This Risk Assessment covers the hazards associated with volunteers litter picking in the community on **Solihull MBC land only**. It is to be used as guidance when volunteers are undertaking activities without the supervision of a Solihull Metropolitan Borough Officer.

This Risk Assessment should be used in conjunction with the Love Solihull Community Litter Picking Guidelines. Activities that do not follow these guidelines are carried out at your own risk.

If you require further clarification or have any questions or feedback relating to this risk assessment, then please get in touch.

If you are involved in an incident or accident that has resulted in ill health or injury or if you are involved in an event where no harm has been caused, but had the potential to cause injury or ill health then please report this to the Love Solihull team at the earliest opportunity: 0121 704 8000 or email <a href="mailto:lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk">lovesolihull@solihull.gov.uk</a>.

	High	Amber	Amber	Red						
Impact/severity	Med	Green	Amber	Amber						
ct/se	Low	Green	Green	Green						
Impa		Low	Med	High						
	Likelihood									

	Community Litter Picking	Community Litter Picking										
				itial ri	isk	Control Measures; (existing controls / precautions) should be considered.	Net Risk		sk			
Hazard	Risk Description / Hazardous Event	Persons at Risk	Likelihood	Impact / Severity	Risk Level	<ul><li>Preventative &amp; Protective Measures;</li><li>(IP) = measures in place;</li><li>(TP) = measures to be put in place / date of completion.</li></ul>	Likelihood	Impact / Severity	Risk Level	Owner		

Slips, trips and falls	<ul> <li>Uneven surface area.</li> <li>Equipment and/or waste bags left lying around site.</li> <li>Inappropriate footwear.</li> </ul>	Volunteers and members of public	н	M	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Where possible, conduct a site-specific inspection before litter picking to identify and assess potential hazards such as uneven ground, steep slopes, loose debris, or trip hazards.</li> <li>(IP) Always wear appropriate footwear, ideally sturdy, flat-soled boots or shoes with good grip to reduce the risk of slips and falls.</li> <li>(IP) Stick to designated footpaths.         Avoid walking along roadside verges, entering ditches, or navigating steep or unstable terrain.     </li> <li>(IP) Exercise caution in overgrown, rocky, or wet/muddy areas, as these can become particularly hazardous. If conditions appear unsafe, avoid the area.</li> <li>(IP) Filled litter bags must be placed next to a public bin. Do not leave bags where they could obstruct pedestrians, vehicles, or create additional trip hazards. If a bin isn't available an appropriate location needs to be approved by relevant Love Solihull team member.</li> </ul>	M	L	Green	
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Lost child	Children litter picking, wandering off, and getting lost or abducted	Children litter picking	L	Н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Children under 16 must be supervised at all times by a responsible parent or guardian. They must not litter pick independently unless pre agreed consent has been given, such as for Duke of Edinburgh litter picking activities.</li> <li>(IP) For group litter-picking events, a child's parent or guardian must be present throughout the event and remain responsible for their supervision.</li> <li>(IP) All volunteers must stay vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour concerning children to the event organiser and, if necessary, to the Police immediately.</li> <li>(IP) Ensure that all children and their responsible adult are aware of the designated litter-picking route and what steps to take if they become separated from the group. A clear meeting point should be established at the start of the event.</li> <li>(IP) Children must wear the provided orange high visibility safety vest when partaking in litter picking activities.</li> </ul>	L	Н	Amber	
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Manual Handling	<ul> <li>Moving heavy or awkwardly shaped items</li> <li>Heavy object landing on foot causing break or bruising</li> </ul>	Volunteers	М	М	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Do not overfill litter bags; ensure they remain a manageable weight to prevent strain or injury.</li> <li>(IP) Before lifting or moving a bag, assess its weight and determine if assistance is needed. If a bag is too heavy, seek help rather than attempting to move it alone.</li> <li>(IP) Avoid dragging bags or objects across uneven surfaces.</li> <li>(IP) If an item is too heavy or awkward to move do not attempt to move it. Instead, report large or hazardous waste Solihull Connect (0121 704 8000)</li> <li>(IP) Consider wearing steel-toe cap boots for added protection (please note these are not provided).</li> </ul>	L	М	Green	
Hand tools	Incorrect use of litter picking equipment may lead to injuries	Volunteers and members of the public	н	М	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Only use the assigned litter-picking kit provided (e.g., litter pickers, gloves, and bag hoops).</li> <li>Volunteers must not use mechanical tools or hand tools that are not related to the agreed volunteer tasks.</li> <li>(IP) Volunteers must not use ropes, grappling hooks, or any other unauthorised tools to retrieve items that are out of safe reach and/or in water bodies.</li> <li>(IP) In the instance of a group litter pick, the group leaders must provide guidance on the safe usage of all litter-picking equipment before the activity begins.</li> <li>(IP) All tools must be assessed before use to ensure they are in safe working order. Any damaged or faulty equipment must not be used.</li> </ul>	L	M	Green	

