



## **Health and Safety Policy**

It is the policy of Spinal Homecare Services Ltd to seek to provide a safe and healthy work place and working environment for all of its employees.

We will fulfil this by removing any potential hazards where possible and assessing homes that staff will be working in.

We are committed to completing risk assessments for activities that staff will have to undertake as part of their duties. Spinal Homecare Services Ltd will reduce risks identified from these wherever possible.

We also recognise that it is Spinal Homecare Services Ltd's responsibility to protect the health and safety of its clients. We will do this by assessing client's needs and making sure that staff have knowledge and skills to meet these needs.

By using risk assessments we can identify hazards and minimise these as far as humanly possible. We will endeavour to address any training needs as soon as possible.

### **Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, Spinal Homecare Services Limited is responsible for:**

1. Provision of information about health and safety to all workers.
2. Provision of guidance, instruction and training.
3. The preparation and updating of a written statement of their health and safety policy and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy.

### **Staff have a duty to:**

1. Work safely and not endanger the health and safety of themselves, colleagues, clients or the general public.
2. Adhere to health and safety procedures laid down by Spinal Homecare Services Ltd.
3. Use safety devices where appropriate.
4. Report all accidents and incidents immediately, no matter how trivial.

POL015 (issue No 6) 18.01.19 Approved by: 

5. Read and be familiar with employees responsibilities documented in the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

POL015 (issue No 6) 18.01.19 Approved by: 

### **The Worker**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act workers are obliged:

1. To take reasonable care not to put at risk themselves or anyone else who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work, that includes other Workers, clients and their families.
2. To co-operate with your line-manager in meeting the responsibilities of the Act.
3. To report any incidents, accidents and/or any risks and/or unsafe practices that potentially may result in an accident.

If as a Worker you should have any problems or concerns regarding Health & Safety, please immediately contact your line-manager.

### **Lifting and Handling**

The following has been devised to ensure that Workers are aware of the importance of assessment prior to lifting and/or handling. If you should have any queries regarding the following please contact your line manager.

### **The Assessment for Client Handling and/or Equipment**

Before handling or transferring any clients and/or moving any equipment the following criteria must be utilised.

#### **Always stop, think and assess.**

##### 1. THE PURPOSE

- a) Always think and decide about the start and the end points of the lift or transfer.
- b) How frequently are you going to repeat the procedure?
- c) How long does the lift or the handling last?

Equally important is to consider the following:

##### 2. THE CLIENT

- a) The client's medical condition.
- b) The height, weight and shape of the client.
- c) The client's ability to assist and/or the client's liability to fatigue or pain.
- d) Has the client any restraints which may restrict movement. For example, plaster of paris, limb splints or callipers.
- e) Behavioural constraints or patterns.
- f) Clothing - does it restrict client movement.

##### 3. THE ENVIRONMENT THAT YOU ARE WORKING IN.

- a) Furniture - is it moveable? Can it be adjusted and its condition.
- b) Handling equipment - is it accessible, are there appropriate attachments?
- c) Space - is the area cluttered, obstructed?

- d) The Worker's clothing - is it tight, and are you restricted in your movement?

### 3. SELECTION OF LIFTING OR TRANSFER TECHNIQUE

Consider the following:

- a) Mechanical, assisted manual or manual. (If manual - the number of Workers required, this information should have been provided by the Line-Manager. If in doubt, please consult the office immediately.)
- b) Lifting/handling requirement - vertical lifting or horizontal transfer or support phase.
- c) Consider additional tasks required whilst handling, for example, insertion of bedpan, dress adjustment, cleaning etc.
- d) Lifting/handling posture -  
Symmetrical  
Straight back, i.e. not twisted or rotated Stance
- e) Decide who is to lead the lift so that everyone moves together.

### 4. EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

As a Worker do you require equipment to assist you? Always consider and re-assess situations.

