**Examples & Guidance for Local Action Groups Risk Assessments**

This document contains examples and guidance for various events local action groups may be planning. There are questions which you should ask yourself at the planning stage of each event, suggestions for mitigations, and an example of what this looks like on the risk assessment table. The guidance questions, mitigations and example risks are not meant to cover all possible scenarios, and you should take time to consider whether there are any other specific risks linked to the event that you are organising.

When referring to ‘hazardous activities’ this means **‘anything you would have reservations about doing yourself or having a family member take part in.’** This also includes **any** activity in water.

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## Risk Types – Reference Table

Use this table to help identify different types of risk when planning community activities, events, or campaigns. Consider each category when writing your risk assessment.

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| **Category** | **What to Consider** | **Examples** |
| Health & Safety | Risks to physical safety, including equipment, environment, and emergency response | Trips/falls, tools, litter picking, road safety, fire exits, first aid |
| Wellbeing & Mental Health | Emotional strain, stress, trauma exposure, burnout | Distress from protests, heated discussions, climate grief, feeling overworked and unsupported |
| Safeguarding | Protecting children, young people, or at-risk adults from harm | Unsupervised under 18s, inappropriate interactions, lone working risks |
| Data & Privacy | Protecting personal data and respecting consent | Sign-up forms, recording events, handling contact information |
| Legal & Reputational | Acting lawfully and preserving Friends of the Earth/your group’s reputation | Unapproved demos, offensive content, unauthorised photos |
| Financial & Insurance | Risk of loss, damage, or uninsured activities | Uncovered activities, broken tools, property damage, missed insurance limits |
| Environmental | Risks to local environments or sustainability | Habitat damage, litter left behind, CO₂ from transport |
| Operational/Delivery | Things that could stop the event going ahead smoothly | Event lead unwell, extreme weather conditions, tech issues, venue issues |

## Risk Likelihood and Severity – Evaluation Table

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|  |  | **SEVERITY** | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **1. Minor injury or low level distress** | **2. Lost time injury or moderate emotional harm** | **3. Temporary incapacity or disease or significant psychological impact** | **4. Permanent disability or serious psychological harm** | **5. Fatal outcome or severe harm** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **LIKELIHOOD** | **5. Frequent occurrence** | Tolerable 5 | Substantial 10 | Intolerable 15 | Intolerable 20 | Intolerable 25 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4. Fairly frequent** | Tolerable 4 | Substantial 8 | Intolerable 12 | Intolerable 16 | Intolerable 20 |  | **How to use this:** | | |  |
| **3. Occasional occurrence** | Tolerable 3 | Substantial 6 | Substantial 9 | Intolerable 12 | Intolerable 15 |  | Likelihood = score between 1 to 5 | | | |
| **2. Remote possibility** | Trivial 2 | Tolerable 4 | Substantial 6 | Substantial 8 | Substantial 10 |  | Severity = score between 1 to 5 | | | |
| **1. Highly unlikely** | Trivial 1 | Trivial 2 | Tolerable 3 | Tolerable 4 | Tolerable 5 |  | Risk = Likelihood x Severity | | |  |

## Standard wellbeing questions:

[Safeguarding](https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/safeguarding-guidance-local-action-groups) is not just about physical health and safety, it’s also about protecting mental and emotional wellbeing, including those responsible for safeguarding at events. Without self-care, the emotional toll of running events can lead to burn out and exhaustion. To support the wellbeing of your team, care for all participants, and maintain a sustainable group, consider the following questions:

* Will there be a pre-event briefing covering roles, risks, and conduct?
* Is a post-event debrief or evaluation planned to reflect on what went well and what could improve?
* Are there known emotional or psychological risks? e.g. sensitive topics, potential confrontations
* What wellbeing support is available before, during, and after the event? e.g. team support, space to decompress, follow-up calls
* Who is responsible for monitoring welfare, wellbeing or supporting volunteers during the event?

# **Types of activities:**

## Regular In-Person Meetings

Guidance questions:

* What is the size and layout of the venue? Is it accessible to all participants? e.g. wheelchair accessible rooms, gender neutral toilets, dedicated prayer space or quiet space
* Are there clear fire exits and do attendees know where they are?
* Is there a check-in process in case of emergencies?
* Are there any safeguarding concerns? e.g. under 18s or at risk adults attending
* Is the meeting in a public or place with shared facilities? If so, how is confidentiality managed?
* Do any attendees have medical conditions to be aware of? e.g. allergies to peanuts and refreshments are being served

Mitigation suggestions:

* Complete a venue walkthrough before the event and pay particular attention to accessibility
* Ensure you have an up-to-date attendee list on the day
* Ensure there is first aid provision
* Provide clear signage
* Hold a short debrief at the end to catch any safeguarding concerns or share feedback

