

Merton Mencap

Safe use of slings & hoists

Policy & Procedure

August 2017



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

Reviewed: 10 August 2017

MERTON MENCAP

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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 can be generic or customised. The sling passes underneath the service user and is attached to the hoist and positioned 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. Merton Mencap may use mobile hoists or fixed hoists e.g. ceiling hoists which may be available in special schools, accessible swimming pool changing areas, or respite homes.

Policy and procedure

Merton Mencap will ensure that all hoists and equipment (whether owned or hired by Merton Mencap) are examined every six months by the person with overall responsibility for managing the service person (e.g. Projects Manager) and we will obtain the relevant documentation in relation hoists and equipment checks.

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 or to access a swimming pool with specialised hoists.

Staff training

Merton Mencap staff are **not** authorised to use slings and hoists to transfer service users until

- they have received training from an appropriately trained person, e.g. qualified physiotherapist (refreshed every 3 years)

and

- they have been observed hoisting at least 3 times in a live situation by a 'Merton Mencap Champion Hoist Assessor' who has been trained by a qualified person; staff must be observed at least 3 times before being authorised as a Support Hoister and a further 3 times before being authorised as a Lead Hoister (observations must be refreshed every 3 years or if staff have not hoisted for 6 months)

Training for 'Merton Mencap Champion Hoist Assessors' must be refreshed every 12 months.

Records will be maintained showing staff training, observations and the dates staff have hoisted.

Individual care plans & risk assessments

All staff involved in hoisting **MUST** read and follow directions in the Individual Care Plan & Risk Assessment and Moving and Handling Plan (if one exists) for each service user prior to any hoist– eg use the correct size sling, follow hoisting loops instructions

Before each hoist, staff should complete the following safety checks to ensure

- the area is uncluttered and there is appropriate room to hoist in
- the hoist to be used is fully charged and in good working order – no obvious cracks or breaks
- the sling loops are correctly attached to the hoist bar throughout the hoist
- all other equipment - changing beds, mats and beanbags, are in good condition and in the correct position
- staff maintain good posture throughout the hoist

Before each use, staff should physically observe and examine the sling 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

Where a service user arrives already positioned on their personal sling in their wheelchair, staff need to take the following precautions for the first hoist

- examine the areas of the sling that are visible to ensure good condition

- check the changing bed is the same height as the wheelchair
- hoist the service user high enough to check all areas of the sling is not damaged before transferring - if the sling is damaged lower the service user back into their wheelchair and do not continue with the hoist
- if the sling is in good condition continue hoisting
- provide additional support and precautions during the hoist, eg cushions underneath
- thoroughly examine the sling prior to the next 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.

Merton Mencap will provide 2 generic slings in 2 sizes for use (Guldmann High Back – Children’s 4-6 and Children’s 6-10), only to be used if a service user arrives without their personal sling or it is found to be damaged and it is stated that they are allowed to use a generic sling in the child’s Moving and Handling Plan.

Staff will complete a Sling Maintenance Checklist regularly for each Merton Mencap generic sling.

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 name of the sling 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.

Internal audit guidance

Check	Evidence
Have all staff who are required to hoist received the training and are our training records up to date and clear?	Ask Office Manager and CEO Check training records
Is the identity of trained hoisters clearly shown on the registers?	Check registers and cross-reference with training records
Do service records exist on file for hoists which we use (e.g. at schools)	Ask Office Manager, check records.
Are incidents relating to hoisting recorded and followed up?	Check Incident form log, ask CEO for incident report summary
Are care plans and risk assessments for service users updated and show clear instructions for hoisting?	Check care plans and dates for updates?