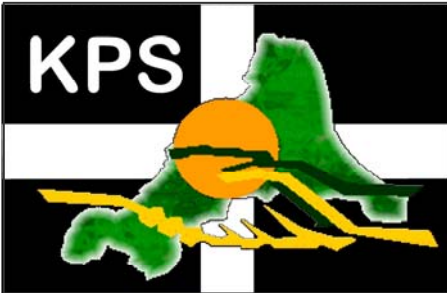


Risk Assessment Procedure Policy

Kernow Positive Support

SPECIALISED HIV INFORMATION,
SUPPORT, RESPIRE & RETREAT

POLICY DOCUMENT 2011



Risk Assessment Policy

Application

This policy applies to all Kernow Positive Support (KPS) workplaces and work activities.

Introduction

A risk assessment is an important tool in protecting employees, volunteers and clients (*service users*), by analyzing hazards and identifying risk reduction measures. The law requires that everything ‘reasonably practicable’ is done to protect people from harm. It helps to focus on the risks that really matter in the workplace – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can be effective in controlling risks.

Aims and Objectives

To ensure that staff, volunteers and clients understand the process of risk assessment and how it can be integrated into effective management practices.

The Arrangements for Applying the Policy

The KPS Board of Trustees will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all tasks, activities, locations and work activities that present a significant hazard in their area(s) of responsibility.

The KPS Board of Trustees must plan, co-ordinate and monitor how risk assessments will be managed locally. Actions must include the following:

- Establishing the activities/tasks/locations/work equipment to be assessed;
- Identifying competent people to carry out the assessments;
- Defining the system to manage completed assessments, any associated actions, communication and review;
- Establish communication and information sharing for the outcomes of the risk assessment with all staff, volunteers and others who may be affected by the risk;
- To involve staff, volunteers and their representatives in assessing the risks; and
- Refer risks to the appropriate senior manager or forum/committee where they cannot be managed locally.

Employee’s and volunteers are required to:

- Be aware of risk assessment and control measures for their area of work;
- Co-operate with and engage in the risk assessment process;
- Use and comply with control measures implemented to ensure the health and safety of themselves or others; and
- Report any workplace hazards or concerns regarding health and safety of themselves or others.
- Carry out “on the spot” (*dynamic*) risk assessments within the context of their own competencies and in consultation with others, as situations arise.
- Ensure all Risk Assessment Forms are complete and updated as required.

Procedure

1. Stages of Risk Assessment

a) Identify the hazards

Staff and volunteers will identify all the hazards associated with their area of responsibility that could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Hazards can be identified by:

- Observing the task or area;
- Referring to available guidance and information about best practice;
- Looking at accident and ill-health records;
- Checking manufacturers' instructions or data sheets;
- Asking staff and volunteers for their views.

b) Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard the groups of people who might be harmed and how must be identified. The groups of people to be considered include:

- Staff and volunteers with particular requirements e.g. new and young workers, people with disabilities, new or expectant mothers;
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers who may not be in the workplace all the time;
- Members of the public, service users; and
- Shared workplaces – how the work affects others and the risks to staff and volunteers from those who share the workplace.

c) Evaluate/assess the risks and decide on the precautions to control the risks

Evaluating/Assessing the risk

For each hazard identified the level of risk must be evaluated (*High/Medium/Low*). This evaluation may include the level of harm presented by the hazard, the number of people involved, and the likelihood of the harm occurring.

Once the level of risk is established staff and volunteers must consider what control measures are already in place and what actions are already being taken to reduce the risk, consider whether these are suitable and sufficient and whether further control measures are required.

