


Document Name	Manual Handling and People Handling Policy			
Document Number				
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1. Purpose

Silvergrove Home Care is committed to providing care in a way that protects Service Users, staff and visitors from avoidable injury. This policy explains how manual handling and people handling tasks are assessed, organised and carried out safely within Service Users' homes and in any other location where care is delivered.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all work activities where staff may be required to move, support, reposition, transfer or assist a person, or to handle loads such as equipment, supplies, laundry, waste or personal effects as part of care delivery.

- It applies to all staff, including managers, coordinators, care staff, agency workers, relief staff, students and any person working on behalf of Silvergrove Home Care.
- It covers routine care, one-off tasks, emergency situations and visits where the home environment changes over time.
- It should be read together with the Service User's care plan, manual handling risk assessment, safeguarding procedures, incident reporting arrangements and staff training records.

3. Policy statement

Silvergrove Home Care will so far as reasonably practicable avoid hazardous manual handling and unsafe people handling. Where handling cannot be avoided, the organisation will complete suitable assessments, provide information and training, use appropriate equipment where available and ensure staff follow safe systems of work. These arrangements form part of the organisation's wider safety management system and safety statement duties under Irish legislation.

- No member of staff should carry out a people handling task unless it has been assessed and they are competent and authorised to do so.
- Handling techniques must be individualised to the Service User and the home environment; staff must not rely on habit, guesswork or informal custom.
- When equipment is required for safe care, staff must use it as specified and must not improvise substitutes.
- If the task cannot be completed safely, staff must stop, protect the Service User, seek advice and escalate promptly.

4. Legislative and regulatory framework

Silvergrove Home Care will manage manual handling and people handling in line with Irish health and safety law, including the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, in particular Chapter 4 of Part 2 on Manual Handling of Loads.

Under this framework, the service will avoid hazardous manual handling where reasonably practicable, assess any unavoidable handling activity, reduce risk through safe systems of work, and provide appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision.

Silvergrove Home Care also recognises the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) as the State body responsible for promoting, advising on and enforcing workplace safety and health in Ireland. Relevant HSA guidance - including guidance on manual handling, manual handling risk assessment, healthcare handling practice, hoists and slings, and risk assessment and safety statements - will be used to support local procedures, training and review.

5. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Manual handling	Any transporting or supporting of a load by lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving, holding or restraining.
People handling	Any action that involves supporting, moving, repositioning, transferring or assisting a Service User or another person.
Handling aid	Any equipment used to reduce handling risk, for example hoists, slings, slide sheets, transfer belts, profiling beds or standing aids.
Risk assessment	A documented review of the task, the individual, the load, the environment and the level of support or equipment required.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Management

- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place for risk assessment, training, supervision, equipment provision and incident review.
- Ensure care packages are planned realistically and that staff numbers, timing and equipment requirements reflect assessed need.
- Arrange review when a Service User's mobility, cognition, behaviour, health condition or home environment changes.

Supervisors and coordinators

- Communicate assessed handling methods to staff before care commences and after any review.
- Verify that staff attending two-person assists or equipment-based tasks have current competence for the activity.
- Escalate concerns about unsafe environments, unavailable equipment, damaged equipment, blocked access or unsuitable scheduling.

Care staff

- Follow the assessed handling plan, use approved techniques and equipment, and work within the limits of their competence.
- Complete pre-use safety checks on equipment and the immediate environment before starting the task.
- Report discomfort, near misses, Service User changes, equipment faults, unsafe requests and incidents without delay.

Service Users and families, where appropriate

- Be involved in planning care wherever possible and informed of safe arrangements.
- Support safe practice by keeping agreed space clear, maintaining equipment in place where provided and alerting the service to changes.

7. Assessment and safe system of work

A manual handling and people handling risk assessment must be completed before a task is introduced, where possible, and reviewed whenever there is a change in the Service User's condition, behaviour, cognition, falls risk, continence needs, medication effects, pain, weight-bearing ability, or the physical environment.

- The task - what needs to happen, how often, whether it is predictable or emergency-only, and whether it can be avoided.
- The Service User - mobility, ability to follow instructions, pain, fatigue, dignity, communication needs, skin integrity and medical advice.
- The environment - access, floor surfaces, stairs, trip hazards, lighting, space around the bed, chair or toilet, pets and household clutter.
- The equipment - availability, suitability, servicing status, sling compatibility, storage and staff familiarity with the device.
- The people involved - number of carers required, competence, communication during the move and contingency arrangements.

