

Risk Management in Latvia Municipal Social Services for Sustainable Well-Being of the Population [†]

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Abstract: The European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in November 2017, sets out 20 principles with the explicit aim of promoting upward convergence to create better living and working conditions in Europe. This helps fight poverty in all its forms and ensures fair, adequate and sustainable social security systems. For several years now, the world and Latvia have been witnessing a change in political systems and ideologies, and rapid technological developments, especially in information technology. Today, we can see how the methods of administration in local government and the forms of customer service in the public sector are changing and what the benefits of change are for the population; however, the risks that can significantly affect the organization of work and communication with customers in local government institutions for the promotion of social welfare in a sustainable way are not fully identified. The aim of the research—based on the scientific literature, regulatory framework and the findings of the empirical study—is to develop a risk assessment, in accordance with the specifics of social services in Latvia, to promote the social well-being of the population with sustainability. Methods of research: theoretical research methods—literature research and analysis and regulatory analysis—and empirical research methods—survey, statistical analysis and expert interviews. Results of the research: Summarized conclusions on the need for risk management in municipal social services and a risk assessment developed in accordance with the specifics of social services. The obtained research results can become a basis for further research and risk management approval in Latvian municipal services.



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1. Introduction

Social work is a field that is exposed to uncertainty or risks on a daily basis because it is not always possible to balance positive and negative factors when working with people with a social problem. At the same time, social services in Latvia are currently institutions with a relatively large number of staff, so risk management in institutions may be incomplete or not yet relevant due to the fragmentation of regions and institutions. The need for risk assessment is also highlighted by the current geopolitical processes—in 2021, Latvia underwent an administrative territorial reform, which merged municipalities and significantly changed local government institutions, including social services [1]. This means that the reorganized institutions—the new social services—now have more than 50 employees under their management instead of the previous 30 employees (some municipal social services even had only 9–15 employees), which is reflected in the research part. The drastic change in the size of the team requires an assessment of risks that would not have been considered before or were very low, and it is also important to carry out a risk assessment specific to social services.

In a global context, risk management in social services is a long-standing issue. In 2014, Frederic G. Reamer, professor and social work researcher at the University of Chicago,

highlighted the importance of risk management in social institutions, given the vital and important role of social institutions in crisis situations, where people need continuous social assistance, both in material terms and in the form of social services. The main challenges in social work are highlighted, namely, that the most significant risks in social services are related to privacy and confidentiality (particularly related to information technology and cyber security), maltreatment and service delivery, actions of practicing social workers and supervision of their work, consultation and referral, fraud and deception at work [2].

The lack of risk management in state and local government institutions was also highlighted in 2017 by researchers from the European University of Tirana in their article “Risk Management in Public Sector: A Literature Review”, revealing the etiology of the problem, which is:

1. The mission and objectives of the public sector institution ignore other considerations, which is not a common phenomenon in the private sector;
2. Frequent management changes and the absence of leadership;
3. Managers who lack basic knowledge of risk management and business;
4. Insufficient budget and resources to develop and implement a risk strategy;
5. Lack of logical and detailed risk matrices in institutions;
6. Lack of understanding of the importance of risk management by the management and staff of the institution;
7. The developed risk management strategy is not applied on a day-to-day basis, so staff do not have practical skills in risk management [3].

It would not be acceptable for a social institution to suspend its work or restrict the provision of assistance or services to clients when internal or external risks occur, but, in the COVID-19 pandemic, which was an external risk, problems in risk management were more frequent and more pronounced. The absence of risk management was clearly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic in social care centers in Latvia and also in neighboring Estonia and Lithuania, demonstrating the “powerlessness” of institutional management against the consequences of the virus and the poor organization during the subsequent vaccination of clients [4]. Without anticipating the risks of the institution, it is impossible to prepare a plan of action in advance in case a risk occurs, which was also demonstrated by the simultaneous occurrence of several serious risks in social care centers both during the pandemic and in previous years (reputational, customer service, financial risks, etc.).

