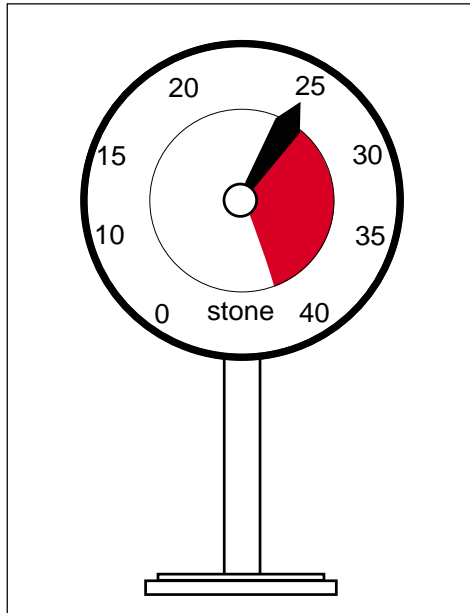


# A Guide to Managing the Moving & Handling Requirements of Extremely Heavy Clients



# Authors

Ken Cookson, SRN; RMN is Moving and Handling Co-ordinator for Aintree NHS Trust, Liverpool.

Debra Hall, MSc (OT); Dip COT; SROT is Moving and Handling Specialist with Chiltern Invadex Ltd, Bicester, Oxfordshire.

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# Contents

Terms and Definitions .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Client and Handler Safety .....	4
Key Personnel in the Management of Extremely Heavy Clients .....	5
Equipment Requirements .....	6
Equipment Considerations - A Checklist .....	7
Management Checklists .....	
For a Planned Admission to Hospital .....	8-9
For an Unplanned Admission and / or Clinical Emergency ..	10-11
For Discharge to Community Environment .....	12-13
Local Information .....	14-15
Notes .....	16



# Terms and Definitions

For the purpose of this booklet, the following terms and definitions are used:-

**Extremely heavy** applies to clients who weigh in excess of 25 stone (159kg). The use of this figure stems from observations that most standard moving and handling equipment tends to have a weight capacity of 25 stones (159kg)\*.

**Bariatric** refers to the field of medicine that focuses on the treatment and control of obesity and disease associated with obesity (Mosby's Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Dictionary, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1998).

The **Body Mass Index (BMI) System** may be used to determine if an individual is considered clinically obese, that is to say with a BMI of 35 or over. The BMI is calculated thus:

$$\frac{\text{Weight in Kilograms}}{(\text{Height in metres})^2}$$

**Moving and Handling** describes facilitating the movement of an individual from one position to another.

**Client** is used to describe the individual who requires moving and handling.

**Handler** is used for the person undertaking the moving or handling task.

**Manual Handling Operations** describe 'any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force (Manual Handling Operations Regulation 2[1])'.

A **load** is regarded as a discrete moveable object and can include a human patient receiving [medical] attention (Health and Safety Executive, 1992a).

\*The use of this weight arises from observations that most standard moving and handling equipment tends to have a weight capacity of 25 stones (159 kg). The same weight capacity is apparent on many other items of hospital equipment in daily use, such as the Kings Fund hospital bed.

# Introduction

The requirement for safe manual handling practices is inherent in legislation (Health and Safety Executive, 1992a). When examining the moving and handling requirements of their clients, healthcare practitioners must also ensure that a client's clinical needs are acknowledged and incorporated into their care plan(s). This will ensure that the client is handled safely, regardless of the clinical procedures, personnel and environments they may need to access as part of their episode of care.

Extremely heavy and clinically obese (bariatric) clients can present a number of additional challenges with regard to their management and treatment (Fazel, 1997). The very nature of obesity presents additional health risks. Amongst other difficulties, clients may be more likely to experience circulatory, respiratory and mobility problems. This, in turn, can result in clients requiring increased medical or healthcare intervention (Gallagher, 1999). However, the services that they need may not be adequately resourced to cope with their excessive weight or size. This can lead to such clients failing to receive the treatment and care required.

Failure to address the specific moving and handling needs of this client group may result in a range of adverse consequences for clients and / or staff (Cookson, 2000). Albeit unwittingly, clients may be discriminated against in the provision of health and social care, either because of their extraordinary needs drawing adverse attention, or because their particular needs have not been acknowledged. Lack of awareness of the special needs of such clients, together with inadequate equipment provision and unsuitable environments, can lead to dangerous practices, which compromise the dignity and safety of clients and staff. For example, using a piece of equipment with inadequate weight capacity can lead to client discomfort or injury, or equipment failure.