Controlling the Risk

When controlling risks the following principles should be applied, where possible in the following order:

- Eliminate the hazard altogether;
- Substitution by something less hazardous or risk;
- Prevent access to the hazard e.g. by safeguarding.
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard e.g. ensuring safety during refurbishment/building works etc.
- Create safe methods of work and safe systems of work designed to reduce the risk.
- Issue personal protective equipment e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc.
- Provide welfare facilities e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination.
- Provide suitable information, instruction and training.
- Ensure appropriate supervision.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

On rare occasions there may be a need for staff and volunteers to undertake a **Dynamic Risk Assessment**. In these circumstances staff and volunteers must work within the context of their own competencies and in consultation with others where possible. The need for a dynamic risk assessment may arise when an unforeseen event occurs and a previously unidentified risk becomes apparent. Once the dynamic risk assessment has been taken place, a formal written risk assessment record must be made of this as soon as is reasonably practicable after the event.

d) Record and implement findings

General risk assessments

Assessments of processes or areas rather than an individual person should be recorded on the General Risk Assessment Form.

Other Risk Assessments

This General Risk Assessment Form may not be suitable for use for recording risks to individuals, complex risk assessments or where there is agreed standard documentation for inter-agency working. Where this is the case, specific forms have been created. The most appropriate form should be used to record the risk assessment.

Risk assessments in other Health and Safety Policy areas

Risk assessment forms can be developed relating to specific policy areas e.g.

- Hazardous Substances
- Manual Handling
- Display Screen Equipment
- Fire
- Work Equipment or Machinery
- Stress
- Educational Visits

e) Review

The KPS Board of Trustees should review assessments;

- At regular intervals not exceeding one year.
- Following a significant change and/or;
- If there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid e.g. after an accident, ill-health. incident, violent incidence or malfunction has occurred.

The risk assessment must remain up-to-date and valid and available at 'point of use'. Once a risk assessment is obsolete it must be archived for a minimum of 7 years.

2. Generic Risk Assessments

In some risk assessments are available to assist staff and volunteers in the risk assessment process. These assessments must be:

- Amended to reflect the workplace arrangements and any additional identified risks;
- Signed by a KPS trustee.
- Effectively communicated to all relevant parties;
- Monitored and reviewed at appropriate intervals.

3. Communication

The KPS Board of Trustees shall ensure that the persons at risk are provided with comprehensive and relevant information on the identified risks and the preventive and protective control measures at their induction. Everyone should understand what they must do and why. Where necessary, job safety instructions should be issued to individual employees and volunteers and appropriate training provided.

4. Training

The KPS Board of Trustees responsible for the planning, co-ordination and monitoring of risk assessments must receive appropriate risk assessment training. Staff and volunteers involved in the creation of risk assessments (*e.g. as part of a risk assessment team*) must receive training in the risk assessment process.

5. Monitoring

The KPS Board of Trustees shall monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that physical control measures are used, installed correctly and suitably maintained.

Employees and volunteers shall report any defects in control measures, personal protective equipment (*if applicable*), immediately to the KPS Board of Trustees.

6. Specialist Advice

It is important when completing risk assessments to be aware of individual limitations in terms of knowledge and competence. If further support is required staff and volunteers contact the KPS Board of Trustees for advice.

Legislative Framework

The Health and Safety at Work Act.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Further advice and Information

Health and Safety Executive (HSE): www.hse.gov.uk/

7. Monitoring and Review

The KPS Board of Trustees shall ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and in the light of:

- a) Any significant changes in working practices.
- b) Any changes in statutory legislation or KPS requirements.
- c) An incident occurs that requires improvement in practice.

8. Compliance

All staff and volunteers who fail to comply with the requirements of any of the KPS Health and Safety policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

9. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a simple, practical but systematic thought process which;

- Identifies the risks/hazards.
- Evaluates the extent of the risk.
- Considers how to eliminate the hazard and associated risk – entirely if possible.
- Checks what control measures are already in place.
- Prioritises actions on an action plan for improvements.
- Records significant findings.
- Requires review of the assessment within a defined time period.

10. Conducting a Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a combination of hazard severity (*consequence*) and the likelihood that it will cause harm or loss. To make the process of conducting a risk assessment an easier task, the procedure can be divided into 5 steps.

Identify the Hazards and Risks and who is effected

When conducting a risk assessment, firstly identify the activity and situation.

There are four main areas that need to be covered when identifying risks/hazards:

Practice – look at the work activities and review any procedures/safe systems of work that are already in place. Identify what in the work activity could be reasonably expected to cause harm. Are any of the work activities carried out in unusual places such as at height, or at night, does the activity involve repetitive motions etc.? Consult with those who are carrying out the work activity, they may have identified risks or hazards that are not immediately obvious.

