



Risk Factory

City of Edinburgh, West Lothian, East Lothian and Midlothian Councils

Executive Summary

The Risk Factory is Scotland's only interactive safety centre and has been operational since January 2007, with its core market focused on providing risk awareness education to Primary 7 children from Edinburgh and the surrounding local authorities. Safety and risk awareness training has historically been the remit of local authorities using the 'Crucial Crew' model, which is run during the year in non-static locations. The introduction of The Risk Factory has reduced the reliance on external partnership involvement and offers an improved service within a static location all year round.

As part of the school programme The Risk Factory welcomes schools that work with children with additional and special needs including behavioural, emotional and supportive needs and has now expanded this to working with adults with additional needs. Scenarios are primarily based on the core program; however the factory is able to tailor scenarios to meet the needs of the group through conducting a pre-visit with group leader(s). A successful pilot was run with a neighbouring local authority college which was very successful and has subsequently resulted in more colleges using the facilities at The Risk Factory.

Background and Aims

The capital build for the project was funded through the Scottish Executive's Community Safety Challenge Fund with match funding from the partner agencies, emergency services and the private sector. The capital build period for the centre was spread over six years due to numerous changes in location, necessitated by circumstances out with the control of the project. The centre opened in January 2007 with the programme being delivered through Volunteer Safety Guides.

The Risk Factory is an unincorporated association comprising of the City of Edinburgh, Mid, West and East Lothian Councils. The management committee who acts as trustees for the association consists of four individuals, one from each of the four councils involved, and two co-opted members representing Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The project is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Risk Factory Officer. Revenue funding is provided in part through the four local authorities with the balance generated through sponsorship, charges and room hire. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service support is provided through the provision of a seconded officer with Police Scotland School Link/Community Officers attending to provide input on day's schools/other groups visit.

The factory aims to teach children and other vulnerable groups from across Edinburgh and the Lothian's which includes:

- Primary 7 children from across Edinburgh and the Lothian's and pupils from other local authorities
- Cub scouts for their Home Safety and Road Safety badges
- Adults with additional needs who are moving towards greater independence and independent living
- Brownies for their Crime Prevention and Home Safety badges or the Fire and Road Safety badges
- Boys Brigade (Anchor and Junior Sections) focussing on Home, Fire, Road and Water Safety

The project aims to provide high quality, interactive community safety education, which will assist in developing pro-active citizenship and will help to reduce the numbers of incidents and fatalities associated with a wide range of risks from electrocution to fire.

Activities

The Risk Factory is based on the principle that learning by experience is more memorable than being told what to do. At The Risk Factory pupils are put into scenarios that they could face in everyday life and are taught strategies that could help save, not only their own lives, but other peoples'. Visiting The Risk Factory allows them to make choices in a safe environment where they can learn from their mistakes.

On arrival at the centre, the school will be welcomed into the building by a member of staff and pupils are split into groups. The groups will then be introduced to their Volunteer Safety Guide who will provide each pupil with a name badge. After a short briefing on what to expect the groups will be led into the main scenario area by their Volunteer Safety Guide who will lead them through the tour. The groups then enter the scenarios from different points so that they do not overlap, ending up back at the main hall for a debriefing and discussion.

The activities covered within The Risk Factory include the following scenarios:

- **Bus**
The students get to sit on a real bus and are taken through a number of scenarios highlighting the risks associated with bus travel - left luggage, stone throwing, Anti-social Behaviour.
- **Street Scene**
A street scene which has a road incident between a car and cyclist is used during an observational exercise getting the pupils to be crime investigators and identify what happened to cause the accident. The scenario provides the pupils with a holistic view of the risks and consequences for all road users.
- **Electric Sub Station**
The substation scenario is a mock-up of a real substation showing a scene where a child has entered a substation and been electrocuted. There is an interactive board for use by the students that shows the impact an electric shut down can

cause on other lives, and a simple plasma ball which demonstrates how electricity 'jumps' and the risks associated with playing near electricity.

