

# Unit Leader Risk Assessment Guide



## Purpose

This guide supports volunteer unit leaders in risk assessing all UK-based activities on the WSJ 2027 journey.

## How to use this document

Each row sets out a hazard and a column of prompts for you to consider. The prompts are not your controls — they are questions and reminders to help you write your own. Do use the example resources on The Scouts website to support you in writing your own: <https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/staying-safe-and-safeguarding/risk-assessments/example-risk-assessments>. The prompts listed are not an exhaustive list, but a starting point for you and your unit team to consider. Remember to involve your young people in discovering how best to keep everyone safe.

## Section 1 — General and pre-event preparations

<b>What could go wrong?</b> <i>Hazard identified / risks arising</i>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Prompts to consider</b>
<i>Describe the hazard and the harm it could cause.</i>	<i>List all groups that could be affected.</i>	<i>These are prompts only — they are NOT your controls.</i>
<b>Consent and participant information</b> <i>Incomplete forms, missing medical details, and no parental consent for young people</i>	Young people, parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are consent forms issued and returned before the activity?</li> <li>• Do forms cover medical, dietary, emergency contact and photo consent?</li> <li>• Is there a chase process for missing forms?</li> <li>• Is the data stored securely in line with local data protection policies?</li> <li>• Are there no participants attending without a signed consent form?</li> </ul>
<b>Medication and medical information</b> <i>Undisclosed conditions, missing medication, allergic reaction</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all medications declared in advance and available at the activity?</li> <li>• Are there any individual care plans in place for anyone who is attending?</li> <li>• Do the unit leaders hold copies of relevant medical information on the day?</li> <li>• Are emergency medications (epi-pens, inhalers) accessible at all times?</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b> <i>Yellow Card breach, harassment, adults without a current disclosure check</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all adults following the Yellow Card at all times?</li> <li>• How are you making sure adults are not left alone with a young person on a 121 basis?</li> </ul>
<b>Incidents and near misses</b> <i>Injury, accident, near miss and reporting</i>	All participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a suitable first aid kit available and all trained to use it?</li> <li>• Do all unit leaders have access to emergency contact details for participants?</li> </ul>
<b>Mental health and wellbeing</b> <i>Pre-event anxiety, financial stress, and peer pressure</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are young people aware they can speak to a leader about any worries?</li> <li>• Is the unit aware of bursary or financial support options?</li> <li>• Are individual support plans in place for anyone with known anxiety or mental health needs?</li> <li>• How is volunteer wellbeing and workload being managed across the leadership team?</li> </ul>
<b>Photography and media consent</b> <i>Images shared without consent, location data shared publicly</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have photo/media consent been collected on the consent form activity?</li> <li>• Are photos/posts being made public without consent?</li> <li>• Is real-time location or venue information kept off public social media?</li> </ul>



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<b>Digital safety</b> Cyberbullying, inappropriate group chat content, and grooming risk	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are online communications with young people following guidance?</li> <li>• Is direct/private messaging between adults and young people avoided?</li> <li>• Are group chats actively moderated by unit leaders?</li> <li>• Have young people and parents been briefed on safe online behaviour?</li> </ul>

## Section 2 — Fundraising activities

<b>What could go wrong?</b> <i>Hazard identified / risks arising</i>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Prompts to consider</b>
<i>Describe the hazard and the harm it could cause.</i>	<i>List all groups that could be affected.</i>	<i>These are prompts only — they are NOT your controls.</i>
<b>Cash handling</b> <i>Theft, loss of income, and lack of financial accountability</i>	Adult volunteers, unit funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are two adults always present when cash is being counted or recorded?</li> <li>• Is cash stored securely and banked promptly?</li> <li>• Is income and expenditure recorded for every fundraising activity?</li> <li>• Are records available to the Lead Volunteer and Treasurer?</li> </ul>
<b>Street collections and public events<sup>1</sup></b> <i>Personal safety of collectors, aggressive members of the public, and unsupervised young people</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the required local authority permit been obtained?</li> <li>• Are young people always paired or within sight of an adult?</li> <li>• Have all young people been briefed on what to do if approached aggressively?</li> <li>• Has the specific venue or route been risk assessed in advance?</li> </ul>
<b>Sponsored events (walks, cycles, sleep-outs)</b> <i>Physical injury, adverse weather, and overexertion</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a separate risk assessment been completed for the specific activity?</li> <li>• Has the route or venue been checked in advance?</li> <li>• Is there suitable first aider cover and a first aid kit present?</li> <li>• Has the weather been checked, and is there a postponement plan in place?</li> <li>• Are young people aware they can stop if they feel unwell?</li> </ul>
<b>Online fundraising platforms</b> <i>Fraud, personal data exposure, and inappropriate public comments</i>	Adult volunteers, donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a reputable, established platform being used?</li> <li>• Is the page managed by a responsible named adult, not a young person alone?</li> <li>• Are funds directed to the unit bank account, not a personal account?</li> <li>• Is the page being monitored for inappropriate comments?</li> </ul>
<b>Bake sales and food events</b> <i>Allergic reactions, food hygiene concerns</i>	Young people, adults, members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is all food labelled with ingredients including the 14 major allergens?</li> <li>• Have contributors been asked to declare allergens in their items?</li> <li>• Are food handlers following basic hygiene (handwashing, suitable storage)?</li> <li>• Has guidance on home-baked goods at public events been reviewed?</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The [Code of Fundraising Practice \(2025\)](#) requires that fundraising activities involving young people are age-appropriate and properly supervised. Young people must not be given overall responsibility for handling or counting money. Unit leaders must be aware that at street collections and public events, local councils may impose stricter age limits as part of the licence conditions, and those always take priority.

