



<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>		<b>Sector Information Minute</b>	
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Target Audience:  
All FOD Inspectors

### **GUIDANCE FOR PROCURING EXPERTISE IN CLIENT/PATIENT HANDLING IN SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES**

This SIM details the procedures inspectors should follow to procure expertise in patient handling/movement. It provides details of professional of organisations which may have that capability.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1 During the 3-year period April 1997-2000, around 16,000 RIDDOR reportable manual handling injuries were notified to HSE by employers with SIC92 codes 85110-85140. This includes health and social care. Incident rates of up to 2,000 accidents/100k employed have been found at NHS hospital trusts. In the ambulance service, rates in excess of 5000/100k employed have been recorded. Employees working in social care are exposed to similar risks.

2 In their Strategic Plan 2001-2004, the Health and Safety Commission has designated both musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) as a priority programme, and health services as a priority sector.

3 Part of the strategy for health services is the inspection of risk management measures for MSD in selected NHS trusts and registered nursing homes. Operational inspectors are also being directed to visit local authority social services departments to assess arrangements for controlling risks of MSD arising from client handling.

4 Inspectors may require advice from experts in patient handling/movement to determine the suitability of risk control measures, and provide support for any enforcement action.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**

5 Specialist groups (SGs) can access wide range of medical, scientific and technical expertise both in house, and through their network of other HSE science and technology (S&T) specialist staff working in other D/Ds. Each SG has nominated a person, (nominated person ergonomics (NPE)), to act as point of contact for ergonomic,

manual handling issues. Where they themselves cannot provide assistance, they can facilitate access to a range of contracted fieldwork services.

6 [OC 26/8](#) details the science and technology portfolio, administered by FOD FSU1. In summary, the hierarchy for obtaining S&T support services, available via the divisional specialist groups is:

- nominated person;
- reactive support provided by HSL under the S&T Services Agreement;
- support via the Field Technical Services (FTS) Agreement with Serco Assurance (formerly AEA Technology Consulting);
- technical support under the Framework Agreements with Serco Assurance, WS Atkins, Amey Vectra, BOMEL Consortium, and NEL Consortium;

7 HSL does have ergonomists and the Framework Agreements are being used to provide some ergonomic advice on certain topics typically the handling of incapacitated passengers at airports and on airplanes.

8 However, should the above hierarchy be unable to meet your needs, then specialist extra mural support may be procured, via FSU1, by the Research Strategy Unit (RSU) using a **letter contract**. The following organisations, identified by Services Sector as being able to provide advice on MSD in health and care settings and expert evidence for litigation purposes, may be procured by this mechanism.

### **The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)**


9 The CSP maintains a list of persons able to advise on all aspects of patient handling. A copy is kept with Health Services Unit (HSU), Luton. Please contact Sally Williams on 508 4225, or any other member of the HSU team.

### **The Royal College of Nursing (RCN)**

10 The RCN similarly keeps a list of persons who can advise on all aspects of patient handling. HSU holds a list of those experts who are willing to provide that service.

### **The National Back Exchange (NBE)**

11 The NBE is a multidisciplinary specialist interest group. Some of the group are able to provide expert support over a wide range of patient handling/movement activities. The NBE is currently inviting members who undertake expert work in civil litigation cases, to forward their names for inclusion on a list. This will be kept at the Administration Office, National Back Exchange, Plantation House, The Bell Plantation, Towcester, Northants. NN12 6HN. Inspectors will be notified, when this list is available.

12  The aims of the NBE and a list of its regional offices, are given at [Appendix 1](#). Services group inspectors are encouraged to make contact with their regional officer in

order to familiarise themselves with NBE activities and also to promote the work of HSE.


### **Emergency Care Research Institute (ECRI)**

13 ECRI is a non-profit making health services research agency. It provides expertise, information and technical assistance, world-wide, on a wide range of clinical and non clinical safety matters in patient care. Initial contact can be made by e-mail to [info@ecri.org.uk](mailto:info@ecri.org.uk) or by telephone to either David Watson, Vice President for European Operations or John Roberts, Special Projects Co-ordinator on 01707 871511.

14 HSU is preparing a separate SIM on the use of ECRI experts for other patient care issues, particularly those involving equipment such as infusion devices.

### **ACTION BY INSPECTORS**

15 Inspectors, requiring expert advice, must always approach theirSG in the first instance, giving details of the assistance required.

 16 Heads of SG will always endeavour to source the required expertise, either in-house, or from HSL ergonomists, before going to the FTS, Framework Agreements, or letter contract. Typically, the information that will be used to set up such a contract is at [Appendix 2](#).

17 Whilst the professional organisations, detailed in paras 9-13 above, are able to provide the required expertise, inspectors may also be able to identify persons locally with relevant experience.

18 If the support required is solely for legal proceedings, this will be funded through the prosecution budget and arranged through the divisional support managers.

19 If the expert undertakes a joint visit, inspectors are reminded thatHSW Act s.20(2)(c) allows an inspector, appointed under s.19, to take with them on entering any premises, any other person duly authorised by the inspector's enforcing authority. Form LP 21 (subject file 190) should be completed before the visit. [OC 26/10](#) gives guidance on conflicts of interest and authorisation of contractors to enter premises unaccompanied by HSE.

20 This instruction will be reviewed after 12 months.

Date first issued: 17April 2002



### **APPENDIX 1 ([para 12](#))**

## NATIONAL BACK EXCHANGE (NBE)

### Aims

- 1 To promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas on back care;
- 2 To develop and promote common standards of training in safer handling;
- 3 To promote initiatives and act as a forum for providing evaluation and audit of current practice in all matters associated with back care;
- 4 To lobby employers to provide back care advisory services to reduce work related back problems; and
- 5 To provide support and advice to members.

### Regional Officers

**North Region** Groups: Belfast, Lancs. & Greater Manchester, Central Scotland, Northern & Yorkshire.

**Contact:** Heather Hetherington, 01768 898891.

**West Region** Groups: Devon & Cornwall, Oxford, Somerset, Avon & Glos, Swansea & West Wales, South Wales, North West & North Wales.

**Contact:** Mary Muir Berkshire 0118 963 6543.

**East Region** Groups: East & West Midlands, Essex, East Anglia & Beds.

**Contact:** Pat Alexander 01582 769943.

**South Region** Groups: Dorset, London, South London, Sussex & Southern, Kent.

**Contact:** Alison Griffiths 01983 534520.

**Central administration office** National Back Exchange, Plantation House, The Bell Plantation, Towcester, Northants. NN12 6HN. Tel: 01327 354701.



## APPENDIX 2 ([para 16](#))

### INFORMATION NEEDED FOR LETTER CONTRACT

1 Name/address of contractor

2 Telephone/fax number/email

3 Rate charged to HSE, eg £/hour, £/day

4 Any additional costs, eg travel and subsistence

5 Job title to be used on correspondence, eg name of employer and purpose of request such as, assessment of training

6 Job specification - a couple of sentences such as:

- Review statements and other information in order to give expert opinion on the adequacy of arrangements and procedures at.....
- If required, act as expert witness in legal proceedings arising from this case

7 Deliverables, eg report, attend meetings, attend court

8 Start date

9 End date

**TOP** **A**