

Information Pack 2

Organising Practical Work Days

Worksheet 1 Agreeing What Needs To Be Done

Choosing your practical work tasks

Think about what practical activities you would like to do and be realistic about what is achievable. You will need permission to carry out practical work from the land owner and be aware that there are certain tasks your group may not get permission for.

Here are some ideas of practical activities that friends groups are involved in: weeding, pruning, litter picking, stream or pond clearing, planting bulbs and flowering plants, re-seeding, planting trees, footpath clearance, repainting benches/fences/playground equipment/pavilions, removing graffiti, sweeping leaves, etc

Groups who are more experienced and have received appropriate training are also involved in: grass cutting, hedge cutting, shrub clearance, building structures such as raised beds, wildlife and ecological surveys, habitat creation or maintenance.

- **Our practical task 'wish list' is**

Questions you need to ask

Once you have your 'wish list' of tasks start action planning by looking at each task in turn and asking the following:

1. Is the proposed practical task appropriate for the site?

Practical tasks in a Sheffield City Council (SCC) managed green space will need approval from an appropriate SCC officer. When considering approval for tasks we will look at the following:

1. Does the task fit with the maintenance or management plan for the site?
2. Is the proposed task a priority for the site?
3. Is it an appropriate time of year for the task?
4. Are there any particular maintenance issues/implications?
5. Are there any safety concerns or implications?

The green space may already have maintenance or management plans and a list of priority tasks determined through a Sheffield Standard Assessment. If the green space has not been assessed yet, this is a process your group may be able to assist with.

- **Who will contact the relevant Park, Woodland or Allotment Officer?**

2. Can we get approval to carry out the practical work?

Getting approval for any practical work activities from SCC is absolutely essential. As well as looking at the appropriateness of the tasks (see above) we will look at your group's ability to carry out the tasks. Before we will approve an activity we will require your group to have:

- A commitment to only carry out tasks for which you have our prior agreement
- The skills to carry out the tasks to an acceptable standard
- The appropriate training (see **Worksheet 5**)



- Enough volunteers to carry out the tasks (see **Worksheet 2**)
- A fully documented risk assessment (see **Worksheet 3**)
- A good understanding of health and safety issues and an ability to carry out tasks safely (see **Worksheet 2**)
- Trained first aiders (if appropriate) (see **Worksheet 2**)
- Access to appropriate tools and equipment (see **Worksheet 5**)
- Any relevant documented procedures for each task
- Appropriate insurance cover (see **Worksheet 4**).

Don't worry if you haven't got all of the above in place yet, as you can use the worksheets in this pack to help you fill in the gaps.

- **What are our gaps from the above list?**

3. Do we need to consult?

Where we give your group permission to carry out a larger practical project it may be a requirement for your group to consult with local residents. We will advise you if we think this is necessary.

- **Consultation (if needed) will be done by**

4. Have we got the ability and enough volunteers for a particular task?

We will look at your group's skills and abilities and whether you have enough volunteers as part of the approval process. The responsibility for ensuring that your group has the ability to carry out a particular task remains with your group so be realistic about your group's abilities.

- **No. of volunteers we will need are**
- **No. of volunteers we have are**

5. Do we need training?

We may be able to provide some training for your group, for example, in carrying out risk assessments or using hand tools, etc. For high risk activities, such as using power tools, we will insist that you have attended appropriate training, provided by SCC Officers or approved professional training organisations.

- **What training (if any) do we need?**

6. What other resources might be needed?

For example tools, plants, protective clothing such as gloves, refreshments etc. This may give you an indication of how realistic your project is and will help you to consider if you need to fundraise or approach other organisations for support, etc.

- **What resources do we need?**
- **Where will we get resources from?**

7. What's the timeframe?

Think about how long it will take you to organise the activity (other worksheets in this pack may help you with this) and also at what time of year it may be best to carry out the activity.

- **We will aim to hold our activity on**

Next steps

There is plenty of information in this tool kit to help you think about all of the above and by working through the tool kit we will help you to action plan for a successful practical work day.

