

**Merton Mencap**

**Safe use of slings & hoists**

**Policy & Procedure**

**November 2011**



# Merton Mencap

## SAFE USE OF SLINGS & HOISTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

This policy and procedure has been adopted by Merton Mencap through its Executive Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the Merton Mencap office.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Chair of Executive Committee

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Chief Executive

### Record of adoption and review of this policy and procedure:-

**Adopted:**            2 November 2011

# MERTON MENCAP

## Safe use of slings and hoists Policy & Procedure

### Introduction

*Staff and staff member* includes Merton Mencap employees, bank workers and volunteers.

Some service users may require special assistance when transferring from one area to another because they lack the ability to weight bear. In such cases, the use of slings and hoists may be considered an appropriate means to assist service users.

The purpose of this document is to set out the charity's policy with regard to the use of slings and hoists and to provide instruction to staff in their safe use.

### Definitions

*Slings:* A sling is used to support the entire body of the service user. It is often made of heavy-duty material and is customised. In many instances, the sling passes underneath the service user and is attached to the hoist by a series of loops.

*Hoists:* A hoist is used to take the weight of a service user. After using a sling to attach a service user to a hoist, the operator will manoeuvre the lifting mechanism of the hoist to lift the service user from one area to another.

### Policy and procedure

Merton Mencap will ensure that all hoists (whether owned or hired by Merton Mencap) are examined every six months by a competent person.

Slings and hoists are only permitted to be used by Merton Mencap staff when absolutely necessary, such as when assisting service users with personal care.

### *Staffing*

Merton Mencap staff are not permitted to use slings and hoists to transfer service users unless they have received appropriate training in their safe use. Training must be provided by an appropriate training provider and refresher training is required every three years.

No fewer than two trained members of staff must be present when transferring a service user using a sling and hoist.

Before each use, staff should examine the sling and hoist for signs of weakness or visible defects before each use, for example:-

- tears, fraying and loose threads in the material, stitching, seams and straps of the sling
- Cracks or breaks in the hoist

Staff should report any defects immediately to their manager. In such instances, the sling or hoist in question should not be used until the matter has been resolved.

### *Service users*

Merton Mencap will identify service users who may need to be assisted using a sling and hoist. In such cases, Merton Mencap will ensure the following:-

- A moving and handling assessment of the service user has been conducted by a qualified professional, such as an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist
- The moving and handling assessment includes instructions for the safe transfer of the service user when using a sling and hoist, including, in particular, the size and nature of the hoist to be used, the lifting position, the connecting points of the sling, and the risks associated with the transfer
- The moving and handling risk assessment is checked for any required update at least three times a year
- A risk assessment/care plan will be in place for each service user
- The manual handling assessment and risk assessment/care plan will be made available to staff working with service users

Staff must remain aware at all times that the safety and dignity of the service user being transported is paramount.

It is the policy of Merton Mencap that a service user (or their carer) must provide their own sling for hoist transfers. In instances where the service user is not able to provide their own sling, Merton Mencap reserves the right to exclude a service user from its services and activities.