

Risk principles tool

The aim of this tool is to help ensure that the culture you work in supports good decisions about risk

Research shows that the environment in which people operate affects how they make decisions. You can use this tool to identify how your organisational or team culture supports you to make good decisions about risk. Consider each principle in turn and identify how far this is embedded and what needs to happen to improve things.

Principle	How far is this embedded (1 low-5 high)?	Action	Who	When
The willingness to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty (i.e. risk taking) is a core requirement of all staff in social care.				
Maintaining or achieving the well-being of individuals and communities is a primary consideration in risk decision-making.				
Risk taking involves judgement, with decision makers required to consider the value and likelihood of the possible benefits of a particular decision against the seriousness and likelihood of possible harms.				
Harm can never be totally prevented. Risk decisions should, therefore, be judged by the quality of the decision-making, not by the outcome.				
Taking risk decisions, and reviewing other’s risk decision-making, is difficult so account should be taken of whether the decision was made during a crisis, was affected by other circumstances, or responsibility was shared with others.				
A reasonable decision is one that staff with similar roles, learning and experience would have taken in similar circumstances.				
Whether to record a decision is a risk decision itself which should, to a large extent, be left to professional judgement. The decision of whether or not to make a record, however, and the extent of that record, should be made after considering the likelihood of harm occurring and its seriousness.				
To reduce risk aversion and improve decision-making, social care needs a culture that learns from successes as well as failures. Good risk taking should be identified, celebrated and shared.				
Since good risk taking depends upon quality information, social care will work with partner agencies and others to share relevant information, where appropriate, about risk.				
Staff in social care who make decisions consistent with these principles should receive the encouragement, approval and support of their organisation.				