## Section 3 — UK domestic travel

<b>What could go wrong?</b> <i>Hazard identified / risks arising</i>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Prompts to consider</b>
<i>Describe the hazard and the harm it could cause.</i>	<i>List all groups that could be affected.</i>	<i>These are prompts only — they are NOT your controls.</i>
<b>Coach or minibus</b> <i>Road traffic accident, luggage injury, breakdown</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the vehicle from a licensed operator with the appropriate insurance?</li> <li>• Are seat belts worn by all passengers throughout the journey?</li> <li>• Is luggage stored securely — not in aisles?</li> <li>• Do unit leaders have emergency contacts for all participants?</li> <li>• Is there a plan for breakdown or significant delay?</li> </ul>
<b>Rail travel</b> <i>Missed connection, lost participant at the station, overcrowding</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the group travelling together with a buddy system and regular headcounts?</li> <li>• Do all young people know what to do and who to contact if separated?</li> <li>• Is there enough time built in for connections and expected delays?</li> <li>• Is there a named meeting point at key stations?</li> <li>• Has seating been reserved to keep the group together where possible?</li> </ul>
<b>Parent/carer drop-off and collection</b> <i>Young person not collected, unknown adult collecting, congestion at the venue</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are drop-off and collection points clearly communicated in advance?</li> <li>• Is there a process to verify the identity of any adult not known to leaders?</li> <li>• Is no young person leaving the site until collected by a named, consented adult?</li> <li>• Is there a written record of each collection?</li> <li>• Is there a plan in place if a young person isn't collected?</li> </ul>
<b>Lost participant during travel</b> <i>Anxiety or personal harm</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a headcount or register taken before departure, at each stop, and on arrival?</li> <li>• Do every young person have at least one unit leader's mobile number?</li> <li>• Has the buddy system been briefed?</li> <li>• Do young people know where to go and who to approach if separated?</li> </ul>
<b>Spread of infection</b> <i>Illness within the group before or during travel</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have parents/carers been asked not to send an unwell participant?</li> <li>• Is hand gel or handwashing available?</li> <li>• Is there a plan if a participant becomes unwell during travel?</li> </ul>