However, it should be noted that, at the global level, global crises that “paralyse” organizations are not only discussed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, but, increasingly, risks associated with environmental issues, geopolitical situations and societal processes, such as extreme weather events, natural disasters, biodiversity loss, man-made natural crises and protests and riots (by definition these are high risks by probability), are also being considered as high risks. As well, the use of biological weapons, economic conflicts between major powers, drinking water and food crises, extreme drought, including extreme heat waves, and social instability (high risks by impact) are being included [5]. It is important to take this into account when planning a sustainable risk management strategy, as these risks affect not only the well-being of society as a whole, but also organizations in both the private and public sectors.

As for social services, in the event of one of these risks (natural disasters, geopolitical conflicts, etc.), social workers should have a clear plan for how to continue their work providing adequate social assistance and social services to the population. The role of social institutions and social workers in times of crisis was analyzed in an article in the *Journal of Sociology and Social Work* by researchers of Iran. While such crises are not uncommon in Iran, the researchers point out that, with the rapidly changing climate, the risks are also becoming higher for temperate countries; heat waves, floods, prolonged internet and power outages and even attacks on the installations of sovereign states are becoming more frequent in European countries. The article highlights risk management, which allows one to anticipate these risks and to instruct employees when they occur, i.e., to develop a crisis scenario to prevent or mitigate disasters—the plan includes preventive measures

and permitted and prohibited employee activities, as well as the necessary resources to cope with the crisis. Along with the planning process, practical training of social workers is also important, similar to what is carried out for police officers, firefighters and other professions that are fundamental in crisis situations [6].

Professor F. Reamer, on the other hand, highlights some of the most difficult risks to manage in both private companies and public institutions, namely, the information risks associated with an organization's crisis communication, public relations management, the media and customer behavior and opinion. Social work as a field has existed worldwide for almost a century and has therefore undergone many different transformations, keeping pace with innovation; today, social workers provide counseling in person, by telephone, online via internet platforms (video counseling) and through inquiries, emails and social networks. Cybertherapy and self-guided web-based interventions are described as some of the relatively newer social work methods which can be used by social workers when the client is more comfortable communicating online or when circumstances require them to do so [7]. These innovations also create new risks for institutions which may concern various ethical breaches in the social service itself. In the context of knowledge transfer in social work practice, from a risk management perspective, social workers and social services face the challenge of adopting and implementing a politically neutral position in their professional practice, focusing on individual cases and not focusing on structural causes in risk management.

Based on the facts above and the topicality of the problem, the research questions are:

1. What are the current risks in the social services of Latvian municipalities?
2. Do social services need to assess the risks in order to prevent or mitigate the potential consequences of the risks for the sustainable functioning of the institution?

2. Ethics and Risk Management in Social Service

However, a review of the literature suggests that risk management in the social sphere will be different from risk management in, for example, a private organization. Allan Barsky, professor of social work at Florida Atlantic University, discusses the risks in the risk management strategy itself in his article, stressing that the role of the institution is to avoid or mitigate potential risks and harms, but avoiding harm to the client, employee or institution may not achieve the ethical objectives of the institution. For example, social services often want to avoid actions that could have legal consequences (appealing against decisions of the institution, suing for 'bad practices' or actions of staff, etc.), but it remains an open question as to whether, in such cases, the principle of social justice towards clients is ensured and all the resources of the social service are used to deal with the situation. This brings up the concept of 'risk appetite', or the risks that an institution is willing to take and tolerate in order to achieve its goal as an organization, which is why risk management policies in social services are not straightforward to assess. The author concludes at the end of the article that risk management is essentially a teleological approach to ethics, focusing on the consequences of different actions, and that the key risk in risk management is when the employee and the institution carry out the less risky action rather than the right action [8].

Janet Seden, analyzing risks in social work, highlights social media crises, which often affect social services and have a negative impact on public confidence in social work as a field. Without taking measures to prevent or mitigate this risk, workers themselves may seek to avoid this risk by simply deciding not to perform their duties and shielding themselves from media attention. J. Seden compares social media crises to a 'moral panic', which is an intense public reaction to a sensational or scandalous news item in the media and which does not provide a fertile ground for social workers to continue their work. Moreover, it is concluded that the inability of a social institution to manage social media crises in the best possible way makes workers afraid to carry out their duties or makes them make mistakes, potentially leading to unprofessional social work or even inaction. [9].

