

Risk Assessment – HOAA walks & general management

Location: open air venue	Assessment date: March 2024	Review: March 2025
Benefits of the activity: Participating in walking several miles in the countryside enables people with disabilities to experience activity, stimulation and achievement. It has both physical and mental health benefits. For some it may be the only physical activity in which they participate.		
Those affected:	A: walkers with disabilities	B: leaders & helpers
		C: parents, carers.

Hazards	Affected	Hazards	Affected
Uneven and slippery paths	A, B, C	Manual Handling Risks	B,C
Weather conditions	A,B,C	Physical limitation	A,C
Low Branches	A,B,C	Relatively remote location	A,B,C
Fall from edge of path	A, B,C	Medical problems	A
Poisonous vegetation	A	Lost member of group	A, B, C

Hazard (as above)	Explanatory details	Precautions taken to reduce risk	Risk H,M,L
General group management – Members becoming detached from supervised group, possible whereabouts unknown	Need to ensure continued care and oversight for whole time members are in the care of HOAA helpers and carers irrespective of any organized activity. Need to ensure members not detached from group.	Many members with special needs are under the oversight of a responsible carer depending on ability and independence but it is the responsibility of ALL helpers and carers to make every effort to exercise care for all participants. No member with special needs is to be permitted to leave the group alone. Regular head count	
Uneven and slippery paths	Muddy paths and rocks, loose gravel and tree roots protruding from path. Slips/trips Severe-Head and limb injuries	Carers/parents should ensure participants have suitable footwear. Leader must choose most suitable route. Keep to defined trails. Walkers with poor balance to be supervised individually & reminded to <i>walk carefully</i> . Carers, leaders and helpers should offer hand/arm support where necessary, or encourage walkers to hold each other’s hands. Carry basic first aid kit.	L

Weather conditions	Outdoor environment. Strong wind, rain, snow and ice. Sunburn.	Parents/carers should ensure participants have appropriate protective clothing. Check weather forecast. Find less exposed routes if possible. Cancel if too strong wind, too cold or too icy. Advise to carry sun cream, if appropriate.	L
Head and eye injuries from low branches		Leader chooses most suitable route. Adequate supervision.	L
Fall from edge of path.	Narrow paths with steep sides. Eroded paths.	Appropriate choice of route. Appropriate footwear. Supervision of all special needs persons and regular head counts.	L
Poisonous vegetation	Plants may be harmful if touched or ingested.	Supervision. Group advised not to touch vegetation unless they know that it is safe to do so.	L
Manhandling risks	Arm strain while giving support. Helping special needs persons to cross stiles.	New helpers should be made aware of the dangers of back strain when supporting, and the need to maintain good posture at all times. They should not continue to support if it becomes a strain. Special needs persons should be encouraged to be independent.	L
Physical limitation	Unable to continue due to lack of ability or fitness.	Prior planning as a group. Awareness of weaker members. Weather interpretation. Variety of route options and early egress routes if possible.	L
Remote location	Delayed emergency services, if required.	Carry mobile phone and spare clothing.	L
Medical problems	e.g. epileptic fits, asthma, allergies.	Carers/ parents must inform leader and have relevant medication with instructions for use with them.	L
Lost member of group	.	Organise unobtrusive supervision and regular head counts during the activity and during any informal situations such as refreshment breaks. All carers to remain vigilant.	L

		Walk at the pace of the slowest member of the group. Keep one helper at the rear of the group.	
Cars and other vehicles	Parking areas. Crossing roads.	Close supervision in parking areas and when crossing roads. Keep group together and do not allow individuals to become separated. Adequate carers/helpers for size of group.	L