LIFTING OPERATIONS AND LIFTING EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

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Please note:

If you require a copy of this procedure in an alternative format (for example Large Print, Easy Read) or would like any assistance in relation to the content of this policy, please contact the Human Resources (HR) team on 01803 656680.

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1. Purpose and Introduction

The Trust recognises the significant risks presented by Lifting Operations and the use of Lifting Equipment, and its duty to manage these in order to minimise risk to patients, staff, visitors and others.

The objective of this procedure and associated operational procedures is to meet the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998, and ensure the provision of safe lifting operations and lifting equipment throughout the Trust, through defined management structures and operational procedures.

Estates Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment within the Trust such as Lifts, etc. are managed by the Estates and Facilities Management Department (EFM). Patient Lifting Operations and Equipment such as Hoists, etc. are managed locally by Wards and Departments. All Lifting Equipment within the Trust is managed in accordance with LOLER 1998.

Local managers are responsible for managing their lifting operations and lifting equipment in accordance with this procedure. This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the Trust's Manual Handling Policy.

This procedure and arrangements covers all lifting operations and lifting equipment employed by the Trust.

2. Definitions

2.1 Competent Person

A competent person is someone who has sufficient training, skills, experience and knowledge and the ability to apply them to perform the task safely.

2.2 Lifting Operations

Any operation concerned with the lifting or lowering of a load. A 'load' includes a person or people as well as the usual material, animals or combination of these that are lifted by the lifting equipment.

2.3 Lifting Equipment

This means work equipment for lifting and lowering loads. This includes lifting accessories and attachments used for anchoring, fixing or supporting the equipment.

2.4 Lifting accessories

These are pieces of equipment that are used to attach the load to lifting equipment, providing a link between the two including patient slings. Any lifting accessories used between lifting equipment and the load may need to be taken into account in determining the overall weight of the load.

2.5 SWL

Safe Working Load, i.e. the maximum load the item may lift.

3. Applicability

To decide whether LOLER applies we need to answer two questions – is it work equipment and, if so, is it lifting equipment?

3.1 Is it 'Work Equipment'?

The fact that equipment is designed to lift or lower a load does not automatically mean that LOLER applies. The equipment has to be defined as 'work equipment', which is defined in the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) as "any machinery appliance, apparatus, tool or installation for use at work".

Generally, any equipment used by an employee at work will be covered by this definition. In health and social care settings the main exceptions will be:

- Where a member of the public (eg a user of care services) purchases equipment for their use at home, as it is not defined as work equipment

- Where equipment has been loaned by an employer or community equipment provider for individuals solely to be used by themselves, family or unpaid carers, as it is not defined as work equipment during the loan period

In these cases LOLER will not apply.

3.2 If so, is it 'lifting equipment'?

As previously stated the definition of a 'lifting operation' in LOLER is 'an operation concerned with the lifting or lowering of a load'. It applies to equipment which lifts or lowers loads as a principal function. Much equipment in health and social care premises has an element of lifting as part of its normal operation, for example a variable-height bed or dentist's chair. However, the principal function of these items is as a bed or chair, and not as a device for lifting or lowering of loads. Height adjustability alone does not mean that LOLER applies to the equipment.

Appendix 1 at the end of this procedure gives a list of common work equipment found in health and social care, and advice on whether it should be considered to be lifting equipment.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate management responsibility, including allocation of resources and appointment of personnel, for the safe and efficient management of lifting operations and equipment throughout the Trust.

4.2 Senior Management (including Clinical Directors and General Managers, Hospital Matrons)

Senior Management is responsible for the implementation throughout the Trust of this management procedure and must provide sufficient and suitable resources for the safe and efficient management of lifting operations, lifting equipment and training. Senior management are also responsible for ensuring all lifting equipment within their areas of responsibility is within examination date.

4.3 Ward and Departmental Managers

Each manager is responsible for the safe and efficient management of lifting operations and lifting equipment under their control, through the implementation of this procedure and arrangements. Ward and Departmental Managers are responsible for lifting equipment in their area including:

- Ensuring that staff are competent in the safe use of the equipment
- The lifting equipment is within its examination date
- Is available for examination under LOLER when required
- Informing EFM when a new item of lifting equipment is being purchased
- Informing EFM if an item of lifting equipment is to be taken out of service
- Updating EFM where equipment is transferred between departments

4.4 Persons carrying out lifting operations using lifting equipment

All persons, whether directly employed or working as a contractor, completing lifting operations using lifting equipment within the Trust are responsible for carrying out this work safely and in accordance with this procedure and arrangements. Pre use checks must also be carried out to ensure the equipment is safe and suitable for use, and a current LOLER label is in place on the equipment to state that the equipment is safe and suitable for use. No person shall use any equipment unless they have been trained its safe use.