						<ul> <li>(IP) Volunteers must maintain a safe working distance from others to prevent accidental contact with tools. Be mindful of surroundings, including uneven ground and nearby hazards.</li> <li>(IP) If an item cannot be safely retrieved using the assigned litter-picking kit, do not attempt to remove it. Instead, report large, hazardous, or difficult-to-reach litter to SMBC Connect 0121 704 8000 for safe removal.</li> </ul>				
Moving Vehicles	<ul> <li>Hit by a moving vehicle whilst working on or near the highway</li> <li>Near miss or close proximity drive by whilst working on the highway</li> <li>Working on or near the roadside</li> </ul>	Volunteers and motorists	M	н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Do not litter pick along roads with speed limits over 30mph. Litter picking on high-speed is strictly prohibited.</li> <li>(IP) Always maintain a minimum 1-metre safe working zone from live traffic. If a safe distance cannot be maintained, do not proceed.</li> <li>(IP) Volunteers must never attempt to clear litter from the highway (carriageway).</li> <li>(IP) Minimise the need to crossroads by carefully pre-planning your route and using designated pedestrian crossings where available.</li> <li>(IP) Work in pairs or groups whenever possible to increase awareness and support vigilance when working near roads.</li> <li>(IP) Plan a safe litter-picking route that prioritises footpath availability, road speed limits, and safe crossing points.</li> <li>(IP) Always wear an orange high-visibility vest meeting BS EN 471 (Class 2) standard, provided by Love Solihull, when litter picking near roads or public rights of way.</li> <li>(IP) Avoid litter picking after dusk, particularly near roads, as visibility is significantly reduced.</li> </ul>	L	М	Green	

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)	<ul> <li>Verbal and physical abuse</li> <li>Fire caused by person/s igniting bags awaiting collection</li> </ul>	Volunteers and residents	L	н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) If you encounter aggressive or threatening behaviour, do not engage or confront the individual/group. Leave the area immediately if you feel unsafe and report the incident to Love Solihull. If necessary, report to the Police. If you are part of a litter picking group, inform fellow group members of the incident.</li> <li>(IP) Under no circumstances should volunteers attempt to engage with anyone displaying threatening or violent behaviour. Prioritise personal safety by moving away from the area and calling the Police if required. Always inform Love Solihull of the incident.</li> <li>(IP) If you find a knife or weapon, please report it to the police by calling 101. Following that, please report it to SMBC Connect on 0121 704 8000 for safe disposal.</li> <li>(IP) Filled litter bags must not be left next to buildings, private property, or areas where they may cause concern or obstruction. Bags should be placed in a designated collection point agreed upon with Love Solihull.</li> <li>(IP) Group Leaders must report large amounts of litter bags requiring collection via the online reporting form (hyperlink) to ensure prompt removal and prevent accumulation.</li> </ul>	L	M	Green	
Lone Working	<ul> <li>Medical situation leading to inability to summon assistance.</li> <li>Increased potential to become target of physical</li> </ul>	Volunteers	М	н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Always inform a friend, family member, or trusted contact of your planned route and estimated return time before setting out. Ensure someone knows where you are in case of an emergency.</li> <li>(IP) Choose safe locations for litter picking. Stick to open, well-lit, and visible public</li> </ul>	L	н	Amber	

attack causing harm, injury or		areas and avoid secluded spaces or unlit		
death.		areas, especially after dark.		
		(IP) Whenever possible, consider joining a		
		local community litter-picking group for		
		added safety and social engagement. Take a		
		look at the Love Solihull website for details		
		on nearby groups.		
		(IP) Ensure your mobile phone is charged		
		should you need it for emergency use and		
		ensure it is easily accessible while litter		
		picking.		
		(IP) If you feel unsafe at any time, leave the		
		area immediately and seek a safer		
		location. Report any concerns or incidents to		
		Love Solihull.		

