to do to bring your organisation up to the standards set out in the recommended good practice?

The key questions to answer in relation to each hazard are:

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

Ask children, parents, staff and volunteers what will be realistic and work in practice.

STEP 4 RECORD YOUR FINDINGS AND ACT ON THEM

It is helpful to record the result of your risk assessment. The sample form on page 13 will help you to do this. The benefits of recording are:

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

Keep it simple; for example, for medical emergencies: medical information forms issued, completed forms held by coach, annual check forms up-to-date.

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 REVIEW YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT AND UPDATE IF NECESSARY

On completion of your first risk assessment, decide when you will conduct the next one. It's a good idea to fix a date for this. This might be annually for some areas or more frequently for others.

In reviewing your risk assessment ask yourself, has anything changed? Are there improvements still to be made? Have you learned anything from problems which have arisen since the last assessment? If anything significant happens between scheduled assessments don't wait to make changes.

NOTE: INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

It is now common practice for insurance brokers to insist on a risk assessment for child welfare and protection. This publication is a general guide and each organisation must check with its insurers on their own specific requirements to ensure these are met.

FRAMEWORK FOR RISK ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

HAZARDS AND RISKS	RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE	WHERE TO FIND EXAMPLES
<p>No organisational ownership and accountability for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The protection of children and young people taking part in the sport. ◆ Ensuring staff/volunteers are not exposed to unnecessary risks or harm through working with children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organisational child protection policy, adopted by the management of the organisation, applicable to all members. ◆ Procedures, guidance and codes of conduct to support staff and volunteers to carry out their role. ◆ Support for staff/volunteers who are involved in dealing with concerns about children or the behaviour of an adult towards a child. ◆ Training on policy and procedures relevant to roles and responsibilities in the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National Governing Body (NGB) guidelines. ◆ <i>Creating a Safe Environment for Children in Sport</i> (CHILDREN 1ST and sportscotland. 2006)¹. <p>(All references below are to sections of this document).</p>
<p>The appointment of staff and volunteers who are disqualified from working with or who are unsuitable to work with children and young people under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.</p> <p>Staff/volunteers behaving in a way which is potentially or actually harmful towards a child or children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of those who work/volunteer with children and young people in the sport. ◆ Disclosure Scotland checks for relevant positions. ◆ Clear roles and responsibilities for all positions. ◆ A Code of Conduct which outlines standards of practice for those positions. ◆ Training on the Code of Conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Recruitment and Selection Procedure</i>, page 21. ◆ <i>Code of Conduct</i>, page 25. ◆ Safeguarding and Protecting Children (SPC) and In Safe Hands (ISH), Club Child Protection Officer training².
<p>Failing to take appropriate action where there is concern about the welfare of a child outwith sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance on how to recognise concerns. ◆ Procedures for responding to concerns about a child and reporting concerns about abuse. ◆ Training on guidance and procedures. ◆ Support for staff/volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Guidance on identifying abuse</i>, page 12. ◆ <i>Procedure for Responding to Concerns</i>, page 37. ◆ SPC and ISH².

¹ Available to download from www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk

² Details on how to arrange these workshops and a calendar of scheduled workshops is available at www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk/trainingandevents

³ These guidelines can be found under the 'Resources' heading at: www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk

HAZARDS AND RISKS	RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE	WHERE TO FIND EXAMPLES
<p>Failing to take appropriate action where there is concern about the conduct of a staff member/volunteer which is potentially or actually harmful towards a child or children.</p> <p>Failure to make a referral to Scottish Ministers when the criteria outlined in the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 is met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Procedures for responding to concerns about misconduct or abuse by a staff member/volunteer. ◆ Complaints, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. ◆ Whistleblowing Policy. ◆ Training on guidance and procedures. ◆ Support or access to support for staff/volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Procedure for Responding to Concerns</i>, page 37. ◆ <i>Guidelines on Disciplinary Issues Relating to a Child Protection Concern</i>³. ◆ SPC and ISH².
<p>Coach-athlete relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A coach is in position of trust and power. ◆ Athlete open to exploitation by the coach. ◆ Coach open to criticism; for example, of favouritism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Code of Conduct detailing appropriate standards of practice in this area. ◆ Training for all coaches and all staff/volunteers who are in a position of trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Code of Conduct</i>, page 25. ◆ SPC and ISH².
<p>Trips away from home and overnight stays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of appropriate supervision. ◆ Inappropriate accommodation and sleeping arrangements. ◆ Personal safety in new environments and cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Procedures in place for planning and running a trip away from home. ◆ Training on procedures and what is required during the trip. ◆ Children and parents involved in planning and aware of arrangements. ◆ Code of Conduct for the trip. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 31. ◆ ISH².
<p>Harm resulting through lack of appropriate supervision of activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Requirements for all activities thoroughly assessed. ◆ Supervision ratios implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 27.

