

Events safety guidance



Introduction

This guidance outlines the main factors you will need to consider when running an event at the University. Every year a wide range of events are held from small low risk ones to large and complex ones. This guidance is not intended to cover every type of event but has general guidance on planning your event and details of the main hazards and risks commonly associated with events at the University.

If you need further advice, please refer to the guidance on the [Events team website](#) and [Health and Safety Executive's guidance](#) on running an event safely or contact [Safety and Health Services](#). Organisers of large and more complex events may also find [The Purple Guide](#) a useful resource.

Responsibilities

Head of school, centre, or service

The Head of School or Centre is accountable for the health and safety of all staff they line manage and others (including students and visitors) who may be affected by the activities of that School and/or Centre. This includes events being organised by a school or centre.

Event organiser

You have a duty to plan, manage and monitor your event to ensure attendees and others who may be affected by the event are not harmed. Individuals involved with the event should be competent to undertake their role safely. There should also be an appropriate level of competent supervision, proportionate to the risk, nature of the work and the personnel involved.

You will need to:

- ensure compliance with relevant legislation and University policies,
- make the appropriate applications and notifications to gain approval for holding the event (this includes both within the University and externally for example Bristol City Council or the emergency services),
- consult with stakeholders within the University and externally as appropriate,
- ensure a suitable risk assessment is undertaken,
- ensure competent contractors (where applicable) are used - please refer to the [control of contractors policy](#) for further details.

Planning and risk assessment

Planning

The size and nature of your event will determine how far in advance you need to start planning your event. You should allow enough time to obtain specialist advice (if required), carry out risk assessments, consult third parties, and secure approval for the event. For larger events you may also have to allow time to liaise with statutory authorities (e.g. police, fire and ambulance services and local authority) and voluntary organisations (e.g. first-aid societies etc.).

The Events team have a [range of resources](#) available to help you plan your event.

Risk assessment

You will need to carry out a [risk assessment](#) for your event to ensure that hazards have been identified and suitable control measures are in place. The level of detail required in the risk assessment will depend on the size and activities that are part of the event.

Please see the Safety and Health Services [guidance on risk assessment](#) for more detail.

Event approval processes

Permission to hold **outdoor** events on University owned land should be applied for through the [external events application process](#). Applications for events must be received **at least 3 weeks before** the proposed date to allow time for the panel to consider the application and risk assessments.

- a. Events held outdoors at halls of residence do not fall within the scope of the above process and are managed by other local mechanisms. Please contact [Residential Life](#) for more information resilife-whats-on@bristol.ac.uk.
- b. Organisers of events held inside University buildings should liaise with local management and the local [Facilities Manager](#).

Licensing requirements

You may need to apply for a [temporary events notice](#) from Bristol City Council. It is your responsibility to ensure that any required [licences and permits](#) are applied for. Your event must not go ahead unless these are in place.

Emergency plans

You should have plans in place to deal with emergencies that might occur at your event. Clear roles and responsibilities should be in place together with plans for how communications will be managed if there is an emergency.

Depending on the event, emergencies might include:

- Fire
- First aid
- Security risks

- Adverse weather

Insurance

You must ask any contractors involved with your event for written evidence that they hold their own Public Liability insurance. Insurance should be for a minimum limit of indemnity of £10m for any one claim with a company registered with the [Financial Conduct Authority](#) and be valid for the date(s) the event is planned.

Please contact the [Insurance team](#) for further advice.

Road closures etc.

If you are considering closing a road for your event, ensure that you apply to the Local Authority ([Bristol City Council](#) or [North Somerset Council](#)) at least 8 weeks in advance.

Specific hazards and issues to consider (not all will apply to your event):

Welfare

- Toilets: you must provide an adequate number of toilets/hand washing facilities for the number of people expected at the event. Depending on the size and location of your event, this may be by using existing University facilities or sourcing more.
- Waste: you are responsible for clearing the site of rubbish after your event. You will also need to provide an adequate number of bins. Contact the [Sustainability team](#) for guidance on disposal of and recycling waste from your event.
- Lighting: ensure there is suitable lighting throughout the site, including lighting if the event will go on after dark.
- Stewards: you will need to provide enough stewards for the size and nature of your event who must be adequately trained in their roles and responsibilities.

First aid

The first-aid provision will be determined by the event risk assessment and should be suitable for the number of people expected to attend and for the risks associated with the event.

