Keeping ourselves safe - A guide to managing risks at activities

Parkinson’s UK provides spaces, activities and events to encourage people to come together for support and to participate in activities. This includes activities such as local group exercise classes, lunches and outings or events held to raise awareness or raise funds.

Activities offered by Parkinson’s UK provide vital support to those affected by Parkinson’s, so it’s crucial they can be enjoyed in a way that doesn’t expose anyone attending or delivering the event to illness, injury or harm - assessing potential risk helps us to achieve this.

This document provides support around how to identify hazards, think about the effects these might have and highlight measures that could be taken (or are already in place) to mitigate for risks; therefore reducing the likelihood and/or impact a hazard might present. Guidance on how to complete a risk assessment form and where to go to ask for further support will be provided.

**Why do we assess risk?**

Managing risk is something we do naturally on a daily basis, usually without thinking. Whenever we cross the road, make a cup of tea or exercise, we take steps to reduce risks. Occasionally we may injure ourselves, but we adapt what we do or the tools we use, to help us prevent an incident occurring next time.

It’s not just injuries and accidents that we need to mitigate; we can also take measures to reduce the likelihood of someone contracting an illness at one of our events. You can use your risk assessment to think of things like spacing people out, providing proper facilities or ensuring food hygiene measures are considered etc.

No activity can ever be completely risk free, even with good planning. However, if something does go wrong, then good risk management will help minimise the impact. Knowing an activity or venue has been risk assessed is reassuring to us all. It shows that we’re working with an organisation that values us and our safety.

A risk assessment is not just about preventing injury or illness, it is also a compulsory element of our insurance arrangements. If an accident occurs at an activity arranged by Parkinson’s UK, then the insurers will want to see evidence that the activity had a risk assessment in place. **If a risk assessment has not been completed for an activity, it will not be covered by the charity’s public liability insurance.** By completing a risk assessment we aren’t just keeping ourselves safe, but also keeping the charity safe too.

**What is a risk assessment?**

A risk assessment contains a list of hazards that could cause harm. In the context of delivering an activity, the focus is on harm to the people involved. The risk score states the level of risk for each hazard. A list of actions is given to explain what has been done to reduce the likelihood or severity of injury or illness occurring:

| **Hazards** | **Risk score** | **Mitigating actions** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hazards are sources of potential harm. Some examples are:* Loose flooring (trip hazard)
* Hot drinks (Burn hazard)
* Moving traffic (Risk of being hit by a vehicle)
* Chairs (people falling off if using them to stand on, or in the case of Parkinson’s - if there are no arms)
* Large amounts of cash (risk of theft)

Most hazardous things also have benefits (chairs are good for sitting on), which is why you need to take a balanced view about hazards.  | A risk score is the likelihood that something will happen combined with how big an impact it would have *if* that hazard had an impact on a person. Likelihood and impact are scored between 1 for low risk, to 3 for high risk. By multiplying these scores together you get a **risk score** for the hazard - this calculation is automatically done for you if you are using the [online form](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GzcLpVsBLizVu4hT-Hcobqw23Gu01pjavPV7z85OS8Y/edit?usp=sharing).You should grade each hazard in this way to understand how much of a threat it poses to the delivery of your activity.  | These are measures which may already be in place, or steps you have taken, or will take, to respond to the risk score and therefore reduce the risk of causing injury, illness or harm.It might not always be possible to eliminate the risk straight away or completely. For example if there were an area of loose flooring, it might not be practical for the venue to replace this immediately, or for a group to find an alternative venue. Cordoning off the area and putting signs up to warn people would be an appropriate mitigating action.  |

**How to complete a risk assessment**

Please use the [Parkinson’s UK risk assessment template](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GzcLpVsBLizVu4hT-Hcobqw23Gu01pjavPV7z85OS8Y/edit?usp=sharing), or print out the blank form at the bottom of this guide.