The outcome of the assessment must be reflected in the care plan. The record should clearly state the approved transfer method, the equipment required, the number of staff required, any prohibited actions and any escalation instructions.

8. Manual handling principles

- Avoid unnecessary lifting wherever possible and break tasks into smaller safer actions.
- Plan the move before starting; remove obstacles, check footwear, clear the destination and ensure the Service User understands what will happen.
- Keep loads close to the body, maintain a stable base, avoid twisting and use smooth controlled movements.
- Use handling aids, trolleys or wheeled equipment where practicable for supplies and other loads.
- Do not attempt to catch a falling Service User or lift a person from the floor without following the assessed response and seeking appropriate support.

9. People handling principles

- Promote the Service User's independence and enable them to do as much as they safely can for themselves.
- Gain consent, explain each step, preserve privacy and dignity and communicate clearly throughout the task.
- Never use unsafe or non-approved methods such as under-arm lifts, dragging, jerking, or moving a person in a way that causes pain or distress.
- Two-person or equipment-assisted transfers must only be completed where the assessment states this and the required staff and equipment are present.
- Slings and other accessories must be selected, fitted and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the Service User's assessment.

10. When staff must stop and escalate

Staff must not continue with a handling task when the risk is unacceptable. The task should stop and be escalated to the line manager or on-call support where:

- the Service User's condition or behaviour has changed from the assessed plan
- the required number of carers is not available
- the necessary equipment is absent, damaged, overdue for servicing or incompatible
- the home layout or immediate area is too restricted or unsafe
- the Service User refuses the agreed method and no safe alternative is available at the time

11. Equipment

Where equipment is required, Silvergrove Home Care will support its safe use as part of the care package. Equipment may be Service User-owned, family-provided or sourced through statutory or private arrangements, but it must be suitable, maintained and used only for its intended purpose.

Stage	Required checks / actions
Before use	Check brakes, straps, clips, batteries, fabric integrity, labels and general condition. Confirm correct sling size and type for the Service User.
During use	Follow the assessed method, communicate clearly, protect limbs and lines, and keep the environment free of obstruction.
After use	Clean and store safely, recharge if applicable, remove from service if faulty and report defects immediately.

12. Training and competence

- All relevant staff must receive manual handling and people handling training at induction and refresher training at intervals set by the service or sooner where competence concerns arise.
- Training must include practical safe principles, the limits of training, use of common equipment, reporting arrangements and the need to follow Service User-specific assessments. Training content should be aligned with current HSA guidance and with the specific equipment and Service User handling tasks used by the service.
- Competence is confirmed through supervision, observation, incident review, spot checks and feedback from Service Users and staff.
- Training alone does not authorise staff to carry out any task that has not been assessed for that Service User and environment.

13. Incident reporting and learning

All accidents, injuries, near misses, equipment failures, falls linked to transfer activity and occasions where safe handling could not be completed must be reported promptly in line with Silvergrove Home Care's incident reporting procedure.

- Immediate safety actions must be taken for the Service User and staff member.
- Medical attention must be sought where required and family or representatives informed in line with care arrangements.
- The handling assessment and care plan must be reviewed after relevant incidents.
- Themes and trends should be reviewed by management to identify additional controls, equipment or training needs.

14. Documentation and record keeping

- The current handling assessment and care plan must be accessible to staff providing care.
- Changes, refusals, concerns and incidents must be documented clearly and factually.
- Training, supervision, competency checks and equipment issues must be recorded and retained in line with organisational records requirements.

15. Monitoring, audit and review

Managers will monitor compliance through care reviews, spot checks, supervision, incident analysis, complaints review and training compliance. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner

if there is a significant change in legislation, guidance, service delivery, equipment usage or learning from incidents.

Quick practice reminder

- Pause - assess - communicate before every move.
- Follow the Service User-specific handling plan every time.
- Use the correct equipment and the correct number of staff.
- Stop and escalate if the task is unsafe.

16. Related references

This policy should be read alongside the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005; the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, particularly Chapter 4 of Part 2 - Manual Handling of Loads; HSA guidance on manual handling and people handling in healthcare and social care settings; guidance on patient hoists and slings; infection prevention requirements; safeguarding procedures; risk management arrangements; and Silvergrove Home Care local operating procedures.