- a) Fixed hoist and its adjustments.
- b) Mobile hoist, its adjustments and attachments.
- c) Seat lift.
- d) Handling or transfer equipment for use by clients or for use by Workers.

### 5. WORKERS

As a Worker of Spinal Home Care always assess and consider the following:

- a) Fitness for the task.
- b) Energy levels.
- c) Experience with clients.
- d) Experience with the handling team.
- e) Handling skill.
- f) Familiarity with lifting/handling equipment.

### 6. ACTION

- a) Entry in the Client Care Report Book.
- b) Regular Client reassessment.

### **Lifting and Handling**

In the client's home you will frequently be called upon to lift things. This may seem of

little importance but even lifting a tray from the floor to the table may involve strain. In normal bending movements the weight of the inclined upper part of the body subjects the discs of the spine to considerable stress. If the spine is subjected to heavy strain, as in lifting, the discs may be damaged causing considerable pain. Lifting incorrectly is one of the major causes of back trouble.

As a Worker, first consider if the lift and/or transfer can be avoided - do not rush to lift things, transfer Clients or move equipment without pausing to ask and assess if it is a really necessary.

1. A weight bearing client may be assisted by one Worker providing the Worker, the line-manager and/or the Social Worker considers it safe practice.
2. Clients unable to weight-bear of moderate weight may require more than one Worker and/or a mechanical hoist to transfer depending on their individual care plan and/or assessment.
3. Heavy clients unable to weight-bear must be lifted by one to two Workers and the use of a hoist.

The chosen method for lifting and manual handling must be determined by the Line-Manager, Occupational Therapist and/or Social Worker on the service commencement. This must be recorded in the Client Care Report Book and notes and to be reviewed as and when necessary.

Each separate manoeuvre and or transfer must be assessed in the light of each given situation and the Worker must seek advice from the Line-Manager if unsure of how to proceed and or required advice.

The principles of lifting rely on the folio-wing:

1. Firstly, always stop and think. Do not rush to lift things or clients without assessing the situation first.
2. Always assess and plan the lift or manoeuvre.
3. Where is the load to be placed and where appropriate please use the appropriate handling aids/equipment.
4. Please always place the feet apart giving a balanced and stable base for lifting. Always face in the direction of travel for balance and ease of travel. It is important to remember to keep your arms close to your body when lifting. Always take a firm grip prior to lifting.
5. To lift an object in the correct manner always adopt a good posture and bend the knees to ensure that the strain of lifting is taken up by the thigh and leg muscles. Keep back straight to also avoid strain. Always perform the lifting movement smoothly, do not use jerky movements.
6. If your vision is obscured or could potentially become obscured when moving or lifting an object or person, do not proceed as it is still dangerous as you will be placing yourself and others at risk.
7. It is sensible not to push, shove and/or jerk objects as it may cause severe strain to the

POL015 (issue No 6) 18.01.19 Approved by: 

arms, back and shoulders.

Using this procedure and lifting objects in this manner may avoid straining the weak areas of the body. Always use your common sense and do not place the client, your colleagues and/or yourself at risk. Assessment of the situation and of the client is of a paramount importance.

The same principles apply to lifting and/or manoeuvring light objects or persons. Wherever possible, always think and assess the situation and/or individual. When assisting clients always tell the client what you are intending to do, this will prevent sudden, sharp movements and/or actions.

Since lifting and carrying is a common part of your work use the correct procedure at all times. If you have any queries or problems, contact your line manager.

### **The Handling and Operation of Equipment**

All equipment within a client's home must be used correctly. As a Worker you may be requested to use a household appliance, for example, a washing machine, dryer and/or microwave. If you are unsure of how these appliances work or they are faulty or broken, contact your line manager for guidance.

After use, please clean and always store in a safe place. Please do not leave appliances blocking halls or doorways or you may cause an accident.

Regarding hoists, the same principles apply. Always ask your Line-Manager for advice.