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Worksheet 2 Health & Safety

Staying safe on your practical work day

It is the responsibility of your Management Committee to ensure that your group is carrying out practical work safely, you are responsible for the actions of your group's members at all times during the activity and you should take reasonable steps to ensure your group, and members of the public, remain safe.

Consider the health and safety aspects of your activity:

- **Before** the activity (e.g. at the planning stage)
- **During** the activity (e.g. adequate supervision)
- **After** the activity (e.g. leaving the site safe for other users and reviewing).

What do we need to do to address potential health and safety issues?

- Think about the location of your proposed activity, for example is it near a slippery bank, fast flowing water or heavy traffic? It may not be appropriate for volunteers to be working in some areas and weather conditions can impact on this (e.g on a steep slope which may be slippery in the rain). We can advise you on this when you contact us.
- Complete an appropriate risk assessment (see **Worksheet 3**).
- Allocate someone who is familiar with both health and safety and the completed risk assessment to supervise your activity on the day.
- Share the tool safety checklist (see **Worksheet 5**) with all of your group and volunteers.

- Never allow any volunteers to use power tools unless you have our express agreement and the volunteer has had the appropriate training.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment such as boots and gloves (see below).
- Think about your group's ability to manage a task, don't over-reach yourselves!
- Ensure appropriate instruction or training has been provided to each volunteer
- Have accident reporting procedures in place and make sure that all members of your group are aware of them.
- Consider the safety of children, vulnerable adults and other green space users before, during and after the activity.
- If you are asked to stop doing something on the basis of health and safety, stop immediately - make sure all volunteers are aware of this golden rule.

Remember - it is more important that your group stays safe than it is to achieve your task!

- **Our safety supervisor(s) will be**

Responsibilities and SCC requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your group, participants and anyone else who may be affected by your activities. We require your group to demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety issues and the ability to manage risk appropriately.



If the practical work activity is being organised, managed and directly supervised by Parks and Countryside Officers (e.g. on a Ranger led work day) then the officer present will have responsibility for health and safety and managing risk.

Before approving any practical work based activity SCC will ask your group for evidence that you have everything in the list provided in **Worksheet 1**.

- **Required documentation will be provided to SCC by**

Ability and training

The level of skill and ability of your volunteers is really important. It is your responsibility (as a Management Committee) to ensure any required training is given and that volunteers are supported in requesting this. Make sure that volunteers know what they will be doing and what is expected of them. Allow volunteers to stop tasks if they feel unable or unwilling to continue. Encourage volunteers to think about any health concerns they have and to seek appropriate advice from their GP before commencing any activities. For certain activities it will be a Sheffield City Council requirement to have training before approval will be given - see **Worksheet 5**.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

It is your responsibility (as a Management Committee) to ensure that all volunteers have access to basic personal protection equipment appropriate to the task they are doing. This may include gloves and high visibility vests, etc. Participants should be advised prior to the activity to wear appropriate clothing and footwear, etc. We can provide some basic PPE to groups (subject to availability) and your group could also ask participants to bring their own gloves, etc. Other more specific PPE may be required when using particular 'high risk' tools and we can advise you on this.

First aid

At all activities, it is the activity organiser's (your Management Committee) responsibility to ensure medical and first aid assistance is available as appropriate, for those involved. It is good practice to have someone who is first aid qualified present and, if you are carrying out regular practical activities, we strongly encourage this. The requirement for first aid assistance will be dependant on your risk assessment, for example, the level of risk your activities pose or the remoteness of your location, etc. You should therefore ensure that you have considered emergency procedures as part of your risk assessment and that volunteers are aware of these prior to the start of the activity.

- **Our first aid appointed person is**
- **Our emergency procedures are**

Child protection

Your group should have a child/vulnerable person protection policy statement, which outlines your group's child protection procedures and identifies a person within your group who can guide members. Children attending your activities should always be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

All groups should consider whether their volunteer roles require a Criminal Records Disclosure and Barring Service Check - previously known as a CRB Check. A check may be required when children or vulnerable adults are participating in group activities and are not accompanied by parents or guardians. You cannot simply ask to see a volunteer's criminal record history. This information is only provided by exception and when it is relevant to the activities that are being carried out. Eligibility criteria for a check includes regularly (at least twice in 30 days) teaching, training, instructing, caring for, supervising or being wholly in charge of children/ vulnerable adults.

