

Manual handling of people

(Adult Social Care, Children's Residential Services and Schools)

Document information

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1 Introduction

Clients – refers to individuals accessing a local authority or educational service e.g. pupils, service users.

Walsall Council has a minimal approach to the handling and moving of people and loads.

Manual handling is defined as;

“any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force”

Manual handling for the purpose of this document is those aspects of manual handling related to assisting someone with an illness, condition or disability to move around and carry out daily tasks and/or activities.

2 Policy Statement

This policy applies to the manual handling of clients in schools, homes or services.

We recognise our responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of our employees and others whom may be affected by our activities.

To this end, we aim:

- to avoid, so far as is reasonably practicable, manual handling operations which are a risk to our employees, to seek and take into account the views of clients (so far as is reasonably practicable), parents, carers and other relevant staff. The health, safety and dignity of all those concerned is paramount,
- to ensure that all potentially hazardous operations involving manual handling that cannot be avoided are assessed and those assessments are recorded and reviewed six monthly or whenever there are significant changes or incidents,
- to ensure that where manual handling procedures cannot be avoided, the risk is reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable,
- to ensure that all handling assessments are carried out by suitably competent/qualified personnel and in line with current guidance in the corporate [Safety Management Standard](#) on Manual Handling and Risk Assessment,
- to provide all employees directly involved in the manual handling of clients with thorough training covering all the key elements for safer handling processes.
- to ensure that all manual handling of clients is carried out in line with their individual safe systems of work (safe handling plan),
- to ensure that all employees directly involved in the manual handling of clients are competent and confident to carry out all manual handling tasks in line with individualised safe systems of work (safe handling plans), supervised by suitably qualified personnel, and



- that all equipment used in schools/services to support and move clients are inspected and maintained in line with relevant legislative requirements. (LOLER or PUWER as appropriate) and suitable records are kept.

3 Legislative background

3.1 Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA)

The Health and Safety at Work Act places general duties on employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and others who might be affected by work activities; this would include visitors and contractors. Senior or Managerial staff should manage this on behalf of the employer.

3.2 Manual Handling Operations Regulations

Employers are required to:

- **AVOID** hazardous manual handling operations where possible.
- **ASSESS** any hazardous manual handling activity that cannot be avoided. This should include an assessment of all relevant factors including the load, individual capability, task, working environment and other factors.
- **REDUCE** the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable.
- **INFORM** employees of measures to reduce the risk and if reasonably practicable, give precise information about the weight of each load.
- **REVIEW** assessments every six months or when significant changes occur.

Employees are required to:

- make full and proper use of safe handling plan/systems of work put in place by the employer to reduce the risk of injury.

3.3 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)

These regulations apply to the lifting operations and lifting equipment, e.g. hoists, slings, platform lifts, poolside hoists, etc. Employers are required to:

- ensure that lifting equipment is safe and installed to minimise any risks,
- ensure it carries information to indicate safe working limits, its purpose and use,
- ensure that lifting operations are properly planned, supervised and performed by competent people,
- ensure regular examination/inspection of equipment is carried out by competent people at the required intervals,
- ensure that defective equipment is not used and that access to that equipment is prevented and any potentially dangerous defects are remedied, and;
- keep installation, maintenance and inspection records,



3.4 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)

These regulations apply to ALL equipment that may be used at work and include wheelchairs, beds, standing frames and aids, protective equipment, etc. Employers are required to;

- provide suitable equipment,
- assess the working environment where the equipment will be used to assess whether any additional risks are posed by its use there,
- ensure that equipment is only used for its intended purpose for which it is suitable,
- ensure equipment is maintained (at required intervals – as per manufacturer’s recommendations) in a safe condition and that maintenance records are kept,
- ensure that where equipment involves a specific risk only trained personnel use it (or those closely supervised by an experienced/competent team member) ,
- provide adequate information, supervision, instruction and training, and control any risks associated with the use of machinery.