It follows that the safe moving and handling of this client group suggests a need for specialised equipment, practices and, sometimes, environmental adaptations. This will extend to the range of services and treatment facilities with which a client has contact. The appropriate management of extremely heavy clients may be addressed through the development of specific guidelines, providing a framework through which the needs of the client group can be identified, planned for and met.

# Client and Handler Safety

Safety is paramount when considering the moving and handling of any client, but especially one who is considered to be extremely heavy. Practitioners have a duty of care to their clients and employers have a requirement to ensure that their workplace, systems of work and equipment are safe. This is underpinned through UK legislation. Key factors include:

- The need for employers to provide a safe workplace, properly maintained with adequate access, egress and work space, and the need for safe systems of work and use of equipment (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974; Workplace Health and Safety Welfare Regulations, 1992b).
- The requirement for employers to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of all hazards and risks to employees, and others affected by their actions. To implement measures to prevent and reduce the risk of injury, establish safe systems and procedures, appoint competent people to help with the implementation of health and safety arrangements and provide adequate health and safety training (Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999).
- The requirement for employers to avoid manual handling tasks wherever possible, assess the risks presented by those that cannot be avoided, eliminate or reduce risks to the lowest level and provide information and education to employees concerning loads and proper techniques for handling them. Employees are required to co-operate with their employer and make full and proper use of any equipment or system of work provided by them (Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992).
- The requirement for employers and others, such as the self-employed, supervisors and managers, to provide suitable work equipment, as well as information, instructions and training for the people who use it. Such equipment must be suitable for its intended use, maintained in good repair and regularly inspected with records of the inspections kept (The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998).
- The requirement for proper planning of lifting operations and their execution by a competent person. Equipment used must be fit for purpose and include safety features that will prevent a person being exposed to danger by the equipment itself. The required methods of use should be clearly described and staff trained in them. Employers are expected to ensure the safe installation and ongoing maintenance and inspection of equipment (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998).

# Key Personnel in the Management of Extremely Heavy Client

A **Manual Handling Advisor** will usually undertake or assist with risk assessments and provide clear guidelines on how the client may be safely handled. They will determine what equipment is required and from where it may be obtained. They may also be responsible for training others in safe handling techniques and the use of equipment.

The **Hospital Bed Manager** should have an overview of the bed availability within a hospital or Trust. It may become apparent that some beds, wards or areas are more suited to the needs of the client, due to the resources available or their proximity to other services. It may be possible to 'free up' such a bed for the client.

The **Ward or Departmental Manager** is responsible for the safety of clients and staff on his area. They need to be aware of the particular needs of a bariatric client.

A **Tissue Viability Nurse** can provide specialist advice concerning the prevention and management of pressure ulcers, to which clients become susceptible as a consequence of weight, immobility or ill fitting equipment.

A **Dietician** may play a significant role in determining the nutritional requirements for the client, especially with regard to a suitable reducing diet as part of an overall management plan.

An **Occupational Therapist** may need to be involved in order to arrange appropriate living accommodation and equipment, for the client post discharge. This may also involve a **Housing Officer**.

Prior to and post-discharge, the **Community Care Manager** may have a role in liaising with various treatment team members to ensure that suitable living and care arrangements are available to the client, and that care and management plans are transferred to/from the community.

The **Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator** will have a key role to play in making appropriate plans and arrangements for the discharge of the client, who may require different facilities from those generally available e.g. transport.



# Equipment Requirements

The following list provides an indication of the range of equipment that may need to be provided in order to safely manage the client.

- Weighing scales
- Hospital trolley
- Bed
- Lateral transfer system
- Commode
- Accessible Shower / bath
- Shower chair / trolley
- Chair
- Hoist with compatible sling(s)
- Small moving and handling equipment (e.g. slide sheets, trapezium)
- Theatre table
- Examination couch / plinth
- Walking frame
- Wheelchair, preferably power-assisted
- Rehabilitation equipment
- Standing / walking jacket or harness
- Concealment trolley
- Mortuary tray
- Mortuary fridge
- Transport vehicles

## Equipment Availability

Employers need to adopt a system of work that protects employees from the risks of handling extremely heavy clients. Thus handlers must have access to appropriate moving and handling guidelines and equipment as and when they need it, including 'out of hours'. If equipment is not available, at the very least, a short-term management strategy should be apparent to ensure safety for client and handler(s).