### **The Maintenance of Handling Equipment**

It is important that planned preventative maintenance procedures are established taking into account the manufacturers recommendations, for example, regular services.

Maintenance work to equipment must only be carried out by an approved competent person. It is the responsibility of all Workers to report any potential problems or faults to the Line Manager. Any equipment found to be faulty must be withdrawn from service immediately for prompt repair.

### **Hazards in the Home**

As a Worker your place of a work will be in clients' homes. Every year thousands of people are involved in accidents at home. More people are injured in accidents at home than at work, so it is important that you are aware of the potential causes of the accidents.

Accidents are likely to occur in clients' homes as they may be old and in need of repair as well as unfamiliar to you. As a Worker you may have several clients to visit each day and inevitably you may be tempted to take short cuts which could end in a serious accident.

The Health and Safety at Work Act places a responsibility on the provision of instruction, training and information on safety matters. However, as a Worker you have responsibilities under the Act. In particular to take care of yourself and anyone who may be affected by your work and/or actions. By being safety conscious you can avoid accidents.

POL015 (issue No 6) 18.01.19 Approved by: 

The aim of this section is to prevent accidents and to inform you of some of the common hazards that you may encounter. Periodically Policies will be revised and new updates will be issued by your Line-Manager which you must read and keep in a safe place.

Staff Contract including terms & conditions + Policies should be used in conjunction with the Quality Manager Induction Training provided by your Line-Manager.

Finally, if you have any problems concerning health and safety please contact your Line-Manager. If you see a potential hazard or have an accident, however minor, please report it to your Line-Manager immediately.

### **Protective Clothing**

When working in clients' homes it is always sensible to wear appropriate protective clothing. Tabards at a reasonable cost can be obtained from your Line-Manager. It is recommended that all Workers have a pair of sensible, comfortable, well fitting shoes with a broad heel and good gripping soles to prevent slips and falls. Try to avoid wearing loose clothing or jewellery because they can get caught in appliances or knock objects over.

Other items of protective clothing that you may require include plastic aprons and gloves. All these items should be available as issued or on request.

As your work will involve travelling between several different clients in any one day suitable outdoor attire is a necessity.

### **Falls**

One of the most frequent causes of accidents to Workers are falls. These can happen in most parts of the home and often occur on the way to a client's house. During wet or icy weather you can easily slip on the path or steps leading to the front door.

Inside the home, cluttered hallways and rooms, especially if they are poorly lit, present serious risks. These involve worn and frayed carpets, loose lino, badly fitting stair-rods, small mats and rugs. Wet or polished floors can also be serious hazards, especially to the elderly.

Try to prevent falls occurring by removing objects that you could trip over, keep hallways and stairs clear, dry wet floors, avoid polishing floors and make sure that the client's home is properly lit. If you are not satisfied than please inform your Line Manager as soon as possible.

### **Electricity**

As a Worker you will frequently come across hazards associated with electricity and electrical appliances. Always treat these with respect and report any hazards immediately to your Line Manager. Do not attempt any repairs yourself since these could result in serious injury or death.

### **Plugs and Sockets**

Part of your work will involve using plugs and adaptors. Always check that these are removed when not in use and avoid pulling them out when switches are still switched on. Never pull plugs out by tugging at the cable and be especially careful of two pin plugs or sockets which you sometimes will find in old houses. These do not have a third earth wire

like modern plugs.

Multi plug adaptors are frequently used at home. Overloading can occur if too many appliances are taken off one socket. This can cause burns, fires or shocks.

Before changing a light bulb, make certain that the power is turned off and that you have a safe pair of steps to stand on. If you are not certain that the power is off, use the main isolation switch at the fuse box to turn off the whole supply.

### **Appliances**

Before using any appliance it is sensible to check that the plug is not cracked or broken. At the same time examine the cable for frays, cracks or other damage. If the plug or cable is faulty please inform your Line Manager.