HAZARDS AND RISKS	RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE	WHERE TO FIND EXAMPLES
Transportation of children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Road traffic accidents. ◆ Children being abused when isolated from others. ◆ Staff open to accusations when alone with a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance for transportation of children. ◆ Training on guidance. ◆ Code of Conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 30.
Inappropriate touching or injurious contact during coaching/instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National governing body guidance on technical aspects of coaching practice. ◆ Code of Conduct. ◆ Training on Code of Conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NGB guidelines. ◆ <i>Code of Conduct</i>, page 25.
One-to-one arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Child being exploited when alone. ◆ Adult open to accusations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance on one-to-one arrangements. ◆ Code of Conduct. ◆ Training on guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Code of Conduct</i>, page 25.
Being unable to respond appropriately to a medical emergency or inappropriate use of first aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Trained first aider and first aid kit accessible at all activities. ◆ Knowledge of medical conditions/allergies and emergency contact details available to staff/volunteers running activities. ◆ Recording any significant incidents. ◆ Reporting any significant incidents to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 25.
A child's behaviour placing the child, other children or property at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance and procedures for managing challenging behaviour. ◆ Training on the guidance and procedures. ◆ Recording any significant incidents. ◆ Reporting any significant incidents to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 28. ◆ <i>Code of Conduct</i>, page 25.

HAZARDS AND RISK	RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE	WHERE TO FIND EXAMPLES
<p>Hazards associated with information technology including photos, films, video, mobile phones, websites and internet.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child who is considered by social work services to be at risk of harm is identified and vulnerability increased. 2. Inappropriate footage or footage being manipulated. 3. Opportunity for child to be targeted by those who may wish to harm them as a result of contact information being available. 4. Children being bullied, groomed, threatened or harassed by text, email or social sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidance and procedures on the use of information technology. ◆ Training on the guidance and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Safe in Care Guidelines</i>, page 33.

When carrying out a risk assessment refer to the hazard, harm and risk definitions on page 5.

SAMPLE RISK REGISTER (with examples)

Child Protection Area	Hazard	Harm	Rating Risk	Controls to Mitigate Risk
Child Protection Reporting Procedures	Failure of adults in club to follow guidelines on reporting concerns.	Mishandling or non-reporting of child protection concerns.	H	Education through training on child protection awareness courses.
Code of Conduct	Failure of adults involved in club to comply with the Code of Conduct.	Standards of behaviour towards children not being met leading to incidents, breach of code, complaints, legal action and bad publicity.	M	Adults involved in club made aware of Code of Conduct, and implications of breaching code. Signed acceptance required.
Trips Away	Risk of fire at accommodation facility.	Minor to fatal injury.	L	All involved to be clearly briefed as to protocols in case of fire. Fire exits to be clearly pointed out.

Rating Risk Definitions:

- HIGH: could occur quite easily
- MEDIUM: could occur sometimes
- LOW: unlikely, although conceivable

NOTE: INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

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OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

PUBLICATIONS

For guidance on assessing risk in recruitment and selection, see *Creating a Safe Environment for Children in Sport, Guidelines on Safe Recruitment and Selection*. Child Protection in Sport Service (2008)

For guidance on assessing risk posed as a result of poor practice or misconduct, see *Creating a Safe Environment for Children in Sport, Guidelines on Disciplinary Issues*. Child Protection in Sport Service (2008)

Spoilsports: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Sport. Celia H. Brackenridge (2001)

Five Steps to Risk Assessment. Health and Safety Executive (2006)

Creating a Safe Coaching Environment. sportscoach UK (2005)

WEBSITES

www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk

www.helpforclubs.org.uk

www.sportscotland.org.uk

www.runningsports.org

www.sportscoachuk.org

www.1st4sport.com



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