Equipment – as part of the work activity, consider what equipment or substances are used. Identify the potential/actual hazards associated with the equipment/substances as they are being used in the workplace. When in use does the equipment produce excessive noise / are there any emissions? Manufacturer's instructions or data sheets can also help to spot hazards.

Environment – are the conditions of the local environment satisfactory for the work activities being performed. There are two ways that hazard spotting can be completed. One is to analyse the various tasks undertaken by jobholders and another is to produce a list of relevant topics and conduct risk assessments for each topic.

People - identify which personnel are involved in the activity and what their roles are. Special consideration must be given to the following groups:

- New and Expectant Mothers.
- Vulnerable Adults.
- Young people (*under 18*) – need to take into account inexperience .
- Lone Workers.
- Disabled.

Particular attention should taken when dealing with people with known and/or suspected problems that may have been noted within their Support Plan or identified by a third party (*referrer*) etc.

- Mental health problems.
- Self-harming.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- Violent tendencies.
- Depression.
- Abused or a perpetrator of abuse.
- Known or disclosed criminal conviction (*spent or unspent*).

Working with perpetrators of abuse

KPS is committed to creating a safe environment for people to report abuse by providing a gateway for multi agency interventions designed to hold abusers accountable for their behaviour. Through its policies and staff training KPS hopes to highlight the negative consequences of abusive behaviour as a deterrent sending a strong signal that abusive behaviour in any form is not acceptable. KPS will work with the perpetrators of abuse who wish to address abusive behaviour provided the risk assessment enables it to do so and no criminal offence has been committed. The rights of those accused of abuse will always be maintained, and they will be supported to exercise those rights within the KPS client charter, and have access to the KPS complaints procedure.

***N.B.** In the case of those referred by other agencies the Referral Form should indicate any particular risks. However, due to the confidential nature of HIV disclosure this may not have been disclosed by the referring agent for a number of reasons. It is important to ask the referrer if there are any important information KPS should be made aware of.*

Also consider who else may be affected by the activities, such as:

- Clients.
- Visitors/members of the public.
- Contractors.
- Other Site Users.
- Cleaners.

Accident and ill-health records can also be helpful with hazard spotting or identifying if a particular group of people are at risk.

Once a risk assessor has identified who is at risk, consider how they may be exposed to the relevant hazards that have been identified. Identify under what conditions exposure occurs; routine, non-routine, deviation from normal exposure or emergency situation such as spillage of hazardous substance.

Glossary of Terms

Risk Assessment

A careful examination of what, in the workplace, could cause harm to people so that a decision can be made as to whether there are enough precautions in place or more should be done to prevent harm.

Hazard

Anything that has the potential to cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer etc.

Risk

Is the chance, high, medium or low that somebody could be harmed by the risk or hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Harm

Is the actual injury or ill-health suffered by those exposed to the risk hazard.

Dynamic Risk Assessments

A risk assessment which takes place during work in progress as a need arises (“*on the spot*”). In these circumstances a previously prepared risk assessment may not be in place as the situation has not been previously foreseeable. Once the dynamic risk assessment has been taken place, a formal written risk assessment must be made of this as soon as is reasonably practicable after the event.

This policy also includes the identification of risks posed to both clients and staff during lone working. KPS recognises that a significant proportion of the support provided will be through one to one contact in a variety of settings and the risks to clients, staff and volunteers need to be identified. Staff and volunteer training and induction procedures will highlight the potential risks to staff and volunteers, and the risk to clients will be identified in the client handbook. As part of the overall service provision staff and volunteers are required to draw to the attention of perspective clients the relevant section of the client handbook which deals with these potential risks.