- **Railway**
The railway scenario includes a, full audio highlighting the risks of playing on or near the railway; looks at how to keep safe at a station and the dangers of playing on rail tracks. To demonstrate the later, attractive items (£20 note, school bag, etc) are placed on the tracks and pupils are asked what they would do, during this period a simulated train appears from the tunnel to show the speed and size of the danger.
- **Water Safety**
The water safety zone examines the risks attributed to all water safety whether inland or out to sea. The room has painted scenes, a bridge and a waterway which the pupils are prompted to discuss and examine. The students are asked to make an emergency call, using the telephone box that is in the scenario, which improves awareness and helps them to gain confidence to raise the alarm if needed.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour**
There is an area that looks like a park with a dummy on a bench and alcohol cans lie around. A police officer comes out of the house, having visited a local resident, and the scenario examines anti-social behaviour and what the pupils should do and not do, making them aware of the consequences and dangers.
- **Fire**
The fire scenario allows the pupils to look around a house which in the scenario is one of their aunties. A fire then breaks out and the pupils who are first on the scene have to make decisions about what to do to save their aunt and how to raise the alarm. This is hosted by a fire officer who discusses the pupil's actions with them after the scenario.
- **Home**
The home scenario is a mock-up of a house with a kitchen, sitting room, toilet/bathroom and bedroom. All the rooms have a number of high risk items, scenarios and substances and the pupils are challenged to find as many as they can, thereby making them more aware of the risks often overlooked within the home. This scenario also looks at gas and carbon monoxide.
- **Building Site**
The building site has scaffolding and equipment laying around which pose a threat to safety and can easily result in injury. The scenario has a dummy of a girl climbing up the scaffolding and as the group enter the dummy falls stopping before it hits the floor. The scenario again asks the pupils to discuss the risks and highlight any they can see.
- **Farm Yard and Flood**
In addition to farm and countryside risks the children are introduced to the risk from bacteria from animals and the dangers of farm yard machinery. An interactive scenario which has the pupils looking around the farm equipment, hay bales and different animals depicted on the walls.

The flood element discusses the dangers of flood water and asks the pupils if they had to leave their house for a few days to identify the key items for inclusion in their family flood kit.

- **Internet Café and Online Activity**

The Internet Café/Online activity area tests the pupils understanding of the risks associated with the use of computers, online and social media and chat rooms. It examines understanding and provides direction and safety advice to prevent the pupils from becoming victims.

Impact

Information Services Division (ISD) reporting^{i ii} identified that unintentional injury admissions within the Edinburgh and Lothian areas over the period 2009 to 2014 has reduced by 18% which translates to nearly 250 children aged under 15 no longer becoming victim to unintentional injury. Although it is difficult to quantify why this reduction has occurred and it is not possible to state that The Risk Factory is solely responsible it is assessed that the improved level of knowledge with regards to unintentional injury and risk could be a factor in this reduction.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Due to the educational nature of the project quantifiable analysis on outcomes is difficult. Evaluation Surveys are conducted with those attending and teachers identified that children remember more the threats as a result of practical exercises however long term outcome associated to this project are very difficult to evidence; other than the prevention of unintentional injury and death through life long lessons.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The Risk Factory is available to educational organisations from outside the Lothian and Edinburgh but this is at a minimal cost of around £5.10 per pupil (at 2014). The promotion of The Risk Factory to external educational organisations will enable additional funding to be raised which will assist with the sustainability of the project.

The Risk Factory has already implemented some changes with regards to pupils with additional needs providing a Social Story and Visual Journey pre-visit package.

The Risk Factory is dependent on volunteers and has to date a group of dedicated volunteers which is always in need of expansion. To attract more volunteers The Risk Factory hosts two volunteer events annually and hosts volunteer family days where the volunteers can bring family members to the factory.

The Risk Factory volunteers were acknowledged for the work they had done in educating children with an award at the Inspiring Volunteers Awards held during volunteer week in Edinburgh (2009). In addition The Risk Factory volunteers have also won the Promoting Intergenerational Projects Award (Aug 2009) and Get Up and Go Awards (2009) for the work done across generational boundaries.

Resources

The current partners for The Risk Factory are The City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership, Midlothian Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, SP Energy Networks, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and West Lothian Council.

The capital build for the project was funded through the Scottish Executive's Community Safety Challenge Fund with match funding from the partner agencies, emergency services and the private sector. The capital build period for the centre was spread over six years due to numerous changes in location, necessitated by circumstances out with the control of the project. It opened to groups in January 2007 with the programmes offered delivered through our Volunteer Safety Guides.

Outcomes

The primary outcome for The Risk Factory is the reduction in accidents, crime, the fear of crime and creating safer communities through experiential learning and interactive safety.

National	We live our lives free from crime disorder and danger We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
Justice Strategy	Reducing crime Reducing offending Preventing offending by young people Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime Strengthening community engagement and resilience

Practice Note Information

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ⁱ NHS Scotland, Information Services Division, Unintentional Injuries, Year ending 31 March 2014 Published 3 March 2015.

ⁱⁱ NHS Scotland, Information Services Division, Unintentional Injuries, Year ending 31 December 2009 Published 14 December 2010.