**Electric Blankets:** If an electric blanket is frayed or worn report it to your Manager.

A frequent cause of fires is old and worn electric blankets.

**Irons and Kettles:** Before filling a steam iron or kettle with water pull out the plug. Do not iron garments etc. on the floor.

Kettles should be unplugged before emptying the contents. Avoid the temptation of boiling them on the floor since they can be easily knocked over.

**Portable Appliances:** Never take portable electric fires into the bathroom or near the

Kitchen sink. Water is a good conductor of electricity and can cause nasty shocks or kill if it comes into contact with a source of electricity.

**Vacuum Cleaners:** Before emptying a vacuum cleaner remember to pull out the plug.

Take care not to trip over the cable or drape it across a cooker or fire.

If you find a faulty appliance, plug or socket, do not use it under any circumstances. Please refer the problem to your Line Manager and advise the client not to use it until it has been repaired. Mishandling electrical equipment can lead to a serious accident and/or incident.

### **Gas**

Gas is a convenient and popular method of cooking and heating at home. It is nonetheless dangerous and can explode. If you should notice a smell of gas do not use any matches, lighters or switch on any electrical appliances including light switches or sockets as a small spark is sufficient to ignite gas and cause an explosion.

If you smell gas or find a gas appliance in a faulty condition, telephone the gas emergency service. The number is in the telephone book or the operator will give it to you. Alternatively dial 999. The service is free. After telephoning leave the house with the client and contact your Line Manager as soon as possible.

POL015 (issue No 6) 18.01.19 Approved by: 

Never attempt to repair a faulty gas appliance. Always contact the gas emergency service for assistance. Leaking gas can explode and kill.

### **Heating**

Heating appliances are a common cause of fires in the home, especially during the winter months. Many of the clients cannot afford to spend much on heating so they will use a variety of portable heaters for economy. Whether they burn oil, bottled gas, paraffin or electricity, there are some simple safety precautions which must be taken.

Portable heaters should be kept against walls and not in the middle of the room. They must never be moved when lit and clothes should not be dried on them.

With these types of heaters good ventilation is essential because they use up oxygen and produce water vapour and carbon monoxide. Many clients attempt to conserve heat by blocking up all cracks under doors and closing all windows, so they obstruct the flow of air. As a result, many people die every year from carbon monoxide poisoning and suffocation. So good ventilation is essential.

These heaters should never be left in a through draught, which could blow the flame out and in the case of a gas heater cause an explosion.

If possible paraffin or oil heaters should be stored and poured outside. Never attempt to fill a lighted paraffin heater. Similarly, when using liquid petroleum gas heaters change *the* storage cylinder in the open air. Before doing so check that the cylinder valve is shut. Finally, whenever you have to fill a heater or change the wick always follow the manufacturer's instructions. If you have any problems, always speak to your Line Manager or contact the Kendal Office.

As well as portable heaters gas fires, coal fires and fixed electric fires must be treated with care. Please keep them guarded and make sure furniture like armchairs are kept at a safe distance. And check that the taps on gas fires have not been accidentally turned on.

Remember by following these simple safety precautions you can prevent a fire breaking out.

### **Lighting**

Poor lighting in the home is often the cause of serious falls. It is frequently found in passages and stairs. Many elderly people attempt to economise by using 40 or 60 watt light bulbs. So if you consider the lighting is inadequate tell your Line Manager or contact the Office.

As a Worker you may be involved in cooking for clients. When this happens watch out for the metal handles on pans etc. These can get very hot and cause nasty bums. So remember to use an oven glove or pot holder when lifting a kettle or saucepan. Beware of loose handles on cooking utensils. It is also a good practice to keep saucepan handles turned away from the front of the stove. And as a matter of course you should check pilot lights and cooker taps.

It is possible for a client or their family to forget saucepans of milk or soup left

warming on the stove. These can boil over extinguishing the flame and causing an escape of gas.