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Worksheet 3 Risk Assessment

The importance of risk management

A risk assessment should limit the chances of someone being injured or becoming ill during, or as a result of, your activity. It is essential that your group carries out a risk assessment and that you take reasonable steps to minimise risk for each activity you do. An appropriate risk assessment is a requirement to getting permission for your group to carry out an activity. As activity organisers your Management Committee will have a responsibility and a duty of care to anyone affected by your activities.

Responsibility

It is your group's responsibility to carry out a full and appropriate risk assessment for your activity. Once the risk assessment is completed you must also make sure that you:

- Take all reasonable actions outlined in the assessment to minimise or mitigate any serious or high and medium level risks **and**
- Supervise all activities on the day to ensure that others also act accordingly to minimise risk.

The only exception to this is during work days that are organised, managed and **directly supervised** by Parks and Countryside Officers (e.g. on a Ranger led work day) where the officer present will have responsibility for risk assessment and managing risk.

How do we carry out a risk assessment?

We have an example of a risk assessment form which you can use as a template for your own risk assessment. You need to

allocate one or two individuals to carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity and to implement any actions from the risk assessment. More than one person carrying out this task is often helpful as assessing risk can be very subjective.

A good risk assessment will identify:

- All the potential hazards involved in an activity
 - Who may be harmed by the activity i.e. volunteers, members of the public etc. (see below)
 - The level of risk posed by each hazard
 - Any actions needed to reduce (mitigate) the risk level to a more acceptable level
- **Who will carry out our risk assessment?**

Remember risk management should include:

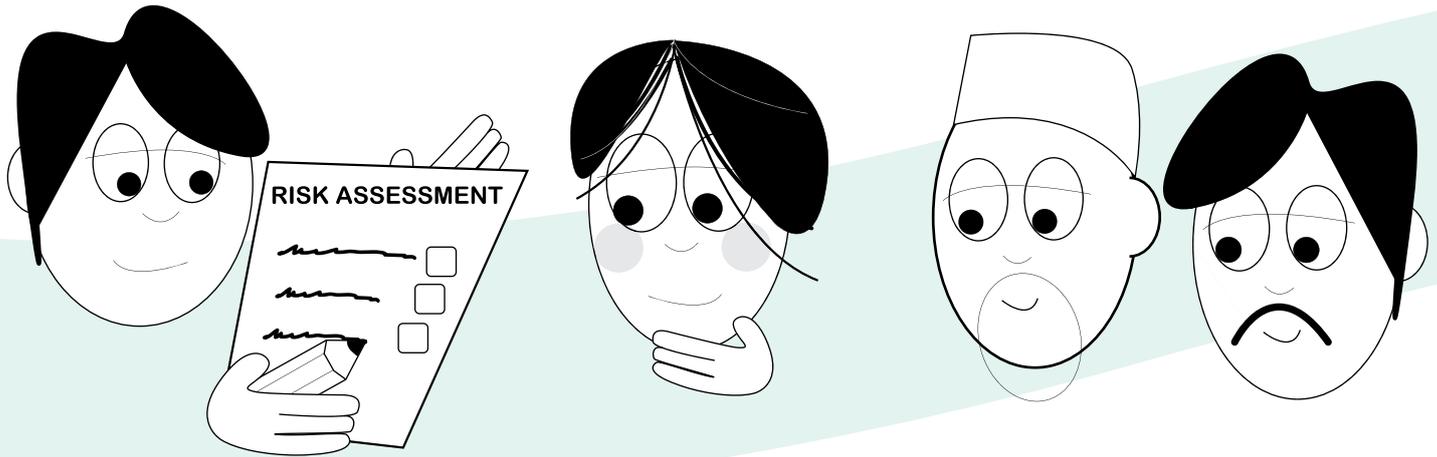
- **Preparing for the activity**
- **During the activity**
- **After the activity**

Who should be considered as part of the risk assessment?