4. Key principles

- a) if a risk assessment concludes that the manual handling task is too unsafe in its nature to undertake , no other agencies or professionals will be invited or persuaded into offering/providing a service, even if they are prepared to ‘take the risk’. If provision is sought from a private or external provider any risks identified by the directorate shall be brought to the attention of the said provider. If the risk assessment has revealed a task is so profound in risk and should not be undertaken in any circumstances, the party seeking alternative provision must not acquire the service delivery through misrepresentation of details to any of the provision providers,
- b) where the client and the service area are in disagreement about manual handling tasks, there will be a balanced decision making process. Each establishment will have a local procedure for when there are disagreements between the two parties, and
- c) all clients who can safely do so will be encouraged to move themselves in order to promote and maximise independence. Any changes to clients abilities should be reported and recorded and a new safe system of work (handling plan) identified and implemented,



5. Responsibilities

5.1 Heads of Service/Head teachers will;

- a) inform our current service providers commissioned by the department on hazards and risks associated with manual handling, and request that they co-operate in accordance with this policy,
- b) ensure that when the department is commissioning new care arrangements that any care provider will be able to work to the standards set out in this policy,
- c) ensure the process of implementation, ongoing application and monitoring of policies and procedures relating to manual handling will be subject to consultation with the trade unions through the established consultative arrangements,
- d) receive copies of all accident report forms when an injury to the client or staff occurs during a manual handling task,
- e) ensure that all staff comply with all aspects of this policy, including the policy being discussed as part of a new employee's induction and ongoing supervision, and
- f) make available the appropriate resources, including equipment and training, to ensure the effective implementation of this policy

5.2 Operational Managers/Nominated persons will;

- a) be aware of, and have an understanding of the manual handling of people policy,
- b) attend manual handling & risk assessment training and up-dates accordingly,
- c) ensure that all employees are not exposed to foreseeable risk of injury from manual handling so far as is reasonably practicable,
- d) investigate and record all accidents involving manual handling giving consideration to reassessment of risk. Any corrective measures should be implemented at the earliest opportunity,
- e) ensure all staff (including relief and agency staff) know what they are responsible for, are aware of and adhere to the safe systems of work (handling plan) where manual handling of people is concerned,
- f) monitor and regularly review their implementation of this policy through the use of the risk assessment process, supervision of staff and monitoring the attendance at training sessions relating to manual handling of people,
- g) if a client refuses to comply with the detailed safe handling plan/system of work recommended through the risk assessment then the service provider will seek an alternative where reasonably possible,
- h) ensure that all risk assessments are retained for five years,
- i) ensure their staff, visitors or work experience personnel undertake the directorates/schools initial manual handling of people training (including hoist training where applicable) and one day refresher training every three years (school's/children's residential training programme will vary and be pupil/child specific),



- j) ensure records are maintained for all staff receiving training in manual handling. All relevant staff are included in the training programme,
- k) ensure that staff are provided with suitable handling equipment to eliminate the need for manual handling tasks so far as is reasonably practicable,
- l) ensure that suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided where appropriate to enable the employee to achieve the necessary close proximity to the client or load being handled (e.g. plastic apron or gloves where contact with bodily fluids is possible),
- m) ensure work allocated includes rest breaks and task rotation to enable muscles to recover from previous handling activity and reduce the risk of injuries, and
- n) ensure that new staff only carry out manual handling tasks under supervision and within their capabilities until they have shown a level of competence and/or completed the initial manual handling of people training.

5.3 Manual Handling Trainers will;

- a) provide a comprehensive training package in relation to manual handling of people to employees and other participants. In doing so, trainers will demonstrate an appropriate level of competence in delivering that training,
- b) promote so far as is reasonably practical a “minimal and single person handling” approach within the Directorate/school,
- c) provide information and guidance regarding the manual handling of people in support of both employees and clients in receipt of council services,
- d) report to/liaise with the line manager of staff with whom any pertinent issues concerning manual handling have been raised. This includes instances where the participant has seemed unable to participate in manual handling activities, and
- e) assist with investigations of accidents or near misses in relation to manual handling of people when requested.

