



# Information Sheet

Foundation for Community Dance • June 2013

## Introduction to Risk Assessment for Community Dance Practitioners

If you are self-employed, an employee or an employer you are under a legal obligation to ensure the health and safety of yourself and those you work with (whether the other people are volunteers, employees or participants). Undertaking a risk assessment is one mechanism you can use to ensure people's health and safety.

There are many ways a risk assessment can be done, but all risk assessments usually have five basic steps:

1. Identifying the hazards
2. Deciding who is at risk of harm
3. Evaluating the risks and deciding on precautionary measures
4. Recording your findings and implementing them
5. Reviewing your plan on a regular basis

Please read our Community Dance Risk Assessment Prompts to help you with Steps 1 and 2.

You can adapt and use our Risk Assessment Proforma to help you complete Steps 3 and 4.

Remember that if you work with different groups or in different locations you may need to complete a risk assessment for each group or location that you work with.

For general advice and guidance about risk assessments visit the Government's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)



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## Community Dance Risk Assessment Prompts

This sheet contains some prompt questions that you might like to consider when undertaking a risk assessment for your practice. It is only designed to prompt you to think about a range of issues so remember that there may be other things that you may need to consider in relation to your particular circumstances.

You may wish to use this prompt sheet to help you complete a risk assessment template, an example of which is available at the Foundation for Community Dance website – [www.communitydance.org.uk](http://www.communitydance.org.uk).

### Who might be harmed?

Think about who uses the space you work in. Remember that you're responsible for anyone entering the building who may be related to the sessions you run (eg. dance participants, parents, carers etc). Your responsibility extends to all areas of the building that people associated with your work may use – not just the space in which you hold your sessions (eg. car park, entrances and exits to the building, corridors, waiting areas, kitchen facilities etc).

#### People to consider may include:

- Yourself and any assistants who work with you
- Musicians
- People bringing equipment/resources to your session
- Dance participants
- Parents/carers or those accompanying people who attend your sessions
- Audience members

Remember that young, old, disabled or pregnant people are generally considered to be especially at risk of hazards, including low level hazards.

### How might people be harmed?

#### Environment:

#### Access points

- Can participants to your session access the building and dance space without risk of trips or falls?
- Is there a risk of participants leaving the dance space/building without your knowledge?

#### Lighting

- Is there sufficient lighting in/to the building and the dance space to ensure participants' safety?

#### Building

- Are there changes in flooring levels, slopes or steps?
- Are the parts of the building that you come in contact with in a good state of repair?

- Are there any trip hazards (cables, wires, loose carpets, furniture etc)?
- Are there heavy doors that users might struggle to open/close?
- Have you checked that vulnerable people can use the main means of escape?

If participants or those accompanying them have access to a kitchen you need to consider how access to equipment (kettles, ovens, knives) might cause risk.

### **Heating**

- Are there appropriate heating and ventilation systems available?
- Is there access to drinking water to prevent dehydration?

### **Lone working**

- Do you work alone and are you safe from intruders or unwanted attention?

### **Fire**

- Do you know where the fire exits are?
- Do you have access to a phone from which you could dial for emergency assistance?
- Are the fire exits always unlocked, easy for all your participants to access and clear of rubbish?
- Do you know where fire alarms and fire extinguishers are located?

Remember: If you're an employer you need to complete a separate fire risk assessment. Visit the Health and Safety Executive website for further information: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### **Equipment storage and use**

- Do you bring in or store heavy equipment (eg. ballet barre, instruments, music amplifier)?
- If you store props or equipment is there any risk of these items falling on anyone or tripping them up?
- Do any of your props present trip hazards to your users when they are in use?
- Do you or your participants use paints or other substances containing chemicals?
- Do props put participants at risk of falling from a height?
- If you use electrical equipment do you have it regularly inspected for safety to ensure it complies with safety requirements related to use in public?

### **Activity**

- Do you check for pre-existing medical conditions amongst your participants?
- Do you ensure that participants wear appropriate clothing/shoes for each session?
- Do you provide a warm up and cool down at each session?
- Are you clear about what constitutes safe practice in relation to the group or individuals you are working with?
- Are the dance activities suitable to the group or individual participating in the dance session?
- Do you make water-breaks available to prevent dehydration?
- Do activities put participants at risk of falling from a height?





# Information Sheet

Risk Assessment example • June 2013

**Name of group/session:** Dance for Parkinson's Group

**Location where session takes place:** Stoke church hall

**Date 1<sup>st</sup> risk assessment completed:** 7/6/12

What is the hazard?	Who is at risk from the hazard?	What are you already doing to reduce this risk?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Who is responsible for further action?	When will the safety precautions be put in place?	Tick when the safety precautions are in place.
Uneven floor at entry to building (trips)	Participants with Parkinson's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warning participants about the floor before they attend.</li> <li>Ensuring all participants are accompanied when entering or exiting the building.</li> </ul>	Add line to publicity material requesting people phone before attending.	S.Courtney	19/6/12	✓
Heavy swing door on entry to studio space (falls)	Participants with Parkinson's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warning participants about the floor before they attend.</li> <li>Making sure the door is securely propped open when participants enter and exit the studio.</li> </ul>	No	Not applicable	Currently in place	✓
Moving ballet barre (weight)	Practitioner and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that two people are always available to move the barre.</li> </ul>	No	Not applicable	Currently in place	✓
Participants footwear	Some dance	Advising all participants	Add line to publicity	S.Courtney	19/6/12	✓

(trip)	participants.	about the sort of footwear they need to participate in sessions and advising them that participation is dependent on appropriate footwear.	material requesting people phone before attending.			
Working in isolation (abusive behaviour)	Dance practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure mobile signal is available and bring mobile to all sessions.</li> </ul>	No	Not applicable	Currently in place	✓
Some unstable chairs (falling when seated)	Participants with Parkinson's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selecting stable chairs before each session</li> <li>Warning participants.</li> </ul>	Advising church hall committee that chairs need to be replaced.	S.Courtney	19/6/12	✓
Rural isolation causing delay of medical assistance (health)	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure mobile signal is available and bring mobile to all sessions.</li> <li>Bring first aid kit to all sessions.</li> </ul>	Keep first aid certificate up to date.	S.Courtney	21/11/12	✓
Features of Parkinson's (trips, falls)	Participants with Parkinson's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure sufficient volunteers are available to provide assistance to all participants who need additional support.</li> <li>Select movement activity with care and differentiate for those with more/less physical capacity.</li> </ul>	No	Not applicable	Currently in place	✓
Use of long scarves as props (trip)	Participants	Ensure participants are given clear instructions.	No	Not applicable	Currently in place	✓