

Health & safety policy

1. Introduction & statement of intent

Ripon City of Sanctuary (RCoS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in all locations where its various activities are carried out, and to minimising risk. Specifically, health & safety is about stopping people getting hurt or becoming ill in the course of activities carried out on behalf of RCoS. In all its activities, RCoS is dedicated to upholding health and safety law (see www.hse.gov.uk). This document has additionally been developed to assist all RCoS management committee members and volunteers to identify, assess and manage health & safety risks and to prevent/mitigate possible accidents or ill-health in the conduct of our activities.

RCoS acknowledges that we have an extra duty of care because our clientele are people seeking sanctuary, having fled war, violence and persecution. Therefore, we have a responsibility to support their mental as well as physical health. This means we have a duty of care not to expose people to anything which might reasonably trigger post-traumatic memories or distress. Additionally, RCoS recognises that we may be supporting individuals for whom health & safety might not be as familiar a concept as it is in the UK and therefore we have an obligation to explain health & safety requirements thoroughly and ensure individuals adhere to health & safety requirements established in this and related policies. Our clientele may have limited English, and so RCoS acknowledges that they may need extra support in understanding what is expected of them in keeping themselves and others (including RCoS management committee members and volunteers) safe.

2. Responsibility for health & safety policy and procedures

RCoS management committee members and volunteers are responsible for complying with this policy. Additionally, they are expected to take responsibility for their own and others' health & safety and to take a proactive approach to identifying and managing concerns.

Management committee members must approve and, on an annual basis, review this health & safety policy and assess if there are any associated training needs for the management committee and/or RCoS volunteers around health & safety.

All volunteers supporting RCoS activities are to receive copies of the policy and must indicate their understanding of it and commitment to uphold the policy by signature. If deemed necessary, appropriate training opportunities will be provided to RCoS management committee members and/or volunteers.

3. Related RCoS policy documents

The RCoS health & safety policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with other RCoS policies and key documents, including but not limited to:

- [RCoS Code of conduct \(2018-2019\)](#)
- [RCoS Children safeguarding policy \(2019\)](#)
- [RCoS Adult safeguarding policy \(2018-2019\)](#)
- [RCoS Food handling policy \(2019-2020\)](#)

4. Use of risk assessments to promote health & safety

For all ongoing RCoS activities (e.g. regular befriending and ESOL tutoring support) as well as one-off events (public talks/film nights/market stalls, etc), RCoS will complete risk assessments which will include health & safety risks plus measures to mitigate these risks. The appended risk assessment template is designed to reduce and manage risks to the health & safety of volunteers and of clients (refugees and those seeking asylum), and of the general public participating in RCoS events and activities.

Every RCoS-organised event will have a named individual (either a management committee member or RCoS volunteer) who will complete a risk assessment detailing all possible risks to health & safety, which will then be shared with the management committee for review, comment and approval no later than 7 days prior to the event/activity.

The completed and approved risk assessment will be shared in advance no later than 3 days prior with all management committee members and volunteers involved in the running of the event. For each event, there will be a designated person at the event responsible to ensure compliance with the risk assessment for health & safety procedures. All volunteers attending and/or supporting an event will be expected to read the risk assessment in advance and commit to abide by it. Their participation in the event will be taken as confirmation of their having read the risk assessment and their willingness to adhere to it.

All volunteers involved in an event will be made aware of who is responsible for health & safety and a record must be kept of who was responsible for that event; this information should be included in the meeting notes of the committee meeting immediately prior to the event. In the event of a health & safety-related issue and/or incident during the event, then the designated person will be required to document in a report what happened and what was done in response. Learning from any incident will be incorporated in future versions of this policy.

5. Defining risk to help complete risk assessments

RCoS risk assessments include health & safety reviews, which is the purview of this policy. However, risk assessments are also about good management of activities, ensuring reputational integrity, and demonstrating responsibility for supporting volunteers and ensuring the well-being of refugees and asylum seekers.