It follows from the above that it is important for the risk assessment and later the risk management strategy or policy of a social service not only to be based on statistical data and the best practices of other institutions in risk management, but also to take into account the specificities and ethical aspects of the field of social work when developing sustainable risk management in social services with the aim of ensuring the well-being of the population. In practice, this would mean taking into account modern ethical guidelines, such as those proposed in the NASW Code of Ethics developed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The document was last updated in February 2021, and most of the additions to the Code of Ethics relate specifically to the prevention of information technology and reputational risks, as well as a recommendation to assess the risks of each social institution in order to form a basis for implementation of an organizational policy or strategy to mitigate the impact of negative events on staff or the institution as a whole [10]. In Latvia, to address the risks mentioned above, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 includes a Sustainability Model as a response to global challenges, which is the basis for the research [11].

3. Method

The study was an analytical and research project aimed at identifying the need for risk assessment in Latvian municipal social services. The research methodology consisted of two parts: the first part used theoretical methods—analysis of scientific literature and analysis of normative acts—and the second part used empirical methods—questionnaires, statistical analysis of data and expert interviews—to assess the need for risk assessment in social services. The study concludes with the risk assessment itself and proposals for the implementation of risk management in municipal social services.

In the period from 1 March to 31 May 2021, a questionnaire survey was carried out with the heads of social services in Latvian municipalities on the existing risks in social services that the institutions face on a daily basis, as well as on the existing risk management and the methods used to prevent or mitigate the risks. A total of 76 respondents, or heads of social services, social administrations and social departments from all over Latvia, completed the questionnaires. The questionnaire was in electronic format and was sent to the respondent, completed and returned virtually via the internet. The questionnaire consisted of 10 closed and open-ended questions, including as the response type multiple-choice questions and a Likert scale, which is an ordinal scale aimed at the respondent to assess the extent to which he agrees or disagrees with a series of statements about the phenomenon or risk under study. The questionnaire selected different types of risk based on the results obtained from the analysis of literature sources, as well as following the best practice of the Exchequer of the Republic of Latvia in risk identification in institutions [12].

The questionnaires were collected manually, coded and statistically analyzed using Microsoft Excel software (version 2111) and an analysis package (Data Analysis) to perform a statistical analysis (Pearson analysis, linear regression analysis, simple analysis of variance and 2-group comparison tests). For the discussion with the experts, a semi-structured interview (the interviewer read out the prepared questions and wrote down the respondent's answers) with 6 questions based on the results of the questionnaire was developed to obtain an in-depth view of the social services managers on the current risk management and the need for a risk assessment in the institution. The expert interviews took place in October 2021, both face to face (the interviewer met the respondent in person) and via the online platform "Zoom"—managers of social services in Saldus, Sigulda, Tukums and Kuldīga municipalities were interviewed.

4. Findings

Social service managers were asked to rate the proposed risks on a Likert scale according to the level of risk (high, medium or low), thus revealing respondents' views on the risks that are relevant to social services as public institutions. In order to find out whether there were overall differences between respondents' opinions on the different risks,

a simple analysis of variance (ANOVA: single factor) was carried out, which showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups ($p = 0.0003$; $p < 0.05$) (see Table 1). This means that the respondents assessed the risks differently, and the differences were significant enough to warrant further investigation into this issue.

Table 1. Risk assessment of social service managers by risk level.

Risk Level	Risk Type	Average (n)
Low	Risk of corruption	2.53
	Customer service risk	2.56
Medium	Strategic risks	2.97
	Reputation risk	2.91
	Cyber security risk	2.78
	Natural disaster/crisis risk	3.00
High	Information circulation risk	3.66
	Financial risk	3.34
	Work environment risk	3.03

After a simple analysis of variance and respondents assessment, it was possible to distinguish which risks are rated as high for social services and which are less relevant and rated as medium or low (see Table 1). The results showed that the lowest risks according to the social services managers are corruption and customer service risks, while the highest risks are information flow, financial and working environment risks.

According to the respondents' rating on a scale of 1 for "no risk" to 5 for "high risk", it was found that the social services representatives consider information circulation (average rating—3.66), financial (3.34) and working environment (3.03) risks to be high risks for the institution. The assessment is also in line with the analysis of the literature sources, especially as regards the risk of information circulation. The aspect of the working environment appears as a topical and high-level risk, which is relatively less frequently reflected in the literature review, but the results of the study show that this aspect needs more attention, specifically at the national level, and should be taken into account in the institution's risk assessment.