4.5 Trust Manual Handling Advisors

The Trust's Manual Handling Advisors provide advice and guidance on safe moving and handling activities within the Trust including all patient lifting operations and equipment. The Manual Handling Advisors are available to provide advice and guidance on the purchase of lifting equipment. The Manual Handling training for all staff includes information on the pre use checks staff must carry out on lifting equipment, and their responsibilities under the LOLER regulations including ensuring the lifting equipment is within test date.

4.6 Trust Health and Safety Manager

The Health and Safety Manager provides advice on lifting operations.

4.7 The Head of Estates

The Head of Estates is responsible for appointing competent persons and a manager within EFM who has designated LOLER responsibilities:

- To ensure the suitable and sufficient testing and examination of Lifting Equipment required under LOLER is completed

- To inform the Ward and Departmental managers of the lifting equipment's examination status through the management of a LOLER database

- Acting as a liaison with Ward and Departmental managers with regard to lifting equipment and for advice on LOLER

5. Procedures

5.1 Organisation

Appropriate training and guidance is given to all persons carrying out lifting operations so that the provisions of this procedure are understood and safe working practices adopted.

All lifting operations shall be properly planned and carried out in a safe manner with a suitable risk assessment having been carried out.

PUWER 1998 requires that all work equipment (which includes lifting equipment) be constructed or adapted to be suitable for the purpose for which it is provided, and that the working conditions and risks are taken into account during the selection process.

No work equipment which is not specifically designed or intended to be used as part of lifting equipment shall be used as lifting equipment (including lifting accessories) in any lifting operation carried out under the Trust's LOLER arrangements.
A suitable risk assessment should be carried out to identify the selection of all equipment intended to be used for lifting taking regard to the working environment and any associated risks. The risk assessment shall take account of:

- Ergonomic risks

- Materials of manufacture

- Means of access

- Protection against slips trips and falls

- Operator protection

- Environmental factors such as space & the wind

- Risks to others not involved in the lifting operation

No lifting operation shall be carried out under the Trust's LOLER arrangements unless the capability of the lifting equipment and the forces that may be imposed by the intended load are known.

All lifting operations shall minimise the need to lift loads over people, and ensure that

all persons not essential to the lifting operation are kept at a safe distance.

A suitable risk assessment for the lifting operation requires that the capability of the lifting equipment and the forces imposed by the load (including any shock or wind loading) to be lifted are known.

The risk assessment should take account of possible combinations of forces which may affect the stability and due regard of the installation of lifting equipment. This is especially important when using mobile lifting equipment or equipment which is assembled at different locations.

All lifting equipment should be inspected before each use to ensure that its capability remains adequate for the intended loading.

5.2 Strength and stability

All lifting equipment shall be of adequate strength and stability for its proposed use and marked to show its SWL. Every part of a load and anything attached to it and used in lifting it shall be suitable and of adequate strength.

All lifting equipment is installed or positioned in such a way so as to remove or minimise the risks of injury, from the load or equipment striking persons, the load falling or being unintentionally released.

5.3 Marking of lifting equipment

It is a requirement that all lifting equipment including lifting accessories is clearly marked to indicate safe working loads, and in the case of a carrier (for lifting persons) also display the maximum number of persons to be carried. Where the rating of equipment depends on configuration, this information has also to be kept with the equipment.

No lifting equipment or lifting accessory shall be used in lifting operations covered by the Trust's LOLER arrangements unless it is so marked.

Where lifting equipment and/or lifting accessories are not designed for lifting of persons but it is possible that they are inadvertently so used, then these items shall be marked accordingly.

5.4 New lifting equipment

When new lifting equipment is procured by any department within the Trust the department must notify EFM so that the new equipment can be registered on the management systems.

No lifting equipment (including lifting accessories) shall be put into use for the first time unless it is thoroughly examined for any defect by a competent person, or it is accompanied by physical evidence that such a thorough examination has been carried out.

Where lifting equipment has to be installed or assembled then a thorough examination must be carried out after installation/assembly and before first use.

5.5 Lifting equipment used for lifting persons

Lifting equipment which is used for lifting persons receives special attention under LOLER.

Within the Trust two main classes of such equipment are in use:

- Passenger lifts – fixed installations which include goods lifts but not document hoists. This are installed, commissioned, maintained and examined by EFM

- Patient hoists – both mobile and fixed, including lifting accessories

No person shall be raised or lowered using work equipment (other than that listed above) under the Trust's LOLER arrangements unless a specific risk assessment has been carried out.

Within the Trust vehicle tail lifts designed for lifting persons are managed by the Transport Services department.

5.6 Lifting of patients

A large number of lifting operations involving patients and lifting equipment are carried out by staff under the auspices of the Trust Manual Handling Policy. The assessment and planning of these lifting operations is carried out according to the arrangements detailed in the Trust Manual Handling Policy which also indicates safe systems of work, selection of equipment and training requirements.

The Trust Manual Handling Policy, arrangements and advisors are therefore to be utilised in the management of all patient lifting operations and lifting equipment.

