

THE COMMON-SENSE APPROACH

to Moving and Handling of
Disabled Children and Young People

Easy Read







Who is this guide for?

This guide is for workers and employers who work with children and young people who have moving and handling needs.

What does it do?

It helps to make sure that the experiences of disabled children and young people are not limited because people don't know or understand the laws and rules.

It gives a common-sense, practical approach based on the current laws about children's rights, manual handling and health and safety.

Using this guide will help to make sure that you get it right for children and young people who have moving and handling needs, so they can enjoy their right to be active, healthy and confident members of our society - and that workers and employers know their responsibilities.



Introduction

Working with disabled children and young people may involve moving and handling risks. We need to manage these risks properly – in ways that do not limit disabled children and young people’s opportunities to play, and let them have a wide social experience at home, in education and in their community.

The human rights and safety of both the child and the worker must be maintained.

Some children and young people do not have access to their rights because people don’t understand the rights of children and young people properly.

This is usually because:

- People make guesses about disabled children and young people that can lead to poor practice or discrimination
- People may worry too much about the bad things that can happen, and think less about what can help the child or young person, or what they want
- People do not know the rules very well
- Organisations and people are worried that they may be prosecuted if they injure a disabled child or young person when they are moving and handling them
- People might not know the best ways to assess and manage risks
- People cannot get hold of good advice or training about moving and handling people safely.

Moving and handling will be needed in a lot of different situations, for example, at home, playing with friends at school in break time, shopping with friends or on a school trip.

The rights of children and young people

The basic rights of children and young people in Scotland are part of the law. It is up to everyone who supports children and young people in moving and handling to keep these rights in mind, but to manage risk sensibly as well.

The rights of the worker

Employers must not ask workers to perform tasks that put them and the children and young people they care for at unacceptable risk.





Risk Management

What is Risk?

Risk exists in all aspects of life – and affects all of us.

A risk is when a person is likely to be harmed by a hazard. Moving and handling children and young people may cause harm to them or their workers. However, the chances of it happening and how serious it might be depends on a number of things including:

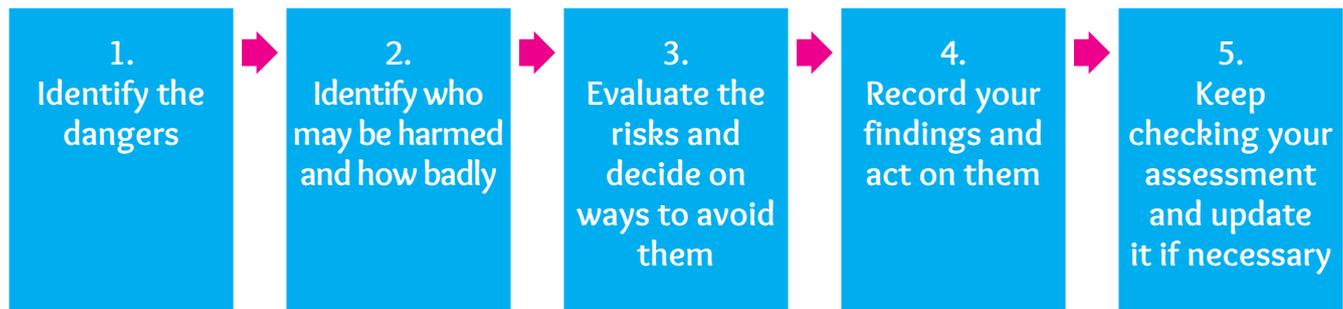
- The moving and handling tasks
- The place
- The equipment
- The needs of the child or young person
- The abilities and skills of the workers involved.

Managing Risk

“No lifting” is not a good way to control moving and handling risks.

An across the board no lifting policy removes some handling risks, but totally ignores the needs and rights of the child and young person. It is better for employers to do risk management.

The right approach to safe moving and handling is through the five steps of the risk assessment:



Risk cannot be eliminated completely. Risk management is about reducing risk as far as possible.

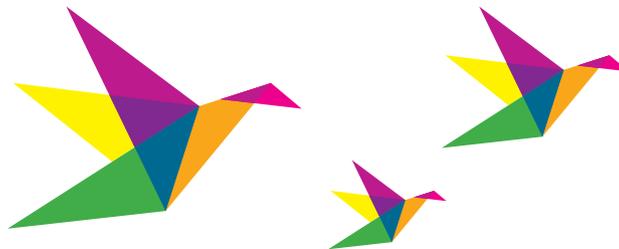
The law says employers must:

- Make sure that the moving and handling needs are clearly identified so there is as little risk to the child or young person and worker(s) as possible
- Change moving and handling plans if necessary.