It is important that you consider anyone who might be affected by your activities as part of your risk assessment, for example:

- Yourself and your group members
- Other volunteers involved in your activity
- Members of the public and passers by
- Children or other vulnerable groups
- Employees of Sheffield City Council or other organisations
- Animals and wildlife.





- **Groups involved in, or who could be affected by, our activities are**

Things to think about as part of the risk assessment

As part of the risk assessment you need to think about **all of your activities**. As well as thinking about the actual tasks you should consider:

- Terrain
- Location
- Weather conditions
- Equipment or tools to be used
- Medical or health issues of participants
- Identifying named supervisor(s)
- Names of appropriately qualified first aiders where required

- Knowing your exact location in case of emergency
- Access for emergency services vehicles
- Location of nearest telephone or named person with a mobile phone (you need to check for a strong signal)
- Access to a vehicle in case of emergency
- Details of nearest medical centre

Where can we get help with this?

In this pack we have included a risk assessment form which you can use to carry out your own risk assessment. If you need more help, contact us and we will arrange training for your group.

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Worksheet 4 Insurance

Why do we need insurance?

Appropriate insurance is needed for all your activities and is absolutely essential if you are carrying out practical work activities. If your group takes out Public Liability Insurance this should cover you for any injury, damage or loss caused to any person as a result of your activities. It is important to remember that the liability is with the whole of the Management Committee and a claim can be made against the whole committee or individual committee members - so it is in your interests to make certain that you have appropriate insurance cover.

Can Sheffield City Council (SCC) provide insurance cover?

In most circumstances Sheffield City Council cannot provide insurance to your group or offer recommendations on where you may acquire insurance. There are two exceptions where insurance cover can be provided by SCC and these are listed below. In all other cases you must have your own insurance.

1. As with health and safety, when the practical activity is organised, managed and directly supervised by Parks and Countryside Officers (e.g. on a Ranger led work day) SCC will have the responsibility for ensuring appropriate insurance.
2. If your group is only carrying out litter picks where we have both approved the activity and provided health and safety guidance and risk assessment information you will be covered by SCC Insurance - this information is correct at the time of going to press but you must check this prior to commencing your activity.

If you are unsure whether your activity is covered by SCC you should always assume that it is not or seek further advice from a Parks and Countryside Officer.

What insurance do we need?

Your group will need Public Liability Insurance with an indemnity level of at least £5 million. The indemnity level could even be more for some high risk activities, or if you are using high risk tools and you should seek advice on this. It is extremely important that the insurance covers all of your activities and that your insurer is aware of all that your group does - if you are at all unsure speak to your insurance company. You may also need to consider other types of insurance cover, for example, for loss or damage to tools, etc.

- **The types of insurance we require are**
- **Who will check the appropriateness of our existing insurance cover?**
- **Are our premiums up to date?**

SCC requirements

If your group wants to do any practical work based activities on a Parks and Countryside managed green space we will require you to have Public Liability Insurance with an indemnity level of at least £5 million. This is for your group's own protection against possible claims. The documents required as evidence of your group's Public Liability Insurance are listed overleaf:



INSURANCE



- A valid copy of your insurance certificate
- Evidence of indemnity level (if not contained in the above)
- Proof of premium payment

- **Who will provide the above evidence of our insurance cover to SCC?**

From time to time, Parks and Countryside Officers may also decide to visit your activity to ensure that your documentation is appropriate to your activity. This may involve, for example, an officer attending your activity to ensure health and safety procedures are documented and adhered to. This audit trail will demonstrate to both the Health and Safety Executive and your insurance company, in terms of duties of care owed both criminally and civilly, that reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate and control perceived risks, both by your group and Sheffield City Council.

Finding an insurance company

You can do an Internet search for insurance companies or approach a broker. It is useful to approach companies who offer specialist insurance for community groups, such as The Conservation Volunteers (formally known as BTCV) or Zurich, and who are experienced in supporting organisations with similar structures and carrying out similar activities. When comparing insurance companies some of the things you need to consider are: the premium, the level and type of cover, the indemnity provided and also the amount of excess payable.