Try to dissuade clients from leaving matches on the stove or drying tea towels or clothes over the stove. These could easily catch fire.

Chip and frying pans are the frequent cause of serious fires. If the fat or oil bursts into flame do not put water on it. Water will cause a violent explosion sending boiling fat all over the kitchen. If a fat fire occurs switch off the stove and cover the pan with a metal lid or damp cloth. Then leave the pan to cool down and leave undisturbed for thirty minutes. Never attempt to carry a pan of burning fat.

### **Household Appliance**

Everyday you will use a variety of household appliances to clean the clients' homes. These can include washing machines, irons, vacuum cleaners, electric kettles and so on. Careless use of any of these appliances can cause accidents.

It is important never to cut corners and always follow a safe working procedure. When moving a low heavy object, for example a spin dryer, walk it from side to side, one small step at a time. And before using any electrical appliance always make certain you know how it operates. If in doubt, ask the client or consult the instruction booklet. Always keep thinking of safe ways of performing your assignments and be on the constant guard for dangers and/or hazards.

### **Cleaning Agents**

Part of your duties may involve using household cleaning agents like bleach. These are dangerous chemicals and must always be handled with care. As a matter of course, you should always read the instructions and use the cleaning agents in the recommended quantities.

When you are not using them put out of the reach of children. Never keep any of these cleaning agents in lemonade bottles or other food containers.

It is often not appreciated that mixing different cleaning agents is dangerous. For instance, mixing bleach and harpic can produce a dangerous gas called Chlorine which can cause burns.

Some disinfectants and cleaning agents produce fumes. So it is important that when using them you properly ventilate the room in which you are working. It is recommended that you wear rubber gloves when handling many of these products otherwise you may find that you develop skin irritations and/or sore hands.

Do not smoke when you are using these products. After use of these products always remember to wash and dry your hands. If you do not follow this recommendation you may become ill due to poisoning yourself.

Several household cleaning agents like wax polish are available in aerosol cans. These can be very dangerous so always follow the manufacturers instructions. In particular never use them near a fire or naked flame otherwise they may explode or burst into flame. Furthermore, these should be kept away from heat including sunlight.

To avoid inhaling the vapour they should only be used in well ventilated rooms. And

when empty throw them away - do not attempt to bum or puncture them.

Finally, if you feel sick or drowsy after using any cleaning agent, please inform your Line Manager immediately. Please remember other Workers may also be suffering the same ill effects as yourself. It is therefore important that your Line Manager is informed in order that appropriate action can be taken.

## **DOMESTIC DUTIES**

### **Performing Domestic Tasks**

As part of the total care of a client, attention should be given to the home environment and general surroundings. Therefore, you will be required to perform domestic duties in clients own homes. Please try to maintain standards appropriate to each client's lifestyle and in accordance with their wishes. At the same time, please bear in mind the overall aim of encouraging the client to wherever possible to maintain their level of independence and improve it wherever possible.

This objective can be achieved by remembering not to do everything for a client who is still able to manage some tasks unaided, or with a little help. Please remember the importance of involving the client in the running of his/her home and allow as much choice as possible over what happens.

*For example:*

Please always discuss with each client the cleaning routine and standards expected to ensure maximum satisfaction. Ask how often they would like the fridge cleaned or the floor washed.

As a Worker it is important to always check if there are particular special or valuable possessions and find out how they should be handled and/or cleaned.

In conjunction with the client always agree on certain tasks that can be left for the client to carry out, bearing in mind the degree of frailty or disability. This might be dusting accessible shelves or ornaments or helping to wash up.

It is important that all Workers know how to maintain a proper standard of hygiene in the client's home. Please try to ensure reasonable standards in the bathroom and toilet, and in the kitchen especially where food is prepared or stored.

For people without guiding sight do not move things from their usual place as moving items and/or furniture may cause the client to fall and/or become disorientated.

At the end of each assignment/duty please check with the client that all tasks have been carried out satisfactorily.