The best way to identify risks is to walk through the activity from start to finish. Imagine arriving at your activity and consider what hazards there might be - including tasks required to set-up and clear away an activity. You should consider the effects, likelihood and impact that each hazard presents and what mitigating actions are in place or could be put in place to avoid this. For some things, like exercise provided by a service provider, your mitigating action may be to ensure the provider has a comprehensive risk assessment. You don’t have to visit a venue in advance for reconnaissance, but be prepared to make changes when you get there.

| **Risk score** | **Appropriate action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1-2 | Acceptable level of risk, but maintain controls |
| 3-4 | Acceptable but look to improve with further mitigating measures where possible |
| 6-9 | Unacceptable and further mitigation required |

Repeat this process for every hazard identified. As each hazard may have a different effect, likelihood and impact, it’s best to not lump them altogether. When you multiply the likelihood that the risk might happen with the severity of the impact happening you will get a **risk score**. While we should be taking steps to reduce risks across all our activities, the risk score helps prioritise those activities which pose the greatest risk, so you can mitigate these or decide if the activity is too dangerous to run. After factoring in any mitigating measures, you should recalculate the risk score so that you can demonstrate how you have reduced the risk of the activity.

Get someone else to check over the risk assessment to get a second opinion on the risk scores. If, after considering the mitigating measures in place, you end up with a risk score of 6 or above, you should contact your staff contact and/or facilities@parkinsons.org.uk to discuss how you might be able to bring about a more acceptable level of risk - or if it should be run at all.

Make sure you date the risk assessment and add the names of those who wrote it - so we can keep it up to date.

If you expect that the activity or event will have over 50 people in attendance, or it involves something out of the ordinary, please send a copy of your risk assessment to facilities@parkinsons.org.uk.

An activity organised by you may be delivered by a **third-party provider,** with whom you must have a local service agreement in place. The provider will have their own risk assessment in place for that activity, but you should still ask to see this, review it and add to it if necessary. You should ensure that signs and symptoms relating to Parkinson’s have been taken into account.

Any third party delivering a service should hold relevant qualifications and/or experience and have appropriate insurance in place to undertake their role in a professional and safe manner. Further information about this can be found on Assemble.

**I’ve completed a risk assessment, what next?**

A record of the risk assessment should be kept up to date and accessible. Risk assessments are working documents. You should keep them under review and where applicable, revise them at least once a year or whenever changes occur. Doing this as a group may be beneficial, as you’ll be able to draw upon a more diverse range of skills and experiences.

If there are changes to your activity which might significantly affect your hazards and risk ratings, for example a change of venue or the delivery of a different type of exercise, you will need to complete a new assessment.

Your risk assessment should be at hand when you set up your activity and while you deliver it. Minor changes can be added if you get to your venue and come across a new hazard that you hadn’t expected. You can note it down, calculate the risk score and detail what mitigating measures you have put in place. For example, you might arrive at a community centre to discover that the kettle is not safe for use. You might then state on the risk assessment that no hot drinks will be served at this time.

**What happens if there is an accident, injury or something goes wrong?**

A common-sense approach should be taken and each incident should be dealt with individually depending on what has happened. For example:

If someone has spilled a drink but no one has been injured, you can clean up the spill and continue with the activity. If the spill resulted in injury, perhaps through scalding or slipping on the wet surface, you must **first make sure the affected person has the support they need**. This may include administering first aid (if competent at doing so), contacting the venue staff or emergency services where necessary and then assessing whether you must stop the event. Seek the assistance of other people around you, for example, may ask someone to address the hazard where appropriate while you deal with the injury, so no one else gets hurt in the meantime.

You should [report any accidents, incidents or near misses](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1koJW-3PV2hzlx17HH4PG0_vH1z7kH9G7ZywAUnW5az4/edit) as soon as it is practical to do so after the occurrence.

