

Activity 3: Risk Management and the blue card

SETTING THE SCENE

In order to achieve your organisation's objectives, you need risk management:

- to prevent things from going wrong
- to limit the degree of harm, and
- to reduce your organisation's liability if harm does occur.

Every child related business or service must develop targeted risk management plans around their activities, the environment and the people who are working with children and young people. It is essential to consider factors such as age and developmental level, emotional maturity, abilities and disabilities that can increase or decrease risks of harm to children and young people. The context – where, when, how, why the activity occurs - is also a critical factor. The integrity, competencies, experience, role and risk awareness of staff and volunteers involved must also be taken into account.

USING SCENARIOS

This activity uses scenarios to help people identify, analyse and assess risks in certain situations, and to determine what controls are needed to manage those risks. The blue card status of an employee or volunteer is included in each scenario. This is because the new legislation requires you to 'risk manage' your employment policies and practices and not rely solely on a blue card check to ensure the suitability of people working with children.

The four scenarios provided may be adapted to fit your circumstances. You may substitute examples from your own organisation's experiences or from the bank of scenarios on pages 30 to 34 in Part B of the Resource Book. Vary the blue card status if you wish, and consider how this affects your risk management approach.

Scenarios can be effective training and development tools. They can raise awareness of risks, help you work through issues and reflect on the adequacy of your organisation's child protection policy, capabilities and procedures.

INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY

There are four steps in this activity:

1. Analyse the scenario and identify the risks of harm to children and young people, and also to your organisation.
2. Using the table on page 17, Part A of the Resource Book, assess the level of risk by considering how likely the risk is to occur and what the consequences would be.
3. Identify controls needed to manage the risks identified (ie. prevent them, limit the damage, reduce your liability), and consider your organisation's controls.

Using the checklist on page 12, Participant's Workbook, identify those aspects of the risk management strategy which are missing from your current controls and may manage the risks more effectively if they should arise.

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Category	Scenario	What are the risks?	Assess risk level: How likely? How damaging?	What are your current controls to manage these risks?	What's missing?
A paid employee who has commenced regulated employment pending the outcome of the Blue Card application	You hear the employee making sexually suggestive personal remarks to a group of the older children. Some of the children laugh; others look shocked.				
An employee who holds a Blue Card	You've heard this staff member has been charged with indecent exposure in a playground. The staff member subsequently advises you that he has a change in criminal history and gives you two weeks notice.				
A volunteer employee who is not required to hold a Blue Card.	The volunteer employee is a single parent, new to the area, who offers to run orienteering with small groups at your forthcoming 2 day camp. The parent's son will be attending the camp.				
An employee whose blue card has been suspended as a consequence of being charged with an excluding offence	The Commission has notified you that they have suspended the employee's positive notice blue card. You were relying on the special skills of this experienced staff member for a special event.				