Domestic duties may be required as a supplement to basic home care duties. If you are unsure regarding the level and type of service that the client is receiving, then please do not hesitate to contact the Kendal office.

Please note that the client's accommodation must be maintained in a clean and tidy manner at all times. Please ensure that adequate laundry facilities are arranged.

## **HOUSEHOLD SAFETY**

This checklist has been designed to assist Workers to identify hazards in clients' homes. As a Worker, if you feel or know of any hazard please report them to your Line Manager at once or contact the Kendal office.

### **Hall/Staircases/Landing**

Are the entrances cluttered?  
Is the lighting poor?  
Are there any loose mats rugs or stair rods?  
Are the carpets worn and/or torn?

### **Kitchens**

Are cooker taps left on?  
Are clothes or tea towels dried over cookers?  
Are pot, pan or kettle handles metal?  
Are pan handles turned away from the front of the stove?  
Is the floor wet or slippery?  
Are sharp knives and other utensils properly stored away?  
Are cleaning agents correctly stored away?  
Are all electrical appliances left unplugged when not in use?

### **Bathroom**

Are there any portable electrical appliances?  
Is the floor wet or slippery?  
Is the ventilation adequate?  
Is there a slip mat on the floor?  
Are all medicines properly stored away?

### **Living Room**

Are the fires unguarded?  
Are clothes and/or furniture too near a fire?  
Is the mirror over the fireplace?  
Is the ventilation adequate?  
Are all portable heaters situated in the correct place?  
Are all plugs removed when not in use?  
Are plug switches left on when not in use?  
Are all electrical appliances safe?  
Are the multi-plug adaptors overloaded?  
Are there any trailing wires?

### **Bedroom**

Is there adequate ventilation?  
Are all portable heaters situated in the correct place?  
Is the room cluttered?  
Is the top of the wardrobe kept clear?

## **Outside the House**

Is the path uneven?

Are the steps worn and/or broken?

Is there an outside light?

*This is a basic safety checklist and should be modified to meet clients' individual circumstances*

## **Management of Body Fluids**

As a Worker there will be occasions when you will have to assist clients who have been incontinent of urine and/or faeces. Therefore, when dealing in direct contact with any body fluids, Workers must wear disposable plastic or rubber gloves. In cases a disposable plastic apron will also be required. The same principles apply to the management of sputum and/or vomit.

After safe disposal of any body fluids, disposable gloves and/or aprons should be placed in a refuse sack. Workers must then wash and dry their hands thoroughly using a separate hand towel, not shared by the client.

Additional stocks of plastic aprons and/or gloves are available from your Line Manager.

## **Fire**

Fires do happen even in the most safety conscious household. So make sure you know what to do if a fire should break out. Above all do not panic. If possible get the client and yourself out of the house. Please try to close doors because this will delay the spread of the fire and smoke and make escape easier. On leaving the house, please raise the alarm by telephoning the Fire Brigade. If it is not possible to leave the house, then telephone the Fire Brigade, move the client and yourself to a safe point and close all doors to prevent the spread of fire.

As a general rule remember never use water on live electric fires. Water allows electricity to flow through so you could get a shock. If possible try to switch the supply off but do not take risks. And if you have a pan of fat catch fire never use water to extinguish it. Follow the advice given in the section on cooking. Remember, if in doubt, get the client and yourself out of danger, dial 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade, clearly stating the address and location of the client's property.

## **Reporting of Accidents, Incidents and Diseases**

Every accident and/or incident, however slight, should be reported to your Line Manager on the same day or as soon as possible, but within 24 hours. Please note that the reporting of injuries, accidents and diseases is a legislative requirement and must be recorded in detail in writing. Please obtain the appropriate form from your Line Manager. An accident may seem trivial at the time but may cause you trouble at a later date.

If you should contract an infection through your work report it to your Line Manager as soon as possible.