On the other hand, the risk of corruption (2.53) is assessed as a low-level risk, which can be explained by specific regulatory enactments that already require institutions to manage this risk [13]; thus, the risk has well-known mitigation and prevention measures that reduce the overall risk level. Similarly, the customer service risk is rated as low (2.56), which can be explained by the fact that social services inevitably have to deal with customer service risks (customer complaints, inaccuracies in documentation, etc.), so this risk occurs relatively frequently but its impact on the institution's performance is not as significant, and respondents rate other risks higher. The other risks rated as medium are: natural disasters/crises (3.0), cyber security (2.78), reputation (2.91) and strategic (2.97) risks, which is explained by the complexity of managing the risks in question, taking into account the theoretical analysis of the paper; for example, cyber security risks or natural disasters are not frequently experienced in Latvia.

A slightly different picture emerged when using the Pearson correlation method to find associations between the types of risks, their frequency of occurrence and some of the factors that, according to the theoretical analysis, could influence (most often increase) the risks, such as the communication of social services with clients, the number of employees in the institution, the institution's previous experience with negative incidents, etc. A statistically significant correlation (using Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis) was found between the number of staff and the frequency of current risks, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Relevance between current risks and the number of staff in social services.

Type of Risk	Relevance with the Number of Staff in the Institution (r Coefficient)	p (Confidence Level)
Information circulation risk	0.44	0.004
Customer service risk	−0.37	0.020
Corruption and interests conflict risk	0.11	0.305
Financial risk	−0.20	0.477
Nature disasters/crises risk	0.04	0.408
Strategic risk	0.04	0.385
Work environment risk	0.48	0.009
Reputational risk	0.19	0.610
Cyber security risk	0.1	0.421

When examining the relevance between the number of employees and the frequency of actual risks, positive or negative correlations were sought and found, such as a statistically significant positive correlation between the number of employees and information circulation risk ($r = 0.44, p = 0.004$), indicating a very strong relationship (at least 95% correlation), as well as with work environment risks ($r = 0.48, p = 0.009$). This suggests that the higher the number of employees in an institution, the higher the information flow and work environment risks. While information circulation as a high risk was already addressed in the theory part of the study, e.g., in the book by J. Seden [9], work environment risks, which include employee and customer safety violations, employee interpersonal relations (mobbing, bossing) and a negative psycho-emotional environment in the workplace, were relatively less frequently mentioned in the literature review. This aspect of the survey results leads to the conclusion that, in the opinion of social service managers, the working environment is a sufficiently important risk factor in Latvia and should be given increasing attention as a risk in the institution.

However, a statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -0.37, p = 0.020$) was found between the number of employees and customer service risks. This suggests that customer service risk is more acute in social services with fewer staff, which may be explained by the poor communication with the public and clients in municipal social services, which are probably smaller in terms of staff. This negative correlation led to an analysis of the methods of communication between social services and the public (see Table 3).

Table 3. Social services communication with the public by number of staff (averages).

Communication Channels	1–30 Employees	31–60 Employees	60 or More Employees	Average
Booklets, flyers	2.6	2	2	2.4
Social networks (Facebook, etc.)	3.5	5.3	6	4.1
Through employees	4.2	3.5	3.4	4.0
Newspapers (local, regional)	4.1	4.3	3.6	4.1
TV/radio	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Institution/municipality website	5.6	5.0	5.0	5.4

Table 3 shows the types of communication with the public by different social services, i.e., respondents were asked to rank the communication tools used according to their frequency of use, assuming 6 to be “most frequently used communication tool” and 1 to be “least frequently used communication tool” (averages are shown in the table). The final result shows that social services communicate most frequently via the institution’s or municipality’s own website (average 5.4), social networks (4.1) and direct contact via staff (4.0), while radio, television (1.0) and printed information (leaflets, flyers) (2.4) are used relatively less frequently. There are differences between the communication styles of services with fewer employees and those with more employees, e.g., institutions with up to 30 employees mentioned their own or the municipality’s website (5.6), and direct

contact (4.2), as an important communication tool, but use social networks significantly less often (3.5), without creating a separate profile for the institution and without being committed to communicating with the public via this information channel. In contrast, in institutions with 30 or more employees, social networks are rated as frequently used and important (5.3 and 6), as is the institution's or municipality's website, suggesting that social services with a larger number of employees are more active online, which could also be explained by greater financial and human capital resources. Thus, the customer service risk discussed above, which appears in the results of the study as a more acute risk for social services with a small number of employees, could be due to the lack of public awareness of the tasks, objectives and assistance available to citizens, as the information channel of social networks is not fully exploited.