5.4 Employee’s/client handlers will;

- a) assist clients within the role and responsibilities of their job and be guided by the safe system of work (safe handling plan) identified as a result of a formal risk assessment of the handling requirements of the task,
- b) make full and proper use of any equipment provided in accordance with training, instruction and any safe system of work (handling plan) identified,
- c) inform their manager of any concerns or health conditions (including pregnancy) affecting their individual capability to move and handle a load or a person,
- d) report all accidents, incidents and “near- misses” involving manual handling tasks immediately; following council/school procedures.



- e) ensure that their dress/attire is appropriate to the duties being carried out at all times¹. This includes;
- wearing loose fitting clothing that allows for freedom of movement to ensure safer manual handling principles can be used,
 - wearing at all times, comfortable, non-slip, supportive, fully enclosed shoes/footwear (both heel and toe), that ensure a stable base and/or posture. This will serve to protect staff from falling objects and injury through contact with hoists, wheelchairs, etc. Shoes with wedges, kitten heels, ballet pumps, boots that restrict ankle movement etc are not considered suitable,
 - not wearing any jewellery or articles that have the potential to cause injury or infection. This includes jewellery of all types and exposed body piercings, rings (with the exception of wedding band or partnership ring only), neckties, necklaces, scarves, bracelets, id badges, and wristwatches,
 - informing and discussing practical control measures with the line manager for any items of faith that are worn (e.g. wristband over the top of bangles, taping down of ceremonial swords)
 - discussing practical control measures with the line manager for those who
 - wear “medi-alerts” so that safeguards can be adopted,
 - tying or containing long hair to prevent entanglement, contamination or injury, and;
 - keeping finger nails short and smoothly filed in order to prevent injury. Also refrain from wearing nail extensions and nail varnish to avoid contamination and cross-infection,
- f) report without delay any incidents or occurrences where PPE appears to impair their ability or restrict movement when moving or handling loads or people,
- g) label as “do not use” and withdraw from use any equipment which they feel is unsafe for use, faulty or damaged. This must also be reported to managers **immediately** who will take appropriate action, and
- h) attend and participate in all identified mandatory manual handling training modules, continued competency assessments and refresher training,

5.5 Learning & Development will;

- a) establish and run a people moving people focus group (PMPFG) to oversee the implementation of this policy and the associated systems, procedures and training provision. The focus group will include trained trainers, health and safety advisor(s), occupational therapist(s) and others as appropriate,

¹ This is to ensure the safety of the client and the employee. Minimising the risk of spreading infections, avoiding entanglement with moving parts and minimising any injuries if struck by moving objects (such as hoists) is paramount when manual handling people.



- b) provide a mandatory programme of training consistent with the departmental policy, national training and care standards to all managers and employee's whose duties include significant manual handling of people,
- c) provide appropriate formal refresher training at regular intervals to ensure that managers and employees' continued competence and development by further enhancing their skills and knowledge,
- d) ensure that there is a rolling programme of Continued Professional Development (CPD) for those identified as manual handling trainers,
- e) ensure that adequate records of training are kept and that appropriate action is taken where further training needs have been identified,
- f) advise, liaise with and support managers and other personnel with the implementation of the training programme, and
- g) liaise, guide and support the health and safety advisors in the promotion and delivery of this policy.

5.6 Occupational Therapists (OT) will;

- a) following receipt of referral; complete an OT assessment, to include a manual handling risk assessment, for the client within their home environment providing equipment, advice and adaptation where appropriate.
- b) where the client's environment is residential, nursing, respite placement or a school then advice only will be given
- c) provide and/or contribute to the client's support plan, manual handling risk assessment and/or safe system of work (handling plan).
- d) within School, OT to complete an assessment of equipment and contribute to safer handling plan formulated by Outreach service.