## Section 4 — Training camps and residentials

<b>What could go wrong?</b> <i>Hazard identified / risks arising</i>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Prompts to consider</b>
Describe the hazard and the harm it could cause.	List all groups that could be affected.	These are prompts only — they are NOT your controls.
<b>4.1 — Campsite and accommodation</b>		
<b>Accommodation — general safety</b> <i>Poor condition, falls from height, inadequate sleeping conditions</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the site been inspected on arrival and faults reported to site management?</li> <li>• Have young people been briefed on the site layout and out-of-bounds areas?</li> <li>• Has a kit list been issued that includes an appropriate sleeping kit for expected temperatures?</li> <li>• Is all tentage and equipment in a safe, serviceable condition?</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodation — fire safety</b> <i>Smoke inhalation, burns</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have fire procedures and assembly points been identified for this specific site?</li> <li>• Have all young people been briefed on evacuation before the first night?</li> <li>• Is a tent/room allocation list being kept?</li> <li>• Are open flames prohibited inside tents and accommodation?</li> <li>• Are the locations of fire extinguishers, fire alarms, fire buckets and Carbon monoxide alarms noted?</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodation — unwanted visitors</b> <i>Intruders, theft, safeguarding risk</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What site security is in place?</li> <li>• Has the site security been checked on arrival?</li> <li>• Are tents and accommodation closed when unoccupied?</li> <li>• Do participants know to report any unknown adult on site to a leader immediately?</li> </ul>
<b>Cold and wet weather</b> <i>Hypothermia, wet-through clothing, cold overnight temperatures</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the weather forecast been checked before and during camp?</li> <li>• Does the kit list include waterproofs, spare dry clothing and a warm sleeping bag?</li> <li>• Are leaders monitoring participants for signs of cold or hypothermia?</li> <li>• Is there a warm shelter available as a contingency?</li> <li>• Is there hot food and drink available at regular intervals?</li> </ul>
<b>Heat and sun</b> <i>Sunstroke, dehydration, heat exhaustion</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is water accessible throughout the day, and are participants reminded to drink?</li> <li>• Is sun cream and hat use being encouraged for outdoor activities in direct sun?</li> <li>• Is the programme being adjusted during periods of high heat?</li> </ul>

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<b>Medical devices</b> <i>Insufficient power or temperature regulation for medication</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all electrical medical devices been declared in advance?</li> <li>• Is an appropriate power supply arranged for any device that requires charging?</li> <li>• Is refrigeration for medication confirmed with the site in advance?</li> <li>• Are individual care plans held by the lead leader for the activity?</li> </ul>
<b>Lost participant at the campsite</b> <i>Anxiety or personal harm</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a site tour taken place on arrival, including out-of-bounds areas?</li> <li>• Is there a buddy system in place at all times?</li> <li>• Does every participant have the leader's mobile number?</li> <li>• Are headcounts taken at each activity transition and at lights-out?</li> </ul>
<b>4.2 — Camp cooking and catering</b>		
<b>Cooking — fire, burns and scalds</b> <i>Gas stoves, open fires, and hot liquids</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have unit leaders reviewed guidance on safe use of cooking equipment before camp?</li> <li>• Are gas stoves used in a well-ventilated area and never inside a tent?</li> <li>• Are connections checked before use, and stoves turned off correctly after?</li> <li>• Is hot liquid handling being supervised?</li> <li>• Is there a suitable first aid kit available?</li> <li>• Are carbon monoxide alarms available?</li> </ul>
<b>Campfire and open fire activities</b> <i>Burns, fire spread, and smoke inhalation</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has site permission been obtained for open fires?</li> <li>• Is the fire in a designated area with an exclusion zone in place?</li> <li>• Is the fire being supervised by a leader at all times?</li> <li>• Is fire-fighting equipment (water/sand) within reach?</li> <li>• Are young people with respiratory conditions sat upwind?</li> <li>• Will the fire be completely extinguished before leaving the fire pit and/or site?</li> </ul>

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<b>Food safety — allergies and intolerances</b> <i>Allergic reaction, food poisoning</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has allergen information been collected on the consent/medical form before camp?</li> <li>• Does the catering plan account for all allergens and dietary needs?</li> <li>• Is all shared food labelled with ingredients?</li> <li>• Is perishable food stored at appropriate temperatures?</li> <li>• Are EpiPens for those with severe allergies accessible to leaders at all times?</li> </ul>
<b>Sharp items — knives, axes, saws</b> <i>Cuts, misuse</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are sharp items stored safely when not in use?</li> <li>• Is knife use by young people following guidance?</li> <li>• Is there appropriate supervision for all tool use?</li> <li>• Is there a suitable first aid kit available?</li> </ul>
<b>Toilet and washing facilities</b> <i>Poor hygiene, illness</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have adequate facilities been confirmed with the site before booking?</li> <li>• Are antibacterial hand wash or gel available in the cooking and eating areas?</li> <li>• Are feminine hygiene facilities available?</li> <li>• Is rubbish being disposed of regularly?</li> </ul>
<b>4.3 — Camp programme and activities</b>		
<b>Planned programme activities</b> <i>Activity-specific injury</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does each activity have its own risk assessment?</li> <li>• Has equipment been checked before use?</li> <li>• Are adult ratios appropriate for the activity and age group?</li> <li>• Are young people wearing appropriate clothing and footwear?</li> <li>• Are all participants empowered to stop and speak up if they feel unsafe?</li> </ul>