Details on the amount of first aid cover required can be found in the [Health and Safety Executives \(HSE\) Events Safety Guide](#). The recommended minimum number of first aiders at small events where no special risks are considered likely is 2:1000 for the first 3000 attending. A voluntary first-aid society can be asked to provide a First-Aid service, or contact an organisation such as [St. John Ambulance](#), [British Red Cross](#) to arrange attendance and provide first-aid cover.

If event organisers identify a need to train staff as first aiders to provide cover specifically for regular events, the costs of training are the responsibility of the organising School/Service. Event organisers should ensure that they follow HSE's

guidance when selecting an appropriate first aid training provider [Selecting a first-aid training provider: A guide for employers \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Managing crowds

For larger events, your risk assessment may find that control measures to effectively manage crowds are needed. These might include using barriers, stewards, or signage etc. Further detail can be found in the [HSE's events guidance](#).

Slips, trips, and falls

Consider if there are any slip, trip or fall risks associated with your event. This might be from uneven surfaces, weather conditions or trailing cables. Make sure enough measures are in place to control these risks.

Fire safety

If your event is outside, it is advisable to provide equipment such as fire extinguishers or fire blankets for putting out small fires throughout the site. Fire extinguishers should only be used by people who have taken the training and only then in the event of a small fire. Everyone with responsibilities at the event should be told not to fight major fires and wait for firefighters.

Safety and Health Services provide regular training events in the use of fire extinguishers which can be booked via [Develop](#).

Marquees, tents, gazebos, and similar structures must be inherently fire retardant and meet BS7157 or equivalent. All materials, panels and liners should have a label or certificate affixed confirming this.

Please see the [Safety and Health Services website](#) for more information on fire safety.

Adverse weather conditions

You should consider if:

- the site will be suitable in all weathers and that any staging/structures will be safe in adverse weather conditions,
- there is no trip, slip or other similar hazards to the public,
- wet or windy weather will not cause any other added hazards,
- obvious hazards on both the site and surrounding areas are safe, such as overhead power lines, stored chemicals or machinery, unfenced holes, steep drops between different ground levels, open water including ponds, streams and ditches, and dangerous structures that the participants should be kept away from using barriers/fencing,
- vehicles and pedestrians are kept segregated as far as possible with separate entrances/exits to the site and arrange entrance queues that don't obstruct vehicle access or nearby road or pavement junctions.

Electrical safety

Event organisers should ensure any electrical installations and appliances are safe. Further guidance can be obtained from the HSE - [Electricity and the law - Electrical safety at work \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/).

Use of drones

There are a range of safety and insurance considerations associated with using drones (also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)). certain requirements apply to all drone operations whether staff, students or third parties. Please see the [Safety and Health Services guidance](#) on drone operations for further information.

Food safety

Food prepared or offered as part of the event must meet food hygiene and safety requirements. Individuals preparing food must be suitably trained supervised or instructed and the University's [catering procedures](#) should be followed.

The following key areas of risk must be adequately managed and considered as part of the event risk assessment (if applicable):

- **Allergies (food hypersensitivities):** information on ingredients should be made available whether made by the organisers or sourced from a third party. This might be from the packaging if you have bought food from a third-party company, or a list of ingredients for each item if you have made them for the event. Please also ensure signage is available advising customers to ask for more information if they have a food allergy.
- **Cross contamination:** where harmful bacteria is transferred to food (most commonly from contaminated surfaces, utensils, hands, or raw food).
- **microbial growth:** some food requires refrigeration or hot holding to prevent harmful bacteria from growing. Food may also be at risk if it is past its use by date.

The most common types of foods offered at events are:

- **Charity cake sales:** please see the specific advice from the Food Standards Agency: [Providing food at community and charity events | Food Standards Agency](#) Please avoid offering high risk food (requiring hot holding or refrigeration) as it is much more difficult to control the risks.
- **Barbeques:** it is strongly recommended that an approved caterer is used when organising barbeques. There are a range of cross contamination, allergy and temperature control risks associated with barbeques which are best managed by an approved caterer with suitably trained staff.
- **Third party providers:** ensure only approved third party food companies are used via myERP. These suppliers have all been vetted and have adequate food safety management systems in place.

General information on food safety can be obtained from the [Food Standards Agency](#).

Inflatables

If inflatables are being used as part of the event, follow the HSE's guidance: [Bouncy castles and other play inflatables: safety advice \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).

Useful resources

- University events team resources – for larger events [Event resources and guidance | Events | University of Bristol](#)
- HSE events guide: [The event safety guide \(Second edition\) \(gov.gg\)](#)
- HSE events safety web pages [Event safety - Running an event safely \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- The purple guide (must be purchased) [The Purple Guide](#) for large-scale music and similar events.