



Managers safety training briefing guide - Number 5

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Training topic: **Falls – dealing with a Service User who has fallen**

Background/introduction

Due to the nature of the sector in which we work, it is foreseeable that we will, at some point, have to deal with a service user who has fallen. It is imperative, however, that we do not “default” to inappropriate risk averse actions, however well intentioned, that could put service user’s lives at risk or bring the organisation into disrepute. These inappropriate actions could include (amongst others);

- Telling employees they must **not** move any fallen service user as we have a “no lifting” policy, and
- That a 999 call **must** be made for **every** fallen service user so paramedics can lift them

The NHS accident & emergency and ambulance service are often referred to in the media as being in “crisis” and unable to cope to the demand on these services. As an organisation and managers (with a social responsibility), it is essential we do not add to the demand on these services by letting such risk averse “myths and misconceptions” as those mentioned above, evolve in our organisation.

Paramedics are trained in treating and responding to medical emergencies. They must not be used as any organisational “procedure” for assisting (manual handling) a fallen person off the floor who has no obvious injuries.

The law and CQC requirements

The law requires that employees assess all foreseeable hazards and put relevant control measures/procedures in place to minimise the risk of injury or harm. This is included in the manual handling operations regulations.

As managers you must carry out an assessment determining the likelihood that your staff will have to deal with a fallen service user. If this assessment determines that it is likely, then you must put in place procedures for dealing with such occasions. These procedures could include;

- Having employees who are trained in the principles of assisted manual handling of people,
- Having suitable equipment on site/at hand/on call to assist those who cannot get up by themselves



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What do the Ambulance Service / Trust say?

A 999 or 112 call should only be made in a genuine emergency. To ensure seriously ill and injured patients are treated as quickly as possible, people whose call is not serious should consider other healthcare options rather than calling 999 or 112. These could include;

- talking to your [local pharmacist](#)
- visiting or calling [your GP](#)
- calling [NHS 111](#)
- going to a local [NHS walk-in centre](#)
- attending a [minor injuries unit](#)
- making your own way to your [local A&E department](#) (arriving in an ambulance does not mean you will be seen any quicker)

If the situation is not a life-threatening emergency and you or the person you are with do not need immediate medical attention, consider other options before you dial 999 or 112.

What training do my staff members require?

All front line care staff are required to have first aid awareness training. This will ensure that an initial first aid assessment can be made of any service user who has fallen, to determine what (if any) further medical assistance is required. They are also required to have assisted manual handling of people training. Walsall has a suite of manual handling training for care staff who must attend Modules 1 and 2 as a minimum. This suite includes a section on “assisting a falling person”.

As with anything in life, “prevention is better than cure”. Walsall has developed an extensive integrated health and social care falls awareness and prevention programme. This includes; one day face to face training event, an e-learning awareness programme and other essential guidance/resources.

It is advised that as managers you try to attend all of the courses mentioned above so that you can carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment for falls within your area/team.

The Adult Social Care Workforce Development [website](#) has other resources for managers to access on this subject, as well as a training calendar.

Additional information

If you require any further information regarding health and safety training, please contact [Terry Hassall](#) (Workforce Health and Safety Training Officer), or one of the consultants within Adult Social Care Workforce Development Team.