6. Risk assessments

- a) The Manual Handling Operations Regulations require specific manual handling risk assessments to be carried out where there is a foreseeable risk or the need for employees to practically support clients. Where a client has manual handling needs a manual handling risk assessment must be carried out, this should include a safe system of work (handling plan) to ensure all employees maintain a constant and consistent approach. Both the risk assessment and safe system of work (handling plan) should be reviewed regularly. Any significant changes should be recorded and the risk assessment /safe system of work (handling plan) amended accordingly,
- b) Manual handling risk assessments will be signed off by competent employees who have attended and passed the initial Manual Handling of People two day course and subsequent refresher courses as required (or be Centaur/IOSH trained with Schools as a minimum).
- c) The process of the initial risk assessment and safe system of work (safe handling plan) will require close cooperation between clients, professionals, parents, carers, employees, therapists and other relevant agencies. Through this, all involved will



ensure agreement of the assessment and plan and all will be aware to ensure the constant and consistent approach,

- d) The assessment should take into account details of the task, individual capability, load, environment and any other factors (TILEO). All risk assessments for manual handling tasks must be recorded on the directorate approved form.
- e) The assessment must be reviewed six monthly as a minimum, or sooner in the event of any incidents, accidents, near misses or significant changes (including the client's abilities/condition, etc.)

7. Training

- a) All staff members are required to have a general health and safety induction when they start employment. Specific training should also be undertaken by all employees involved in manual handling of people. It is recommended that such training take place prior to commencing work involving manual handling tasks, or at the earliest opportunity. More specific training and/or guidance will also be required in the case of any personalised therapeutic handling,
- b) All training needs should be reviewed annually,
- c) Manual handling trainers will be HME (IOSH accredited course) trainer, trained.
- d) In addition to general manual handling guidance, services should seek further support when drawing up any of the following for clients with manual handling needs:
 - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs)
 - Intimate Care Plans
 - Work Experience/visitor risk assessments

8. Equipment

- a) All work equipment must be safe to use and must be inspected and tested as appropriate and comply with the required legislations. (e.g. LOLER and PUWER),
- b) Walsall Council has an insurance contract with Zurich Insurance that covers the use of lifting equipment within its services and establishments. In order to comply with the terms of the insurance policy services and/or establishments requesting cover should ensure regular maintenance services and inspections of any lifting equipment,
- c) It is required that all records of services or maintenance work carried out are kept. Each individual piece of manual handling equipment including hoists and slings must have a unique identification number on it; this enables individual records to be kept of all equipment and ensures it is safe and fit for purpose and that any equipment deemed unsafe for use is taken out of service,



- d) Clients whom have provided their own equipment through self-purchase or funding are responsible for its services and maintenance. Any employee who feel that a personal piece of equipment is unsafe to use or not maintained/serviced appropriately must not use this equipment and report immediately to their line manager,
- e) It is recommended that copies of the guidelines/instructions for equipment are readily available and that staff are familiar with the contents, especially those concerning safety precautions/issues, and
- f) In the case of maintenance issues regarding wheelchairs, clients, parents/carers should be informed. If the chair has been prescribed by Walsall Wheelchair Services repairs will be undertaken by Ross Care under contract. Privately owned wheelchairs are the responsibility of the individual client with support from parents/carers if needed.

9. Acknowledgments

Information used in this policy is taken from Derby City Council, Health and Safety Executive website, and HME Ltd. Thanks also to all members of the People Moving People Focus Group (PMPFG) for their expertise, time and effort in pulling this information together.

10. People moving people focus group

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the PMPFG. This group consists of manual handling trainers working within various service areas, health and safety advisor, occupational therapist, and learning & development health and safety trainer.

11. Further reading/information

Walsall Council Safety Management Standards including:

- Incident reporting
- Lifting operations and lifting equipment
- Manual handling
- Providing and using work equipment