Biological hazards including sharps (glass, needles) faeces and urine, asbestos	<ul> <li>Cuts to skin</li> <li>Risk of infection Discarded needles.</li> <li>Disease via transfer from hands to mouth</li> </ul>	Volunteers and members of the public	н	M	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Always use the designated litter-picking tools provided to collect litter.</li> <li>(IP) Wearing gloves is strongly recommended at all times to minimise direct contact with waste.</li> <li>(IP) Do not attempt to pick up or handle any unidentified, hazardous, or biological waste, including faeces, knives, dead animals, syringes, or any other biohazardous material.</li> <li>(IP) If you find needles or syringes, do not attempt to remove them. Leave them in place and report immediately to SMBC Connect on 0121 704 8000 for safe disposal.</li> <li>(IP) If you find a knife or weapon, please report it to the police by calling 101. Following that, please report it to SMBC Connect on 0121 704 8000 for safe disposal.</li> <li>(IP) Cover any existing cuts or grazes with a waterproof plaster before litter picking to reduce the risk of infection.</li> <li>(IP) Do not remove or disturb suspected flytipping. Leave the waste in place and report it to SMBC via the online Fly Tipping Reporting Form (hyperlinked) or the relevant landowner for appropriate action.</li> <li>(IP) Be aware of potential asbestos risks. Familiarise yourself with asbestos identification using the HSE's asbestos information provided online here. If asbestos is suspected, do not touch or move the material; Report it to SMBC Connect: 0121 704 8000</li> <li>(IP) Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating, drinking, smoking, or using the toilet to prevent contamination.</li> </ul>	M	L	Green	
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Adverse weather	<ul> <li>Heavy rain and wind.</li> <li>Lightning</li> <li>Heat / Sun Exposure.</li> <li>Strong winds resulting in falling limbs and/or trees.</li> <li>Cold and freezing conditions.</li> <li>Items blowing on to highways causing obstruction</li> </ul>	Volunteers	М	н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) In severe or extreme weather conditions (storms, heavy rain, snow, high winds, or heatwaves), postpone any planned litter picking to prioritise safety.</li> <li>(IP) During thunderstorms, seek shelter immediately in a building or vehicle—avoid trees, open fields, and metal objects that can attract lightning.</li> <li>(IP) In hot weather, wear sunscreen (SPF 30+), a hat, and lightweight, breathable clothing.</li> <li>(IP) Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water and take regular breaks in the shade to prevent heat exhaustion.</li> <li>(IP) In cold weather, wear warm, layered clothing and waterproof outerwear to maintain body heat and stay dry.</li> <li>(IP) In icy or snowy conditions, be cautious of slippery surfaces and avoid areas with poor footing to reduce the risk of falls.</li> </ul>	L	М	Green	
Open Water	<ul> <li>Drowning</li> <li>Pollution of the water course.</li> <li>Pollution from the water.</li> <li>Disease including Leptospirosis</li> <li>Contact with underwater objects.</li> </ul>	Volunteers	М	н	Amber	<ul> <li>(IP) Volunteers must never enter open water under any circumstances to retrieve litter or objects. Any large or hazardous items (e.g., trolleys, bikes, or debris) must be reported to SMBC Connect 0121 704 8000 for assessment or for safe removal.</li> <li>(IP) Do not attempt to pull items from the water using any equipment (e.g., grappling hooks, ropes, or improvised tools).</li> <li>(IP) When litter picking near open water, always maintain a safe distance of 2 metres from the water's edge, unless there is a formal, maintained footpath present.</li> </ul>	L	Н	Amber	

	Lliah	Amber	Amber	Red
I	High	6	7	9

M	Medium	Green	Amber	Amber						
P		3	5	8						
A	Low	Green	Green	Green						
C		1	2	4						
Т		Low	Medium	High						
	LIKELIHOOD									

NET Risk Level	Action and Timescale
Red 9	Work should not be started or continued until the risk level has been reduced. While the control measures should be cost-effective, the legal duty to reduce the risk is mandatory. This means that if it is not possible to reduce the risk, even with unlimited resources, then the work must not be started or must remain prohibited.
Amber 7 & 8	Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves work in progress, the problem should be remedied as quickly as possible and certainly within one month.
Amber 6	Although this risk is unlikely to happen, all reasonable efforts should be made to reduce the impact of this risk.  Risk reduction measures should normally be implemented within six months, depending on the number of people exposed to the hazard.
Amber 5	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk, but the costs of prevention should be carefully considered. Risk reduction measures should normally be implemented within three months, depending on the number of people exposed to the hazard.
Green 1, 2 & 3	Whilst this level of risk is generally acceptable, consideration should be given to cost-effective solutions, or improvements that impose minimal or no additional cost burden.
Green 4	Monitoring is required to ensure that the controls are maintained.