Several options exist for obtaining equipment. The employer may already have suitable equipment on site and it may simply be a matter of arranging for this to be moved to the client or vice versa. If no equipment is available locally, it may be necessary to consider rental on a short or long-term basis. It may be possible to rent several pieces of equipment as a package, possibly including staff training and equipment maintenance. Ideally, the employer will already have established a management strategy that encompasses all eventualities, including equipment failure, emergency situations and supplier 'let-down'.

# Equipment Considerations

## - A Checklist

### Equipment Considerations – A Checklist

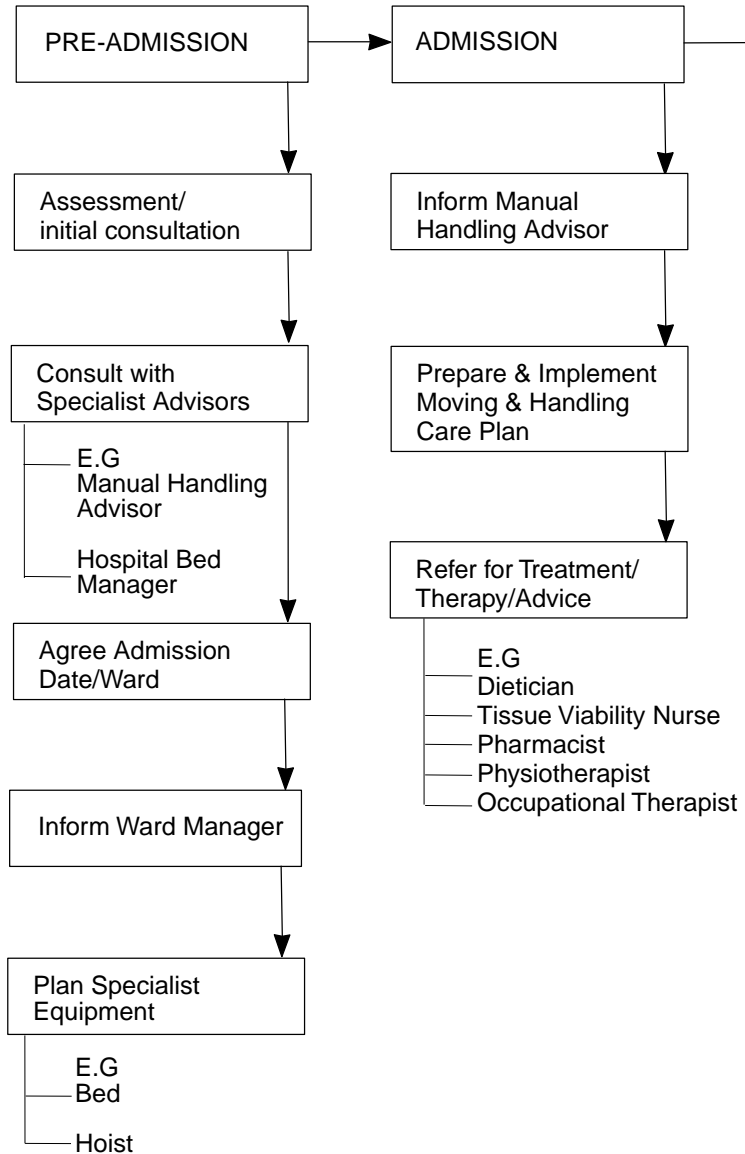
For every piece of equipment that will be used by the client, the handler needs to ascertain the following:

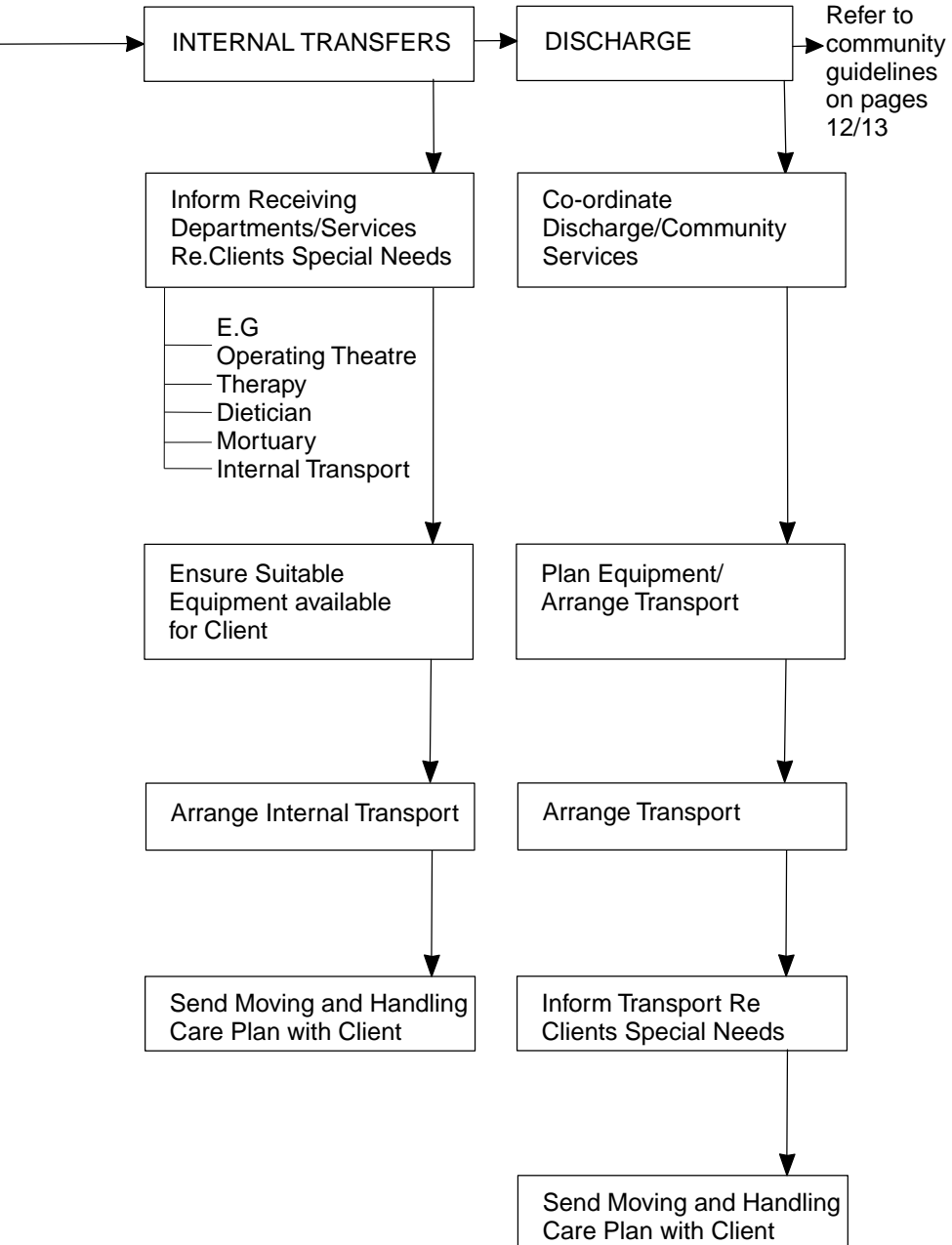
- Adequate weight capacity
- Adequate internal proportions (width and depth) to accommodate client
- Suitable height
- Braking / wheel locking mechanisms
- Robust construction
- Properly maintained and regularly serviced
- Compatible with the environment
- Compatible with other equipment in use

It is also appropriate to consider the following:

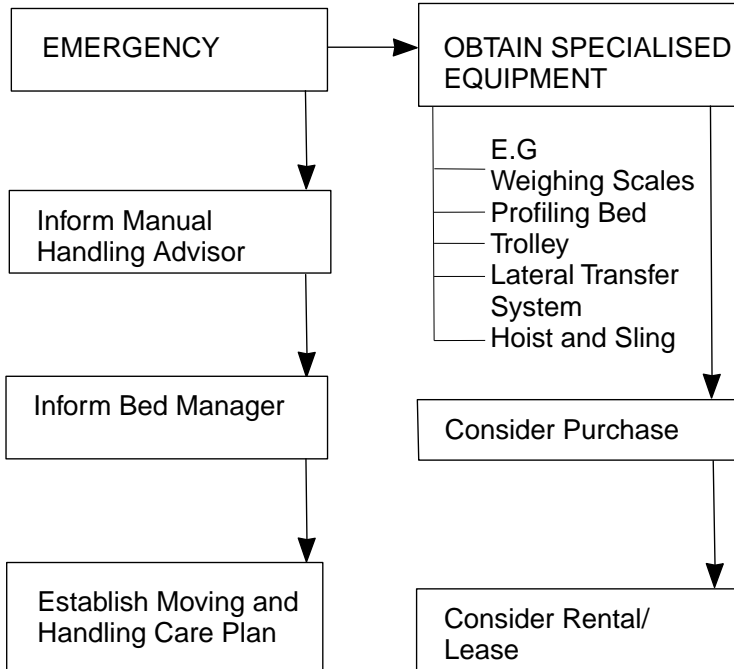
- Does the equipment have integral weighing scales?  
*This can provide accurate information about 'the load' and negate the need for a transfer.*
- Is the equipment power-assisted?  
*Handlers may be placed at risk when moving equipment into position.*
- Is the equipment adjustable?  
*Height and width adjustment may add to the versatility of equipment.*
- Do the arms and / or sides of the equipment detach?  
*Transfers may be simplified and handlers can avoid the need for reaching and stretching.*
- Does the equipment profile?  
*A fully profiling bed may negate the need for an armchair. A riser recliner chair may allow a client to stand and can encourage independence. Profiling equipment can also eliminate the need for some transfers and, in an emergency, may achieve a suitable position for CPR at speed.*
- Can the client operate the equipment?  
*It may be considered appropriate for the client to control the equipment by them self. Alternatively, practitioners may wish to prevent a client from operating the equipment independently.*