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<b>Wide games and night activities</b> <i>Injury in low light, lost participants, and anxiety</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How suitable is the ground for the activity planned and how will that change in adverse weather?</li> <li>• Has the activity area been risk assessed before the activity begins?</li> <li>• Does every young people have a torch for any activity after dark?</li> <li>• Are unit leaders positioned around the activity area with a communication plan?</li> <li>• Is there a buddy system and headcount in place before and after?</li> <li>• Is there a support plan for any participant anxious about darkness?</li> </ul>
<b>Water activities on UK waterways</b> <i>Drowning, cold water shock, injury</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the activity being delivered by a qualified permit holder or externally led provider?</li> <li>• Does delivery comply with POR (9.13) and relevant NGB guidelines?</li> <li>• Are correctly fitted buoyancy aids worn by all participants?</li> <li>• Have young people received a cold water shock briefing?</li> <li>• Is there rescue equipment and a suitable first aid kit at the water's edge?</li> </ul>
<b>Free time, unstructured and unsupervised activities</b> <i>General incidents and injuries</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has guidance on managing free time activities safely been reviewed?</li> <li>• Are the boundaries of the free time area agreed and communicated to participants?</li> <li>• Is there a buddy system in place, and are regular check-ins happening?</li> <li>• Can no young person leave the site alone during free time?</li> </ul>
<b>Slips, trips and falls</b> <i>Uneven terrain, wet ground, obstacles</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is appropriate footwear required for the terrain?</li> <li>• Have activity areas been inspected for hazards before use?</li> <li>• Is supervision adjusted to reflect weather, terrain and light levels?</li> </ul>
<b>Bites and wildlife</b> <i>Tick bites, insect stings, animal encounters</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have young people been briefed on tick awareness for woodland/grassland activities?</li> <li>• Is insect repellent being recommended for evening activities?</li> <li>• Are young people with severe insect sting allergies identified and their epi-pens accessible?</li> </ul>



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<b>Lone working by volunteers</b> Loss of contact, injury, no one to raise the alarm	Adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a lone working plan in place?</li> <li>• If a volunteer must be in a separate area, do they have a mobile phone, and has someone else noted their location?</li> <li>• Is a check-in time agreed, and is it clear who will raise the alarm if they fail to check in?</li> </ul>

## Section 5 — Day trips and excursions

<b>What could go wrong?</b> <i>Hazard identified / risks arising</i>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Prompts to consider</b>
<i>Describe the hazard and the harm it could cause.</i>	<i>List all groups that could be affected.</i>	<i>These are prompts only — they are NOT your controls.</i>
<b>Lost participant</b> <i>Anxiety or personal harm</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a meeting point been agreed and shared with all participants?</li> <li>• Do all young people have the unit leader's/InTouch mobile number?</li> <li>• Is there a buddy system and a regular headcount in place throughout the day?</li> <li>• Do young people know what to do and who to approach if lost?</li> </ul>
<b>Road traffic incidents</b> <i>Collisions when crossing roads on foot</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are designated crossings being used at all times?</li> <li>• Are unit leaders positioned to manage group road crossings?</li> <li>• Has the specific route been risk assessed before the visit?</li> <li>• If abroad, have all been reminded about vehicles on the 'wrong' side of the road?</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour in public spaces</b> <i>Incidents, complaints, and reputational damage</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a clear code of conduct been briefed to young people before departure?</li> <li>• Are unit leaders actively monitoring and managing group behaviour throughout?</li> <li>• Are the young people identifiable (e.g. in necker/uniform) and dressed appropriately?</li> </ul>
<b>Public transport — day trips</b> <i>Missed connections, injury, overcrowding</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the group travelling together with headcounts at each interchange?</li> <li>• Is there enough time built in for connections?</li> <li>• Is there a contingency route or plan if services are disrupted?</li> <li>• Has a meeting point been agreed at each interchange?</li> </ul>
<b>Illness on a day trip</b> <i>Sudden illness, injury, or dehydration</i>	Young people, adult volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a suitable first aid kit carried by a leader?</li> <li>• Are young people reminded to carry water and drink regularly?</li> <li>• Is the process clear for calling 999 and contacting parents/carers in an emergency?</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding on day trips</b> <i>Separation from the group, inappropriate contact with members of the public</i>	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Yellow Card being followed by all adults throughout the trip?</li> <li>• Is no young person ever alone with a single adult?</li> <li>• Are leaders remaining visible and accessible to young people at all times?</li> </ul>