Information covering these potential risks and how staff, volunteers and clients deal with the possible risks which can arise from one to one working are contained in several policy documents including:

- KPS Lone Worker Policy
- KPS Whistleblowing Policy
- KPS Safeguarding Policy Children/Adults
- KPS Managing your Personal Safety
- KPS Harassment Policy
- KPS Ethics and Practices Policy
- KPS Disciplinary Procedure Policy
- KPS Conflict of Interest Policy
- KPS Confidentially Policy
- KPS Complaints Policy
- KPS Health & Safety Policy

Including the KPS Client Handbook, and the KPS Staff and Volunteer Handbook.

All KPS policies and procedures are reviewed annually; this RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY has been reviewed and ratified by the KPS Board of Trustees commencing 1st April 2010 (*under ‘policies’ as shown in the KPS Annual Report and Accounts*).

Ref: RAP2010.

KPS Risk Assessment Log

Practice Guidance & Instruction

All records should be:

- **Timely** - Records should be made as soon as possible.
- **Accurate** - If mistakes in information have been recorded, they are unlikely to be questioned by a new worker (*Staff/Volunteer*). The inaccurate information will be perpetuated inadvertently. At times, information may be gathered in a stressful situation. However, every effort must be made to ensure accuracy. It may be advisable to check the information recorded at a later date. Whereby, staff and volunteers are unsure of specific risks they should check with referring agency and/or the KPS Responsible Trustee.
- **Factual** - It is essential to record the nature and the source of the information.
 - What is the risk/harm factor.
 - How this information was sourced
 - Hearsay and third party information must be clearly recorded as such.
- **Ethical** - All records should be non-judgmental and non-discriminatory. It may be a useful guide to record information with an assumption that the person you are writing about will read it.

The importance of good record keeping is essential for all agencies and not just Local Authorities.

“Good record keeping is essential for Local Authorities so that when they are challenged – as is increasingly likely – they are able to demonstrate that decisions were not taken unlawfully or with maladministration...Defensive record keeping can easily become poor record keeping...This renders decision making opaque and difficult to defend against challenge.”
(Mandelstam, M., 1998, page 163)

From a legal perspective, the Human Rights Act 1998, which came into effect 1st October 2000, brings into English law a distinct and different approach to thinking about rights, responsibilities and remedies. Additionally, courts appear increasingly willing to hold Local Authorities, and individual practitioners, to legal account. In the light of this, it is important to keep detailed records.

Record keeping is an integral part of the professional practice and should assist the process. It is not separate from the process and not an optional extra to be fitted in if time and circumstances allow.

KPS Practitioners must be aware of the Human Rights articles and if they feel that they are possibly contravening any Human Rights article, they must refer to this in written records, including a justification.

For more information regarding the Human Rights Act, refer to the "*Code of Practice*".

Procedure

Whenever a risk or harm is identified and recorded all agencies should keep clear and accurate records and each agency should identify procedures for incorporating all relevant agency and vulnerable adult's and children's records into a file to record all actions taken. In the case of providers of services these should be available to the commissioners of services and to the Care Quality Commission.

When Should Information be recorded?

- Records must be kept from the time that a risk or harm disclosure is made.
- Each entry must be dated and timed.
- The name of the person recording the information must be written in full.
Do not use initials.
- A Lone Worker Log Book should be kept available in the KPS Office stating details of the Lone Worker on duty (*Date, contact details and where the Lone Worker is*) and relevant instructions to safeguard the Lone Worker whilst he/she is on duty (*see Lone Worker Policy*)

What to Record

- All entries must provide factual information, for example, times, dates, names of people at risk or harm.
- All relevant risks or harm.
- Lone Worker risk (*see Lone Worker Policy*)
- Avoid expressions of opinion (*remember that the person you are writing about may have the right to read what you have said*).
- All contact with all those involved including any alleged perpetrator must be recorded.
- Record the exact words of all those involved including any alleged perpetrator used.
- Use body maps to illustrate any physical injuries.
- All consultation with a Manager and/or Senior Manager must be recorded.
- When contacting other agencies the questions asked and information received must be recorded.
- The decisions taken at all meetings must be recorded.
- It is essential to demonstrate how an assessment of risk, responsibility, rights, Autonomy and protection of the vulnerable adult or child was undertaken.
- If no risk assessment is to take place, the reasons why and on whose authority this Decision was taken must be recorded.