It is very important from a children's rights perspective that employers should:

- Involve the child or young person and their worker(s) in the risk assessment and decision making
- Go through the moving and handling plans with the child or young person and their workers
- Make sure that the dignity of the child or young person is preserved.

Case study: Pete at the pool



Pete has cerebral palsy and attends a specialist unit within a mainstream school. Every year, the school lets children choose their own activities for a week. There weren't many choices for Pete so he decided to visit his local leisure pool, as he felt this would be an accessible place for him.

But there was no hoist in the leisure pool changing room and the school's hoist was too big to be taken there. So the school told Pete he couldn't go because school staff would not be able to lift him.

Pete's mum was unhappy about this and complained to the school. The school then contacted the leisure centre to see if there was any other way to help Pete to go swimming. The school learned that the leisure centre staff had been fully trained in moving and handling. They were able to do a risk assessment and use the equipment available at the leisure centre.

The leisure centre manager said the pool staff would meet with Pete and the workers supporting him to do a risk assessment around Pete's use of the changing facilities and pool at the leisure centre. They would need to know more about Pete including his mobility, risk of uncontrolled movements, his weight, height and his individual needs.

The school made sure they had Pete's permission to share the information with the pool staff who needed it.

When the risk assessment was done, the pool staff found that their skills and training would make it possible for them to support Pete with his moving and handling needs. Two of the pool staff could do everything needed to help Pete in the changing room and the pool.

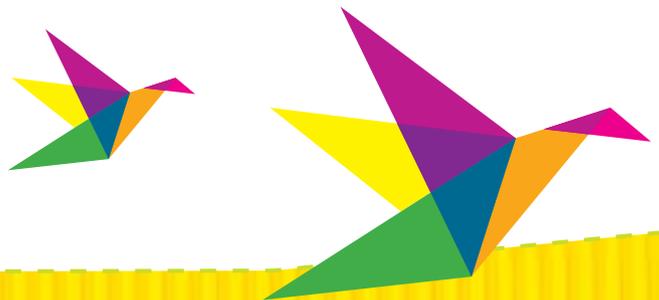




Being able to go swimming helped Pete to improve his well-being. It allowed him to be more active, healthier, and more included.

Pete's story shows that it is possible to find the right balance between the rights of the young person and those of his workers, and the employer's duties. The school staff shared the relevant information about Pete's abilities, needs, height and weight with the leisure centre staff. After doing the risk assessment with Pete and the school, leisure centre staff found out what the risks were and how those risks could be managed and reduced.

The case study shows one barrier children and young people with moving and handling needs and their families frequently face - the risk management was only done after Pete's mother's got involved. It would have been better for everyone if this started as soon as Pete asked to visit the pool.





Assessing Risk

Health and safety law means employers must carry out a proper risk assessment. To do so you must think about:

- The moving and handling task, including, for example postures, weight and how often
- The setting
- The equipment
- The individual child or young person's needs
- The workers who will do the moving and handling.

The risk assessment should consider risks to the child or young person being supported, risks to the worker(s) helping them, and risks to others who may be affected by the activity.

Risk assessment should involve the workers and the child or young person and their family and take into account their wishes and feelings. All decisions should take into account the emotional, psychological and social impact on the child or young person.



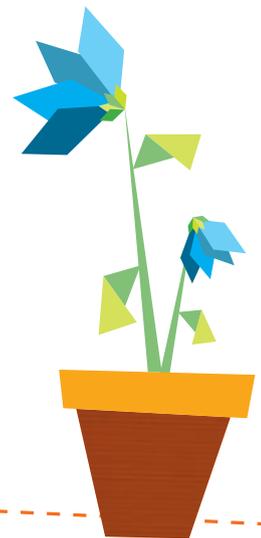
The law on manual handling operations does not prohibit all manual handling.

The law says that moving and handling must be done as safely as possible, where it cannot be avoided.

The child's rights must be safeguarded when they are being supported with their moving and handling needs.

Workers should not be asked to perform tasks that put them and the children and young people they care for at unacceptable risk. Children and young people should actively contribute to their own risk assessment/care plan and workers should ask them:

- How they wish to be physically moved
- What they feel most comfortable with in terms of moving and handling
- How they can help to manage their own care each day
- What activities they want or need to do, and where
- How they can appropriately use their physical ability so they don't depend too much on equipment and support aids
- How they could/would be moved in the case of an emergency, for example in the case of a fire or if the child were to have a seizure in the pool.



