**Society Risk Assessment Guidance**

1. **Duty of Care**

We all have an individual as well as collective **duty of care** in law to ensure the safety of activity participants and any other people who might be affected by activities and events.

**What is a duty of care?** A "Duty of care is a legal obligation imposed on an individual requiring that they adhere to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others."

Therefore when organising any activities or events it's important that you take the necessary precautions to keep your activity/event safe otherwise the Students' Union/student group could be legally responsible for any accidents or injuries that occur as a result.

Health and Safety law is some of the most stringent, so when taking the lead in organising an event you have assumed responsibility for the Health and Safety of all your participants taking part in activities. This cannot be taken lightly; you must be vigilant and make sure all participants are aware of the health and safety implications before partaking in your activity, and what they need to do in order to avoid the risk to them.

You can be liable for an accident or incident if **negligence** and a lack of duty of care is shown. **What is negligence?** Negligence means the failure to use reasonable care, which results in damage or injury to another.

This is where a Risk Assessment comes in. The phrase risk assessment might sound complicated or intimidating however it is a demonstration that you've considered all the possible risks relating to your activity/event and demonstrates that you have been pro-active in thinking of and putting in place measures to reduce the health and safety risks related to your activity or event. A risk assessment helps to demonstrate that a duty of care has taken place to protect all participants and others involved.

A risk assessment should not be seen as putting you off from organising an activity - it simply ensures that the activity and those taking part in it are safe.

1. **Getting Started**

**What is a hazard?** A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm.

**What is a risk?** A risk is the likelihood of harm occurring from the hazard.

All activities/events have risks. You can't eliminate all risks and hazards however you can put in place the necessary measures to prevent these risks from happening. This guide is here to help you start assessing factors relating to your activity that could cause harm to someone.

**Despite all your best planning accidents still happen.**

We want you to get the most out of an event whilst still being safe. Knowing how to respond to these situations is also important as it helps others to plan and prepare to avoid any possible dangers in the future.

All accidents/incidents should be reported as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours), **In the case of a serious accident/incident** contact University 24 hour security on 0114 225 2000 and Inform them that there has been an incident involving a student.

1. **How to Risk Assess**

**Step 1: Look for the hazards.**

Break your event down into individual activities. Look for what could cause harm and what could go wrong.

**Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how.**

Don't forget members/volunteers, members of the public, participants, people with disabilities, vulnerable people, inexperienced workers etc. Describe how the risk could happen and type of risks that could occur. If your event or activity involves anyone who might require Safeguarding measures (e.g. under 18’s, vulnerable people), please tick the box at the top of the page and add sections for Safeguarding as hazard. Please refer to the Safeguarding policy and guidance for more information. If you are using an external venue, please check for the venue's sexual harassment safeguards an include/reference them in the control measures.

**Step 3: Evaluate the risks, look at the existing precautions you have already put in place and decide whether they are adequate or whether more should be done.**

1. What measures are you already putting in place to minimise this risk?
2. Decide whether the hazard is high, medium or low risk by considering how likely is the hazard to cause harm and how severe will that harm be?
3. Are there any other control measures you need to put in place to reduce the risk of the hazard happening?
4. Will the additional control measures increase or decrease the risk?
5. Decide who will make sure the control measure is put in place and decide a time and date that this will be done by.

**Step 4: Signing off risk assessments**

1. Review the information to check accuracy and that control measures are sensible.
2. Once you have reviewed it please send it to the relevant department within the Students' Union (e.g. Societies Admin, Academic Reps team etc.), your risk assessment will then be checked and will be:
   1. Signed off and your event can go ahead as planned
   2. Returned with comments to make amendments (after altering you will need to resend it)
   3. Denied - your event cannot go ahead