

NHS Cambridgeshire Risk Assessment Framework

INTRODUCTION

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) defines risk management as “the process of identifying, assessing, analysing and managing all potential risks”.

Any new projects or services need to identify and assess potential risks to ensure effective management is in place, decisions are made taking account of these risks, and organisations maintain an optimal balance of risk, benefit and cost.

Risk is inherent in all activity. Organisation should not be risk adverse, but risk aware. In many cases the level of risk identified will be deemed acceptable as part of the overall impact of the project or service.

The process of risk assessment requires answers to four questions:

What can go wrong? How bad? How often? Is there a need for action?

DEFINITIONS

Hazard - A source of potential harm eg a room where a service takes place. Almost anything can be a hazard.

Risk- The likelihood (chance of harm) and consequence (result of harm) that could result from exposure to a hazard eg the effect of having poor ventilation in a clinic

Types of Risk

Examples of the types of risk that organisations might encounter and need to protect against include:

- Corporate risks ~ operating within powers, fulfilling responsibilities, accountability to public
- Risks to Reputation ~ quality of services, communication, patient experience
- External risks ~ political, environmental, social, environmental, meteorological
- Clinical risks ~ associated with service standards, competencies, complications, equipment, medicines, staffing, patient information
- Health and safety risks ~ ensuring the well being of staff and patients whilst providing or using services
- Business Risks ~ associated with managing the affairs of the organisation, human resources, information & IT, internal management, achieving objectives.
- Risks to Assets ~ security, protection, optimum use, maintenance, replacement

PROCESS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT

1. Set the context – for example, new vasectomy clinic in a community setting. Draw up and use a process map of the service to clarify what processes are involved and focus the risk assessment.
2. Identify hazards and risks – for example, risk of staff sickness, risk of poor ventilation in the clinic room.

Areas to consider are:

Governance	Infection Control	Medicines Management
Workforce Development	Reputation	Referral process
Workload	Information	Incident Reporting & Risk Management
Skill Mix	Governance & IT	Working with other organisations
Environment	Administration	

To identify risks think of what can go wrong - use 'What If' questions, for example:

- What if the patient does not attend?
- What if the records management system is not available?
- What if the GPs don't refer to the service?
- What if the ventilation system in the clinic fails?
- What if patient acquires an infection?
- What if a member of staff goes on long-term sick?
- What if the estimated cost of a project is wrong?
- What is the directorate does not meet national standards in its area?

For each risk

3. Identify causes and consider what is in place / what steps have already been taken to manage the risks.
4. Quantify risks – use consequence and likelihood matrix below

Consequence	Likelihood				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain
5 Catastrophic	5	10	15	20	25
4 Major	4	8	12	16	20
3 Moderate	3	6	9	12	15
2 Minor	2	4	6	8	10
1 Negligible	1	2	3	4	5

The scores obtained from the risk matrix are assigned grades as follows

- 1 - 3 Low risk
- 4 - 6 Moderate risk
- 8 - 12 High risk
- 15 - 25 Extreme risk

5. Consider how to manage the risks - this will be driven by the risk score. For example, low risks may be accepted, moderate risks prevented, and high and extreme risks controlled. High and extreme risks should be added to the organisational risk register and the action plans for managing the risk regularly reviewed and updated.
6. Reassess what the potential risk level is likely to be after the action plans to manage the risk have been completed. Consider if this is acceptable. If not, further action is required.
7. Review the risk list and progress with action plans at each clinical governance meeting, and consider any changes to the service and any inherent new risks.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR RISKS

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|--|--|
| Accept – do nothing | Control – do something to reduce risk |
| Retain – allocate resources just in case | Prevent – do something to prevent risk |
| Transfer – insurance | Avoid – stop doing the action that leads to the risk |
| Mitigate – do something after the event | |

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES

1. IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS

A table highlighting possible areas to consider when identifying risks

2. RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Use this form to record the risk score and agreed management for each identified risk.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

This matrix gives a format for summarising the risks for a project or service and shows how the risks are being managed.

1. IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS

In each relevant area, consider 'What if' questions

Staffing levels / Workforce Development / Professional development / Skill Mix	Clinical / Medicines Management / Safeguarding
Infection Control / Health & Safety / Environment	Service administration / Patient administration
Corporate / Business / Reputation	Information Governance / IT and record keeping
Governance / Risk Management	Working with other organisations / Referral
Outcomes / National Guidance	Patient experience / Patient Information / Access

2. RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Organisation:	Date Assessed:	Names of those involved in the assessment:	
Description of team, building, service, directorate etc this assessment applies to:			
Description of Activity / Service / Element of service being assessed:			
Significant Hazards / Risks:			
Existing Controls:			
Risk with existing controls:			
Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Score	Accept (Y/N)
If Risk is not accepted, complete action plan:			
Actions	Responsibility	Timescale	Revised risk score
Manager with responsibility for action plan:			Review Date:

3. RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

Risk	Existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Score & Level	Actions required to manage risk	Responsibility for management	Timescale	Revised Likelihood	Revised Consequence	Revised Risk score & Level