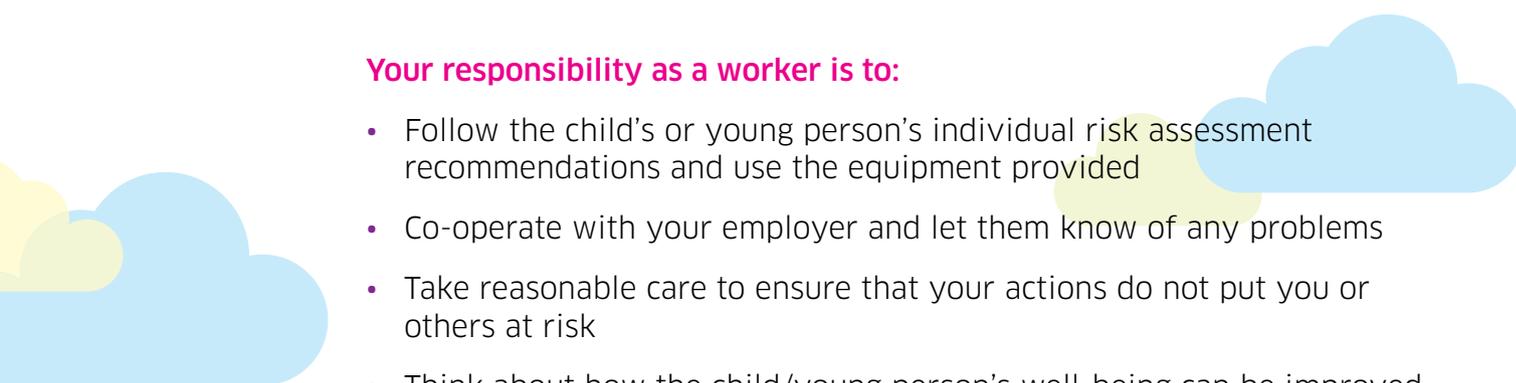
Workers should know all about the moving and handling needs of the children and young people they work with, and they should be trained to use the equipment needed to support them. This means the children and young people will be able to take a full part in a wider social experience.



The Scottish Government wants to improve the well-being of all children and young people, so that they are as safe, healthy, active, cared for (nurtured), achieving, respected, responsible and included as possible.

Children and young people should also be supported to make progress with their social, emotional and mental well-being.





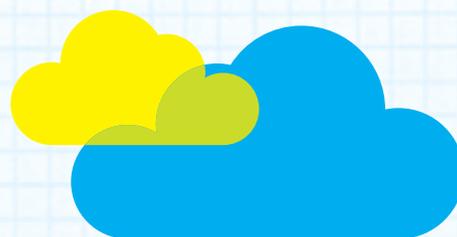
Your responsibility as a worker is to:

- Follow the child's or young person's individual risk assessment recommendations and use the equipment provided
- Co-operate with your employer and let them know of any problems
- Take reasonable care to ensure that your actions do not put you or others at risk
- Think about how the child/young person's well-being can be improved.

Your responsibility as an employer is to ensure the safety of your employees and others affected by their work by:

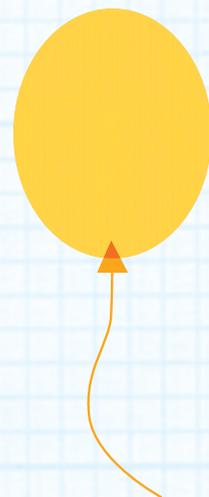
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out by employees who have had the relevant training and who understand the individual child or young person's needs
 - Avoiding those moving and handling tasks that could result in injury, where possible
 - Assessing the risks from moving and handling that cannot be avoided
 - Doing whatever you can to reduce the risk, so far as possible
 - Making sure that equipment used to move and handle children and young people is properly maintained and thoroughly examined every six months
 - Ensuring that the moving and handling equipment, including slings and other accessories is checked before each use, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
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Children and young people with daily moving and handling needs at home, in education, or in the community, must have their human rights carefully balanced with those of their workers. Through the common-sense risk management suggested in this guide, the health, safety and welfare of the children and young people and those responsible for their care will be protected.



Children and young people must not have their learning and social experiences limited because of barriers caused by moving and handling. They should be supported through improvements in their well-being to become successful learners, confident people, effective contributors and responsible members of society.

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equality • choice • control



**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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