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Individual health or medical emergency, such as asthma attack, seizure, fainting | 10 | At least one staff member has first aid training or there is first aid provision  Before joining local action group events, members are asked about any medical conditions that others need to be aware of, and carry an up to date attendee list  If any incidents occur, tell the relevant health and safety person (e.g. first aider) and emergency services if there is a medical emergency. | Group lead/s | Before the next meeting | Tick this box if the action is complete | If there is any incident, email the regional Friends of the Earth staff member and safeguarding@foe.co.uk and [community@foe.co.uk](mailto:community@foe.co.uk)  Flag in the briefing if there are any attendees with medical conditions and highlight the process for dealing with any incidents |

## Regular Online Meetings

Guidance questions:

* Are there safeguards in place to prevent Zoom-bombing or uninvited access?
* Are the privacy and confidentiality needs of participants respected? e.g. clear recording policies
* Are hosts trained to manage technical issues or participant disruptions?
* Is the platform accessible for people using screen readers or with poor bandwidth?
* Is there a clear plan if someone becomes distressed or shares sensitive information?
* Are members given space to raise concerns?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Consider whether you need to make the meeting links public or share after people have registered
* Send out accessibility information before the meeting, including where accessibility is lacking
* Enable the waiting room, or no one to join before the host joins
* Set ground-rules at the start of each meeting
* Have at least one other co-host to manage tech and support if a participant becomes distressed
* Ensure the safeguarding policy covers digital/online work
* Hold a short debrief at the end to catch any safeguarding concerns or share feedback

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Member/s become distressed during meeting because of the nature of the topic on anti-racism and climate justice | 8 | All members informed of topic before meeting  Content warning given at the start to explain the topic will include discussion about racism  Ground rules at start of meeting reiterating use of trigger warnings, and to take care of each other and themselves | Event lead/s | Before the meeting | Tick this box if the action is complete | If attendee leaves meeting, a follow up message will be sent to check in |

## Stalls in Community Spaces (e.g. streets, parks, buildings)

Guidance questions:

* Is permission needed from local authorities or the property owner?
* Is the stall structure stable and weather-proof? e.g. suitable for wind, rain, shade
* Could the placement cause an obstruction, e.g. for wheelchair users, guide dogs, pushchairs or a trip hazard, e.g. guy ropes, extension cables?
* Is there secure storage for valuables or sensitive materials? e.g. donation tins, sign-up sheets
* How will you manage any confrontational or challenging conversations?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Create a site plan and share with all attending
* Monitor the weather and if the conditions are too extreme, communicate quickly and clearly with attendees
* The lead should hold a staff/volunteer briefing on the day
* There should be a debrief to capture any safeguarding concerns, feedback and to provide space for volunteers to share experiences

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Gazebo for stall causing a trip hazard | 16 | Pitch gazebo in an area clear of footpaths and emergency exit routes  Ensure gazebo legs are pegged firmly into the ground and stake guy ropes/lines as closely to the gazebo as possible  Use brightly coloured guy ropes/ lines for visibility, or make them more visible with coloured fabric, flags or reflective tape | Stallholder/s | Before pitching stall | Tick this box if the action is complete | Put up a sign informing people of trip hazards, let people know to be careful of the guy ropes, or stake a large stick or log by guy lines/ropes to draw attention |

## Creative Stunts (e.g. Pop-Up Installations)

Guidance questions:

* Is the installation safe and secure? e.g. no sharp edges, trip hazards taped down or removed
* Do you need road or footpath closures or permissions from the council?
* Could it be misinterpreted or cause unintended offence?
* Have you considered the likelihood of public interference or vandalism?
* What’s the plan if the stunt attracts more attention than expected?
* If the stunt is taking place outdoors, how can adverse weather conditions affect it? e.g. wind, rain, sun

Mitigation suggestions:

* Consultation with local authorities
* Have a clear stewarding plan
* Use signage
* Have a rapid removal plan prepared
* Decide a point when the stunt will be called off e.g. heavy rains, moderate winds
* Hold a debrief to discuss the emotional and mental impact of the stunt for the team

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Using FOE Earth Heads at event limiting visibility or movement of person wearing prop, and can contribute to overheating | 6 | Person using Earth Head needs a ‘buddy’ to ensure their safety, and act as their guide for moving around  If extremely hot, take regular breaks and keep hydrated | Event lead, person using Earth Head and ‘buddy’ | 4 weeks before the event | Tick this box if the action is complete | Include in the briefing on the day so all are aware of people using props and their limited visibility and movement  Consider an alternative if it is too hot (over 30°C)  If water is involved at all, inform insurers |