- **Which insurance companies will we approach for quotes?**
- **Who will approach them?**

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Worksheet 5 Tools And Equipment

What tools do we need?

You should know what tools you need from the list or resources in **Worksheet 1** but if you would like further help with this please contact us. In most cases it is your group's responsibility to ensure tools are available, safe and used correctly. The only exception to this is during work days that are organised, managed and directly supervised by Parks and Countryside Officers (e.g. on a Ranger led work day) when the officer present will have responsibility for any tools and their use.

Tool safety

All tools will pose a risk if you don't know how to use them properly! The following tips will help and we can provide specific guidance on using individual tools if requested:

- Nominate a person to be responsible for tools and tool safety on the day
- Keep all tools clean, sharp and fit for use - check them before each use
- Only allow volunteers to use tools they are confident with
- Make sure volunteers know how to use tools safely and effectively
- Always know where your tools are and don't leave them lying around
- Always use the right tool for the task
- Do not allow use of power or 'high risk' tools (see SCC requirements below).
- Wear gloves, sturdy footwear and other appropriate personal protective clothing
- Be aware of each others activities at all times
- Be aware of the environment, such as slopes or uneven ground

- Don't over-reach
- Take frequent rests or breaks
- Create an exclusion zone (if possible) and be aware you are in a public area
- **The person responsible for tools and for tool safety on our work day will be**

Sheffield City Council (SCC) requirements

The requirements for safe tool use in green spaces will depend on the type of tools that you are using. We divide tools into two broad categories:

1. 'Low Risk' tools

This refers to hand tools such as, spades, forks, hoes, rakes, hand trowels, loppers, pruners, shears, etc. We do not require groups to have specialist training before using these tools, but all volunteers should be given instruction on their safe and correct use. If you would like training from us on using the above tools, it is available on request. We can also provide specific guidance for safe use of particular tools if required. It is expected that at least one person in your group will take responsibility for ensuring all participants know how to use tools safely and correctly on the day of your activity.

2. 'High Risk' tools

This category generally refers to power tools and machinery but can also include other tools such as saws (including pruning saws), billhooks, axes, etc. We will only allow your



group to use 'high risk' tools if you have attended approved professional training in the use of the tools. Only members who have had the training will be allowed to use the tools. Some tools use will also require a licence and others may have to meet additional criteria. You must never use 'high risk' tools in the green space without our express written permission and be aware that using some of the tools can also increase your insurance premium. We have the right to refuse to give permission for the use of any tools for any reason, or if we have safety concerns.

If you are unsure which of the above two categories your intended tools use falls into, contact us. When asking us to approve a practical work based activity it is your responsibility to tell us if you intend to use any tools that may fall into the 'high risk' category. Be aware that the additional criteria around high risk tools is for the protection of your group as well as the general public and wildlife.

- **Do we need permission for particular tool use?**
- **Who will be responsible for getting this?**

Training

If your group has not done any practical work based activities before or, if you need some additional support, we can arrange training for your group. Remember, if we agree to you using any 'high risk' tools, all volunteers who will be using the tools must attend an appropriate training course.

- **Do we need any training**
- **Who will be responsible for requesting this?**

Where to get tools from

1. Buying tools

If you wish to buy tools you need to think about: The type and quantity of tools needed, where the tools will be stored, who will maintain them, any additional insurance cover needed, who will transport them to and from site, where you will get funding for the tools and any additional costs (e.g. increased insurance premiums, storage costs, etc).

2. Borrowing tools

You may be able to borrow tools from us or another organisation such as an environmental charity or other friends of groups. When borrowing tools think about: Where can you borrow tools from? What if there are none available? Will the quality be acceptable? Have they been maintained? Who is responsible for damage or loss and how will you get the tools to and from site?

3. Volunteers bring their own tools

The main issues to think about here are: What tools are available? Are they suitable for the tasks? What is the quality of tools available? Have they been maintained? Are they in good working order? What if volunteers don't arrive or don't bring tools on the day? Who will be responsible if tools are lost or damaged on the day?

