

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the standards and procedures that staff at TruComfort Homecare must follow to ensure safe manual handling practices in the homes of service users.

TruComfort is committed to upholding safe, healthy working environments in accordance with legal requirements and recognised codes of practice. Manual handling operations that are governed by the following key legislation:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of the Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations promote a minimal handling approach and require employers to assess manual handling risks and reduce them as much as possible.

Organisational Commitment

TruComfort Homecare acknowledges its duty to protect all individuals affected by its operations, including staff, service users, visitors and contractors. Manual handling involves moving or supporting loads manually, including lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling or repositioning particularly where service users are concerned.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. **Initial Training:** All new staff will receive full training in safe moving and handling procedures and equipment use before starting work.
2. **Ongoing Training:** Manual handling the refreshers training is mandatory every 12 months.
3. **Double-Up Calls:** Where two carers are required for safety, tasks must not begin until both are present. Absences must be reported immediately to management or the on-call lead.
4. **Use of Equipment:** Only trained personnel may operate manual handling equipment.
5. **Involvement of Family or Third Parties:** If a family member or third party wishes to assist, they must present valid training certification. Without proof they may not participate in any manual handling.
6. **Risk Assessment:** A handling risk assessment must be conducted before care begins. Action must be taken to remove or minimise identified risks wherever possible.
7. **Policy Enforcement:** Staff failing to comply with safe practices may face disciplinary action or dismissal especially if the breach constitutes gross misconduct.

Manual Handling Risk Assessment

Each handling task must be reviewed for safety using the following approach:

1. A trained staff member must conduct a risk assessment before any manual handling is performed. This applies in all new care assignments.
2. At least two staff trained in handling and equipment use must be present when indicated by the assessment.
3. Tasks involving light, infrequent movement may pose low risk, but awkward or repetitive heavy lifting increases risk and must be assessed.
4. Where possible, avoid manual handling altogether—use aids and equipment instead.
5. If manual handling is unavoidable, assess and document the risks involved.
6. Introduce mitigation measures where necessary, such as hoists, repositioning strategies, or adjusting the environment.
7. All actions should be proportionate to the risk involved and practical to implement.

Important: Under no circumstances should a staff member attempt a lift that could risk injury.

Health & Safety Compliance

TruComfort Homecare will:

- Maintain safe equipment & working environments
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained & supervised
- Investigate and report any accidents or near misses in accordance with legal requirements (RIDDOR)
- Record all injuries resulting from manual handling
- Adapt roles when required following injury in line with disability legislation

Staff Responsibilities

All employees are legally required to:

- Take care of their own health & safety and that of others
- Cooperate with safety procedures and use equipment as instructed
- Avoid interference with any health and safety provisions
- Report injuries or unsafe conditions without delay

Manual handling must follow a three-step model:

1. **Avoid** the task if possible
2. **Assess** the risks when the task cannot be avoided
3. **Reduce** the risk using suitable strategies or aids

Lifting Equipment and Maintenance

All manual handling equipment must be regularly inspected and maintained. Managers are responsible for ensuring equipment is safe and any issues are addressed promptly. Supplier records and inspection logs must be kept up to date.

Training Requirements

- All staff will receive comprehensive induction training in health and safety
- Training includes both general and task-specific manual handling procedures
- Staff will be taught how to assess loads and avoid high-risk situations
- Only trained staff may operate specialist equipment
- Ongoing supervision will be provided to ensure safe practices are maintained
- Annual refresher training is mandatory