In order to further analyze the risk assessment, the question was raised as to whether there was a significant difference in the risk assessment between the answers of respondents whose institutions have been involved in a negative and public incident with social media, the municipal council or the supervising public authorities in the last five years and the answers of respondents whose institutions have not been involved in such incidents. The study found that almost half, or 46.9%, of the respondents answered in the affirmative, which leads to the conclusion that social services have to experience various negative events, which could potentially also turn into a crisis situation and have various impacts and consequences on the sustainable functioning of the institution in providing services to the population, frequently. In order to compare the responses of the two groups, respondents who have experienced negative incidents and respondents who have not experienced negative incidents in the last 5 years, a two-group comparison test (F-Test Two-Sample for Variance) was used, which concluded that the p -value for this sample variance is 0.4, which, at the significance level $p = 0.05$, indicates that the variance is homogeneous, and, therefore, a t-Test was performed accordingly (Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances) for this particular sample to assess how different the responses of the two groups are.

It was found that at the significance level $p = 0.05$, there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of the above respondents, and the analysis carried out shows that respondents who have already experienced negative publicity or other negative experiences with other institutions or social media while managing a social service tend to rate risks at a higher risk level, thus giving more importance to the assessment of risks within the institution, than social service managers who have not experienced significant negative incidents so far (in the last 5 years).

The summary of the in-depth expert interview responses concludes that the risks with the highest level in social services are currently:

1. Compliance and customer service risk—due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is prolonged staff sickness, staff turnover and staff shortages, making it difficult for services to ensure the availability of all services across the entire coverage area;
2. Information circulation risk—service managers stress the importance of communication with the public, which includes not only communication with clients, but also communication with local councilors and other related bodies;
3. Work environment risk—experts mention staff burnout as a major problem in social work, which is also linked to frequent staff changes and prolonged sickness and which affects the functioning of the social services.

In the conclusion of the expert interview, addressing the issue of the need for risk management and risk assessment in social services, it is found that risk assessment will become increasingly important in the future, as:

1. The number of staff in the institution will increase;
2. The area covered by the institution will increase;
3. There has already been an increase in certain risks;
4. In the past, risk management in social services was not an issue because institutions were small, fragmented and sometimes without competent management (before the administrative territorial reform [1]).

5. Risk Assessment

The analysis of the literature and documents shows that a risk management strategy appropriate to an organization includes both an assessment of the risks identified, identifying the level of risk acceptable to the organization, and an assessment of the possibility of the risk occurring and its impact on the organization, i.e., the institution has also developed a risk matrix. The risk matrix has been developed taking into account The State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia Guidelines for the internal control system designed in 2018 [14] as well as the COSO 2020 Risk Management Guidelines (COSO Compliance Risk Management: Applying the COSO ERM Framework) [15] (see Table 4).

Table 4. Assessment of current risks in terms of likelihood and impact. Risk matrix.

		Possibility and Impact Risk Matrix				
Possibility	5 Likely to occur	Green	Yellow	Red		Information circulation Risk
	4 Very likely	Green	Yellow	Red	Compliance and customer service risk	
	3 Possible	Green		Yellow	Red	Strategic risks
	2 Unlikely	Green		Yellow	Red	Work environment risk
	1 Rare	Green		Yellow	Red	
		1 Insignificant	2 Small	3 Serious	4 Strong	5 Catastrophic
		Impact				
		Red—high risk, yellow—medium risk, green—low risk				

The table shows that, depending on the possibility and impact, the low level of risk is a strategic risk, while the medium level of risk is much higher—compliance and customer service, work environment, reputational, financial, corruption and natural disaster risks—as the impact of these risks on the institution’s operations can be severe. It is important to mention that, although the possibility of natural disasters/geopolitical crises in the Latvian context is relatively low (unlikely), as reflected in the survey and expert interviews, the impact on the institution when the risk occurs could be catastrophic, so these risks should definitely be considered in the risk assessment.

6. Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

The results show that almost half, or 43.8%, of social services have used a lawyer to deal with the consequences of various risks, while 53.1% have dealt with the problems within the institution, and 3.1% have not faced a situation where they had to deal with serious consequences of risks. The survey results show that 18.8% of social services already have their own lawyer to deal with the consequences of various risks on a regular basis. On a positive note, 81.2% of social services cooperate with their own or the municipality’s public relations officer to inform the public about available social assistance and social services and to reduce negative publicity. However, the majority, or 89.1%, of social services do not have a separate risk management document, which is explained by the fact that the normative acts do not strictly prescribe the creation of such a document for the municipal units as it is prescribed for the state institutions for the development of the internal control system. Of respondents, 7.7% answered that the institution has developed a risk management document, while 3.2% chose another option, in which they noted that risk management in the social service is controlled by the municipal management which has developed an overall municipal risk management policy to ensure the maximum stability of the level of social well-being of the population in the long term.

In summary, it can be concluded that there are a number of high-level risks in the functioning of social institutions that could potentially lead to a crisis situation, and, therefore, risk management in the institution plays an important role in order to prevent these risks. However, a well-developed risk assessment does not necessarily imply good risk management in the institution, or, in the case of social services, risks in risk management itself. Foreign practice and research related to the functions of social services and communication with the public show the need for risk management in municipal social services, thereby sustainably mitigating the impact of various risks on the reputation of the institution and the social work sector as a whole. Risk management and risk assessment in social services will differ from the risk management strategy of the private sector as the introduction of risk management in social services should take into account the ethical dimension of the institution and the ethical norms with which social workers are confronted on a daily basis, thus integrating the principles of the International Code of Ethics for Social Workers into risk management in order to sustainably provide social services and social assistance based on societal needs and ethical principles.

The results of the survey of social services managers show that the most frequent risks in social services in the last five years are information circulation, customer service and work environment risks, while information circulation, work environment and financial risks are ranked as high risks by the heads of social services. The analysis of the survey results shows that there is a statically significant correlation between the number of staff and certain types of risks, i.e., there is a tendency that the higher the number of staff, the more frequent the information circulation and work environment risks, while, with lower staff numbers, the customer service risks become acute, which, in turn, can be explained by the communication style of the service with the public.

The empirical study concludes that risk management in the social services is particularly relevant at a time when, in the context of the administrative territorial reform of 1 July 2021, institutions have been reorganized, bringing together larger teams and covering a wider area, thus changing the various management processes of the institution. In order to facilitate the management of risks in social services based on the principles of sustainable development and performance, it can be generally concluded that risk assessment is feasible for social services and a sufficient number of risks can be identified, which means that risk management in services can be an additional tool in management processes and in ensuring optimal performance of the institution in providing sustainable and quality services to the community.

In the framework of the study, a risk assessment and a risk matrix were developed according to the specifics of Latvian municipal social services, based on the analysis of the literature and the data collected in the study, which reflect the current risks.

When planning and implementing risk management in social services, based on the results of the study, it is recommended to use the already developed guidelines and recommendations of state institutions, based on internationally recognized risk management models, principles and the key principles of the Sustainable Development Strategy. The risk assessment should be developed in a way that does not contradict the Code of Ethics developed by the National Association of Social Workers and/or the Code of Ethics for Social Workers developed within the institution, according to the specificities of the social service, as risk management in the social field involves different ethical considerations. In order for risk management to function fully in the social services once it has been introduced, the management of the institution should designate a risk management officer who regularly updates the identification of risks and reports to management on the urgency of risks and methods of mitigation or elimination.

The risk assessment developed in the study can serve as a basis for the development of a risk management policy or strategy for social services which includes regular risk identification and assessment, selection of risk management methods and a risk management monitoring system. The results of the study can be incorporated into the internal control system of social services as part of risk management, thereby facilitating the development

and implementation of an internal control system in an institution that has not previously had such a system, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the institution's operations and the delivery of services to members of the public.

The study answers both research questions, showing the most common risks in social services and the need for risk assessment. In the context of knowledge transfer in social work practice, from a risk management perspective, it is necessary to focus on the structural causes of risk management.

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