At Parks and Countryside we may have (subject to availability) tools that can be loaned and free packs that will include some basic equipment for litter picking and graffiti removal, as well as personal protective items such as high-visibility vests and gloves.

- **We will get tools from**
- **Who will be responsible for acquiring appropriate tools?**
- **Who will check the safety of tools before use?**
- **Other things we need to consider are**

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Worksheet 6 Organising Your Work Day

Before the work day

Prior to the work day you should have already got in place all the items in the list below:

- Permission for your activity and all related tasks
- A clear plan for all the day's activities (see below)
- A list of participants
- Tools and other equipment (or an arrangement for them to arrive on the day)
- A risk assessment
- Nominated supervisor(s)
- Contingency plans (in case of adverse weather or emergencies for example)
- Appropriate insurance cover

Structuring the day

A suggested structure for the day is provided below:

- **Notices** - put up notices to let others know who you are and why you are there.
- **Register** - take a register of everyone who is attending on the day.
- **Induction** - let volunteers know what you are wanting to achieve, how the day will be structured, any appropriate health and safety information, how long they will be working, what they should do if they need a break etc. Inductions should be recorded including the key points discussed and who was present.
- **Tool talk and inventory** - ensure volunteers are familiar with tools and their safe and correct use. Take an inventory of all tools before handing them out (and visually inspect them for safety) so that you

can ensure they are all returned at the end of the day.

- **Introduce supervisors or task group leaders** - so everyone knows who they are and who they need to approach if they have a question or problem. Consider having name stickers or ID badges.
- **Allocate tasks** - ensure there are adequate numbers of volunteers for each task. Be prepared to drop tasks if fewer volunteers have turned up than expected, rather than spreading volunteers thinly, making tasks more difficult to achieve.
- **Regular breaks** - make sure regular breaks are factored into the day and that volunteers are aware of these.
- **Refreshments** - if you provide refreshments make sure everyone knows they are available. Volunteers unable to do practical activities may welcome an opportunity to provide tea, coffee or water.
- **Collect tools** - at the end of the day check tools off against the inventory to ensure none are left lying around.
- **Check site** - ensure there will be no health and safety concerns after you have left, such as left over debris or mud on paths etc.
- **Thank you** - remember to thank all of your volunteers before they leave.

Who will co-ordinate on the day?

Nominate one person to co-ordinate all tasks to ensure you achieve your activity as safely and as effectively as possible. This person must be very familiar with all of the tasks and what you want to achieve. They must



also be familiar with the risk assessment and health and safety. If you have several different tasks running at once, or you are working with a large group you should have other supervisors to oversee each particular task. Again, they should be fully aware of what you are trying to achieve and be familiar with the completed risk assessment.

- **The person coordinating on the day will be...**
- **The person(s) supervising tasks will be ...**

What facilities do we need?

Most parks and green spaces do not have toilets or access to clean water. You may need to think about how your group can get around this, e.g are there facilities nearby (a local pub or café) or do you need to bring in facilities and what are the implications of this? It is important for volunteers to have access to clean water to wash their hands before eating lunch.

- **Facilities we need are**
- **We will get these from**

Publicity

Prior to your work day put up notices in the green space to say who you are, what activity you are planning and when your activity will take place. You could also give people a number to contact if they would like to join in. You must put a notice up on the actual day of the event to say who you are and what activity you are doing. Templates for notices are available on our website

- **Publicity we will do**
- **Publicity will be done by**

Contingencies

Think about contingencies prior to the activity - for example what would happen if:

- **The weather is not appropriate** - Will you cancel the activity or is there an alternative activity that you can plan for and get approval for as a contingency?



- **You have too few volunteers on the day** - Which tasks can be dropped without affecting the whole activity?
- **You have too many volunteers on the day** - Will you turn people away or is there an alternative activity that you can plan and get approval for as a contingency?
- **Our contingencies are**

Evaluate

It is really important to evaluate your event in terms of its success and also in terms of health and safety. Are there things you could have done better? Did everyone get the most out of the day? Were your ambitions for the day realistic? etc.

- **The person(s) who will evaluate the event is**