**A few tips**

* Don’t over-assess. All controls should be practical and proportionate in relation to the risk posed. For example, a control for a wet floor caused by a spilt drink could simply be to clean up the spillage, with no need to cordon off the area or put out signage. Itemising it in your assessment means you would have thought to have a mop or something similar to hand.
* Accidents may still happen; but, by demonstrating we have taken steps to reduce the likelihood of accidents occuring, we can be prepared when they do.
* Remember that risks may be different when considering people with Parkinson’s; especially in relation to balance and mobility.
* Speak with your peers, Parkinson’s UK staff contact or facilities@parkinsons.org.uk if you need any support around working through a risk assessment or have any other health and safety questions or concerns.

Parkinson’s UK risk assessment

Parkinson’s UK activity risk assessment template

| **Event/Activity (brief description):** | **Date assessment completed:** |
| --- | --- |
| **Name(s) of those completing the risk assessment:** | **Address of Event/Activity:** |
| **Name and role of person signing off on behalf of Parkinson’s UK:** | **Date of sign off:** |

|  | **Hazards**What are the hazards? | **Effects**What might happen because of this hazard? | **Mitigations**How have you reduced the risk already? | **Likelihood of risk occurring after mitigations****(1=low, 2=medium, 3=high)** | **The impact of the risk after mitigations****(1=low, 2=medium, 3=high)** | **Total risk score** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Physical hazards are relatively easy to spot but some other kinds need to be thought about.  | The possible effects of any hazard can vary. You may therefore want to think of a range of effects for certain hazards. | Consider what can be done to minimise the risks.  | How likely is it that the effect will happen? | How bad would the effect be if it happened? |  |
|  | *Unloading the car* | *People may hurt their back carrying heavy equipment or resources long distances* | *Instruct the person that needs to unload to park near the door while doing so and move the car afterwards. Pack the resources into smaller, more manageable boxes.*  | *1* | *1* | *1* |
|  | *Potholes in carpark* | *Someone might fall over* | *Let people know that the car park ground is uneven beforehand* | *2* | *2* | *4* |
|  | *No disabled access to venue* | *Difficult to get wheelchairs in, could cause problems for the person pushing and the person in the wheelchair* | *Agree with the venue that they will provide a disabled ramp and support people getting wheelchairs up it* | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Fire doors need to be easily accessed and marked clearly* | *If they are obstructed or not clear and there is a fire, people may get stuck in the venue* | *Ensure that fire doors are free of obstructions on arrival. Make sure that everyone knows where the exits are in case of a fire* | *1* | *1* | *1* |
|  | *Fire Extinguishers* | *There may not be any in case of emergency* | *Ensure that there are extinguishers fitted and that they are maintained and suitably located* | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Slips, trips and falls in the venue* | *Minor injuries to broken bones* |  | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Serving teas and coffees* | *People may get scalded* | *Invested in appropriate temperature cups. Someone will be on hand to carry cups to tables if necessary* | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Serving teas and coffees* | *People may catch COVID-19* | *Only have one person in the kitchen responsible for refreshments. Ensure they wash their hands regularly, wear a mask and avoid touching their face.*  | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Water station* | *People may slip on spilled water and cause injury* | *Towels available to mop up spilt water* | *1* | *1* | *1* |
|  | *People sitting too close together* | *People may catch COVID-19* | *Ensure that tables are spaced out and there aren’t too many chairs at each table. Encourage people to only sit in their household. Make sure people have to book so the room isn’t over capacity.*  | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Raffle* | *Money may get taken or lost* | *Ensure that there is someone with the money at all times and a locked tin is used. Make sure that the person transporting the money can do so in a safe way e.g. not using public transport* | *1* | *2* | *2* |
|  | *Speaker doing a presentation* | *People may trip over wires* | *Ensure that all wires are taped down so people can’t trip. Let people know that they are there.*  | *1* | *1* | *1* |
|  | *Speaker using a projector* | *The projector may catch fire* | *Ensure that there are no papers around the projector that may cause it to overheat* | *1* | *1* | *1* |
|  | *Moving tables and chairs* | *People may strain themselves with heavy lifting* | *Make sure that there is sufficient equipment to move tables and chairs and people know how to do so safely* | *1* | *1* | *1* |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **12** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **13** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **14** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Add more rows if needed**