



Social Care and Inclusion - Workforce Development

Manual Handling of People Risk Assessment - FAQ

Who should do the manual handling assessment/safe handling plan?

The law states that the employer is responsible for ensuring the assessment/safe handling plan is completed for all manual handling activities where there is a significant risk of injury to their employees.

In reality, this means that any carer who knows the service user and has had some manual handling of people training can do the initial assessment/safe handling plan. However, each team must have a “competent” manual handling risk assessor who will check the assessments to ensure they are suitable and sufficient. In Walsall, a competent manual handling assessor is one who has passed the CIEH Level 2 Principles of Risk Assessment **and** has also completed modules 1 & 2 of the manual handling training suite.

There is specific training (Module 4) that assessors can attend to become familiar with how to use the approved manual handling of people risk assessment form/safe handling plan.

It is the manager’s responsibility as the employer’s representative, to ensure that the assessments/safe handling plans are completed (where appropriate), and that they have been checked by the team’s competent assessor.

How often should the manual handling assessment/safe handling plan be reviewed?

Where the manual handling assessment/safe handling plan is for a person, then it must be reviewed every six months as a minimum. As the service user’s (or “load”) abilities, health, medication needs, etc can change frequently or unexpectedly, this can affect the assessment/safe handling plan and make it no longer appropriate. Therefore the assessment/safe handling plan must be reviewed whenever there are changes to any of the TILEO¹ factors.

How do I record a manual handling assessment for people?

There is a specific assessment form that must be used for recording the assessment/safe handling plan. The form has been developed by the People Moving People Focus Group (PMPFG) and meets the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Care Quality Commission (CQC). The form can be downloaded from the health, safety and fire intranet pages.

How detailed must the assessment/safe handling plan be?

The assessment and safe handling plan must be **suitable and sufficient**. This should cover the range of activities where a person may require assistance with moving and

¹ Task, Individual, Load, Environment, Other



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handling e.g. transfers bed to chair, into bath etc. The plan should be easy to read and clearly state the control measures for moving and handling the individual, as a minimum including:

- specific equipment (e.g. make and model) needed;
- principles/techniques to be used;
- number of handlers required for task;
- sling attachment loops to be used; and, where applicable
- leg configurations for sling etc.

The approved form has the sections required to ensure the assessment is suitable. There are a set of **assisted manual handling guides** that can be copied or attached to the safe handling plan. This will ensure it is detailed enough and therefore sufficient.

If a hoist is used, must there be two carers involved in the safe handling plan?

The number of carers required for hoisting can vary depending on the needs of the individual service user and the specific hoisting transfers required. Some individuals can safely use a hoist without assistance; others may need assistance from a number of carers.

The employer responsible for delivering the care must ensure that a **suitable and sufficient** risk assessment has been undertaken. It must consider:

- the individual being assisted and their needs;
- the environment;
- the specific hoisting transfers;
- the equipment provided;
- how the sling is to be applied; and
- the individuals who are carrying out the moving and handling tasks.

In some cases assessment will show that at least two carers are needed; one to operate the hoist; and the other to help keep the individual in a safe position whilst moving, to maintain co-operation and provide direct reassurance.

How do I share the safe handling plan with carers?

If it is a Walsall Council employee doing the task, then a copy of the assessment/safe handling plan should be readily available and easily accessible to them (e.g. in the service users care plan). Each assessment has a signing sheet that employees must sign to say they have read and understand the safe handling plan that must be used when assisting the service user.

When equipment specific assessments are completed by Occupational Therapists (OT) where the carers are non-Walsall Council employees (e.g. the private, voluntary, independent sector or for those service users who receive direct payments and employ personal assistants), then there is no need for signatures to be obtained via the assessment form from those carers. However, evidence will be required to prove that a safe



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handling plan for the equipment provided was shared with the employer of the carers that are to use the equipment. This can be done a number of ways including:

- obtaining “read receipts” and/or “delivery receipts” or requesting an e-mail back to confirm receipt when the assessment is sent via e-mail;
- asking for written confirmation from the care agency/employer that they have received the assessment.

Must employees/carers follow the assessment/safe handling plan that has been recorded by the assessor?

If the employee is a Walsall Council employee, then yes they must follow the safe handling plan that has been provided. However, if they feel the assessment/safe handling plan is no longer valid, then they should raise their concerns with their immediate line manager.

If the assessment/safe handling plan has been issued to non Walsall Council employees by the OT service (for a specific piece of equipment), then the employer of those carers who are using the equipment has ultimate responsibility to complete the assessment/safe handling plan. Therefore, they may choose to implement a different safe handling plan for their employees to follow to that received from the OT service. The OT doing assessments for outside agencies must still record a **suitable and sufficient safe handling plan** for the equipment they have provided and pass it on to the employer, even if the employer has stated they will be using an alternative method to that recorded in the assessment/safe handling plan.

What if I have done an assessment/safe handling plan and there is an accident or incident?

The law requires an assessment/safe handling plan to be completed to ensure that the manual handling task has been planned to avoid any accidents/incidents, “so far as is reasonably practicable”. Therefore an assessment/safe handling plan must be completed at the earliest opportunity.

Do not avoid doing assessments/safe handling plans on the chance that there is an accident/incident and you are worried that as the assessor you may be held responsible. All accidents/incidents must be investigated to identify the “root” and “underlying” causes. The investigation may identify that the assessment/safe handling plan could have been improved and may have contributed to the accident/incident. However, all Walsall Council employees are covered by their employer’s liability insurance and in some cases their professional indemnity insurance. As long as the assessment/safe handling plan has been completed and is based upon your training, experience and knowledge, then as a manual handling assessor you will not be held personally responsible for the accident/incident.