## Demonstrations (Static or Moving)

**For any protest or non-violent direct action, you must consult the FOE guide** [**How to organise a protest | Local action**](https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/how-organise-protest) **which covers insurance, accessibility, threats from the far right, protest law and more.**

Guidance questions:

* How are attendees getting to the meeting point and returning home safely, avoiding counter demonstrations?
* Has the route or location been agreed with the emergency services/local authority?
  + You don’t need to ask the police for permission to protest, and police have a legal obligation to facilitate your protest.
  + If you’re planning a protest march in England or Wales, you must provide written notice at least 6 days before your planned event to the police.
  + If you’re organising a parade or public procession in Northern Ireland, you must notify the Parades Commission 28 days in advance.
* How will crowd control be managed?
* Are stewards/volunteers trained and briefed?
* Is there a clear plan for communicating changes or emergencies to participants?
* Could counter-protesters or bystanders cause disruption?
* What are the risks to vulnerable participants or those who are being targeted? e.g. disability, race, religion, migrants

Mitigation suggestions:

* Plan journeys for attendees: check for travel disruptions, engineering works, and counter-demos. Share routes to/from stations that minimise risk of harm
* Train stewards/volunteers in de-escalation training
* Designate someone as the First Aider, and identify nearest first aiders/welfare points
* Create a group dispersal plan
* Hold a brief to include how people are feeling about the event, de-escalation tips and what volunteers should do if they feel overwhelmed
* Hold a debrief to provide emotional or mental support and help with any follow-up support if needed

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Confrontation or altercations with building staff or passers by that can affect attendees particularly marginalised/at-risk attendees | 12 | Holding a briefing before the demo that covers ground rules, including what to do if attendees want to leave  Ensuring good communication and that no one is left alone  Nominate one person to be the liaison for speaking with public/passers by (preferably someone who doesn’t have linked lived experience to the cause) | Event lead/s and all members | 2 weeks before protest | Tick this box if the action is complete | Hold a debrief after the demonstration for everyone to share how it went, support through any difficult situations, and encourage everyone to take self-care afterwards |

## Meetings with People in Power (e.g. MPs, Mayors)

Guidance questions:

* Is the meeting private or public, and is that clearly communicated to all?
* Are attendees briefed about confidentiality and respectful conduct?
* Are there potential safeguarding concerns?
* Could emotions run high? Is there a risk of reputational damage?
* What’s the plan if someone becomes disruptive?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Have an attendee list
* Have an agreed agenda
* Prepare with roleplay Q&A and manage expectations

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Meeting goes off topic, becomes heated, or emotions become heightened | 3 | Meeting agenda to be planned and agreed in advance and shared where possible with all attending  Prepare for the meeting and various scenarios with a roleplay. Prepare a scenario and process for ending the meeting early should it become unmanageable  Nominate one person to chair/lead the meeting, who will ensure agenda is being followed, manage timekeeping | Meeting lead | Before the meeting | Tick this box if the action is complete | Ensure there is a debrief with all present to reflect on how it went and provide any wellbeing or peer support |

## Repair Cafés

Guidance questions:

* Are tools and electrical equipment PAT tested and safe to use?
  + All powered machinery **must** be checked by the insurers. See ‘Repair Cafes’ under section 3: [Insurance guidance | Local action](https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/insurance-guidance)
* Are volunteers trained to use tools safely and confidently?
* Do volunteers and visitors understand that repairs are at their own risk?
* Is there clear signage about what can and can’t be repaired?
* Is there a clear plan for disposing of broken or unrepairable items?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Hold a safety briefing
* Keep inventory and tool checklists up to date
* Communicate with insurers
* Ensure proper ventilation for soldering, painting, etc
* Make use of accident books or incident report forms
* Make space for volunteers to speak about the impact of challenging interactions or heavy moments

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| mproper use of or injury from angle grinders (for knife sharpening)  Make: Makita  Model: GA4530R 720W 4 1/2" Electric Angle Grinder 110V | 15 | Only one person will be operating machinery who will have received full training  Protective gear given to operator, plus safety briefing for all at start of the event | Event lead | 4 weeks before the event | Tick this box if the action is complete | Contact insurance to find out if machinery is covered |

## Public Meetings (e.g. Hustings, Film Screenings, Talks)

Guidance questions:

* Is the venue suitable and accessible for the expected audience?
* Could the content cause controversy or conflict? How will this be managed?
* Is there a plan for handling hecklers, protests, or disruption? Especially important around elections, responses to far-right violence, climate change, current crises
* Are there sufficient stewards or hosts to help people find seats or exits?
* Will the event be recorded or photographed, and is that clearly signposted?
* Is there adequate fire safety, lighting, and sound amplification?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Hold a briefing to cover tone-setting, ground rules, what to do if someone is distressed/there is disruption
* Ensure there is security or stewarding and a safeguarding lead
* Create an attendee or audience code of conduct
* Hold a debrief to include feedback from speakers, stewards, volunteers, and attendees on their feelings of safety and to make space for sharing the emotional/mental impact

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| ecklers, protest or disruption during film screening on the impact of war on the environment | 8 | Event lead to speak to venue to find out their process for dealing with disruptions and what support they can offer during the event  Event is ticketed so all guests must register to attend and provide details – they may risk being banned in future  On sign up/before the event, all guests must read/agree to code of conduct stating expectations of all, and consequences of breaking code of conduct  Briefing held before event with team to agree process for handling disruption and escorting guests out, naming someone to report to venue staff/security  At start of event code of conduct/ethos is reiterated to all guests | Event lead | 4 weeks before event | Tick this box if the action is complete | Inform insurers as over 100 people attending |

## Practical conservation work (e.g. clearing land, litter picking, planting trees)

Guidance questions:

* What tools, equipment or substances will be used? Are they covered by our insurance?
* Are there potential hazards on-site? e.g. uneven terrain, brambles, wasp nets, needles. What is the plan for dealing with contaminated, sharp or heavy waste?
* Are under 18s or at-risk adults involved and who will be responsible for them?
* What is the plan for medical emergencies, e.g. designated first aider, first aid kid, shaded area

Mitigation suggestions:

* Support volunteers by scheduling breaks, providing access to water/refreshments, and giving realistic expectations of the demanding work
* Provide appropriate PPE and ensure safe and correct use
* Pair people up to ensure no lone working or working out of sight of others

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Heat exhaustion whilst litter picking in June | 12 | Volunteers given realistic expectations about the physical demands  Check weather and share updates with volunteers  No lone working – pair people up so everyone has support  Site visit to find shady spots for rest and breaks | Event lead | 4 weeks before event | Tick this box if the action is complete |  |

## Leafleting / Doorstep Petitioning / Community Listening

Guidance questions:

* Is everyone trained on how to interact appropriately with the public? e.g. no entering homes or sharing personal contact details
* Are the streets/areas well lit and safe to navigate on foot?
* Have materials been fact-checked for accuracy, compliance and tone? e.g. for elections or lobbying

Mitigation suggestions:

* Brief volunteers on how to respond to hostility, sexism/racism/etc, or abuse, and prepare for potential confrontations, hearing traumatic personal stories, or potential safeguarding disclosures (e.g. if someone reveals abuse or neglect)
* Pair people up to ensure no lone working or working out of sight of others
* Hold a debrief, support wellbeing, and offer signposting for further support

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Hostile or aggressive response from a member of the public | 10 | Volunteers go in pairs or small groups  Briefing includes de-escalation tips and what volunteers can do if they feel unsafe. If they feel threatened, leave immediately and report to the Event Lead  Avoid actions in an area where there is ongoing tensions unless team is experienced  Hold a debrief to support those who found it challenging/distressing | Event lead | 4 weeks before the event | Tick this box if the action is complete | Remind volunteers they can opt-out at any time |

## Bike rides

Guidance questions:

* Has the insurance team been notified, as there are a limited number of rides per year and restrictions on what kind of event this can be? e.g. no extreme terrain or racing events
* Are stewards or event leads clearly identifiable and briefed on their roles?
* Do all participants have appropriate and working bike safety equipment? e.g. helmets, lights, bikes in good condition
* How will the ride be inclusive for people of all levels of fitness/confidence? Could someone feel pressured to keep up, or would someone feel isolated or left behind?

Mitigation suggestions:

* Check the full route in advance, checking for hazards, dangerous junctions or poor road surfaces
* If young people or children are participating, ensure there is someone responsible for them
* Include rest breaks for those who are nervous or new to cycling
* Communicate the procedure for first aid incidents, mechanical breakdowns, or disrespectful behaviour along the ride

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| **Example Risk** | **Risk Level** | **Mitigations** | **Who needs to carry out the action?** | **When is the action needed by?** | **Action complete?** | **Further action needed?** |
| Participant injured due to a fall, poor road surface, or traffic incident | 12 | Route is checked in advance to avoid hazards  Experienced stewards are designated at the front and back of the ride  A named first aider is present on the ride, and a clear emergency plan is in place. All incidents to be logged and reported to FOE. | Event leads | 4 weeks before event | Tick this box if the action is complete | Reminders to wear helmets and protective bike gear |