Risk describes the uncertainty surrounding events, and their outcomes, that may have a significant effect, either positive or negative, on:

- operational performance
- achievement of aims and objectives
- meeting the expectations of stakeholders.

RCoS expects that those completing a risk assessment for an RCoS event or activity will review all possible elements of risk, including health & safety. Assessment and management of risk involves:

- identifying the possible and/or probable risks faced
- identifying and implementing measures to manage those risks
- regularly reviewing the risk assessment to factor in change.

In relation to completing the health & safety component of the risk assessment, RCoS committee members and volunteers should remember to review hazards associated with, but not limited to:

- entering, accessing or leaving the space or venue
- fire risk
- access to first aid equipment/defibrillator
- slip/tripping hazards (obstructions, floor/level changes)
- handling food
- adequate lighting
- use of car seats for children
- vehicle usage
- ensuring the appropriate safeguarding of children and adults.

The risk assessment should clarify how RCoS will ensure adequate communication about health & safety to persons with limited English, particularly in the event of a health & safety incident. For example, the risk assessment should detail planning on how RCoS volunteers would prepare those with limited English to handle situations during outings where individuals become lost/separated from the group or RCoS volunteer(s). This should include specifying how to re-establish contact between those on an outing/event or activity, designating a meet-up point or seeking support from the police.

6. General notes on health & safety measures for all RCoS events and activities

All RCoS volunteers and management committee members should keep in mind the following to promote health & safety during all RCoS events and/or activities. All RCoS management committee members and volunteers share responsibility for:

- checking that all areas/venues/rooms and spaces to be used by RCoS will be well-lit, with no obvious trip hazards such as trailing leads or large obstructions
- checking any electrical equipment for safety before being used in an event, i.e. that wires are not frayed and there is no obvious damage to the equipment
- considering the careful handling of certain materials or items in the course of implementing RCoS activities, including careful management of heavy, hot, hazardous (including chemical and toxic) and/or unwieldy items
- ensuring there is an announcement at the start of each event about the emergency procedures and location of fire exits and first-aid equipment
- raising concerns about any health & safety issue which was not previously identified either in this policy and/or specific risk assessments.

In the event of a health & safety incident during an RCoS activity, any RCoS management committee member or RCoS volunteer will decide on the best course of action:

- **For injuries**, depending on severity:
 - (1) treating the injury there and then using the venue's first-aid kit or other aids such as cold water or ice
 - OR
 - (2) calling an ambulance by dialling 999.
- **For sudden illness**, depending on severity, any RCoS committee members present will agree on the best course of action, such as:
 - (1) calling NHS 111 for advice
 - OR
 - (2) calling an ambulance by dialling 999.

All RCoS committee members and volunteers who drive children in the course of any RCoS activities must ensure they know and abide by the laws regarding the use of car seats by children, according to their age; this includes ensuring that even if the parents of the children bring and install the car seats themselves, RCoS have checked that the seats are secure and that the children are strapped into those seats. Both the law on car seat usage, and information on how to fit the car seats provided to local Ripon families, is provided on the RCoS website.

7. Public liability insurance

RCoS holds current public liability cover. In the event of an incident resulting in a claim, the risk assessments RCoS completes will be of crucial importance to provide to the insurer.

Date approved: 13 January 2020

Appointed lead: Sara Trehitt

Next review date: 12 January 2022

Risk Assessment Template

Use as much space as is required

Activity/event to be risk assessed	
When and where will the event/activity take place?	
Who will be involved?	
Who might be at risk?	
Potential risks	Steps taken to minimise those risks
Health and safety, including accidents/medical emergencies	
Safeguarding (child or adult)	
Food-related	
Miscellaneous	
Reputational	
Financial	

After taking action to minimise these risks, do you feel any are still likely to cause significant harm, damage or costs to anyone involved? If so, please state:

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Do you have any other concerns about this activity/event taking place?

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Person/s completing risk assessment			
Signature/s		Date:	