5.7 Other lifting operations and equipment

All other lifting operations involving the use of lifting equipment carried out by the Trust or on Trust owned or managed premises are covered under this procedure.

5.8 Lifting equipment owned by others

Lifting equipment including lifting accessories provided by a contractor or supplier either in the course of work being carried out by the contractor, or to be used by Trust staff (hired or loaned equipment) shall not be used in any lifting operation carried out under the Trust's LOLER arrangements unless accompanied by physical evidence that the required thorough examinations have been carried out.

5.9 Competent Persons

The Trust appoints competent contractors (members of the Safety Assessment Federation – Safed) who provide competent persons to carry out thorough examinations and provide written schemes of examination for lifting equipment and lifting accessories owned by the Trust.

5.10 Routine maintenance and examination of lifting equipment

All lifting equipment is thoroughly examined by competent persons on a regular basis as identified below.

Lifting equipment for lifting persons or an accessory for lifting, should be every 6 months; all other lifting equipment, at least every 12 months.

Where the above frequencies are not considered appropriate by the competent person, then a written scheme of examination is drawn up by the competent person.

In addition, thorough examinations must be carried out by the competent person following any significant change which may affect safe operation. These changes include:

- Involvement in an accident or dangerous occurrence
- Significant changes in use
- Long periods out of use

In each of the above circumstances the lifting equipment or lifting accessory must not be used until the thorough examination has been carried out.

5.11 Reports and defects

The report of a thorough examination must contain the information as per Schedule 1 of LOLER.

The competent person making a thorough examination of Lifting Equipment must notify the EFM manager responsible immediately of any defect which gives rise to danger and to provide a written report of the examination normally within 28 days. If the competent person believes there to be an existing or imminent risk of serious personal injury the report is also to be sent to the enforcing authority (The Health and Safety Executive) and the Director of Estates and Commercial Development (DECD) notified of the incident.

On receipt of any notification from a competent person of a defect giving rise to danger, then the lifting equipment or lifting accessory concerned must be dealt with in accordance of the serious defect notice.

Even if the equipment or accessory is subsequently scrapped and put beyond use, or the defect is immediately rectified, the competent person is required to make a report on the state of the equipment as examined.

5.12 Disposal of equipment

When any lifting equipment is disposed of by any department within the Trust they must notify EFM and Finance, so that the equipment can be removed from the management systems.

Any lifting equipment identified under the Medical Device Directive Classification System will require communication to the Medical Devices Support Services External Contracts

Manager.

5.13 Recording of information

Information must be kept by the Trust in respect of examinations and inspections carried out under LOLER.

This information can be kept in hard copy or electronically, and protected from unauthorised alteration. A written copy must be available when necessary.
The EFM department will retain records of examination and inspection as follows:

- Initial thorough examinations of lifting equipment (not lifting accessories) until the equipment are no longer used
- Initial thorough examinations of accessories for lifting, for two years after the report is made
- Initial thorough examinations of equipment dependent on installation/assembly until the equipment are no longer used at that location
- For routine thorough examinations for two years or until the next report is made whichever is later

5.14 Monitoring and Review

An annual review of the equipment schedules is part of the contract with the competent contractor.

An annual insurance report is produced and sent to the DECD the CEO and the manager responsible for LOLER.

6. References

The following references and further reading are applicable to this document:

- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)
- HSE Guidance note INDG 290 –A brief guide to Lifting Equipment at work
- HSE Health Services Information Sheet No 3 - Getting to grips with hoisting people
- HSE Health Services Information Sheet No 4 - How the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations apply to health and social care

Further information and advice is available from the Trust Health and Safety Manager and the EFM Department.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Common work equipment found in health and social care.

Appendix 1

Common work equipment found in health and social care

Equipment	Defined as lifting equipment or lifting accessory?	Risk of injury?	Thorough examination required?
Lifting hoists (mobile)	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Lifting hoists (fixed/ceiling)	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Stand and raising aids	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Slings	Yes, accessory	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Bath hoist – a device which lifts and lowers a person from outside the bath into the bath	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme

Equipment	Defined as lifting equipment or lifting accessory?	Risk of injury?	Thorough examination required?
Bath lift – a device which raises and lowers a person within the confines of the bath	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Lifting platforms	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Stair lift	Yes, equipment	Yes, failure can result in serious injury or worse	Yes, a thorough examination at intervals of 6 months or less, or in accordance with a written scheme
Standing transfer aid	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Recliner baths – height-adjustable baths	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply

Equipment	Defined as lifting equipment or lifting accessory?	Risk of injury?	Thorough examination required?

Riser recliner chairs	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Profiling beds and trolleys	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Pillow risers	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Active mattresses	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Mattress elevator	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply
Lifting cushion	No	N/A	No, but the requirements under PUWER to adequately maintain the equipment will still apply