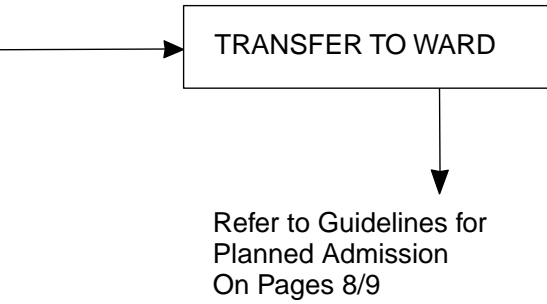
# Management Checklist for a Planned Hospital Admission



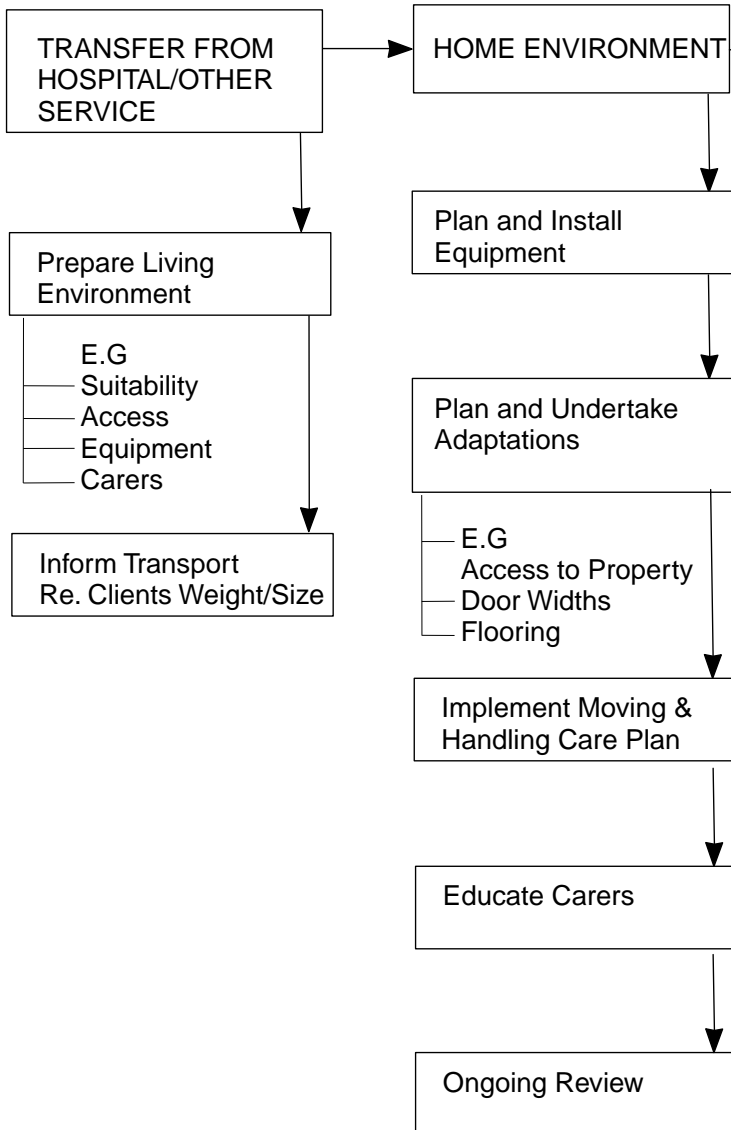


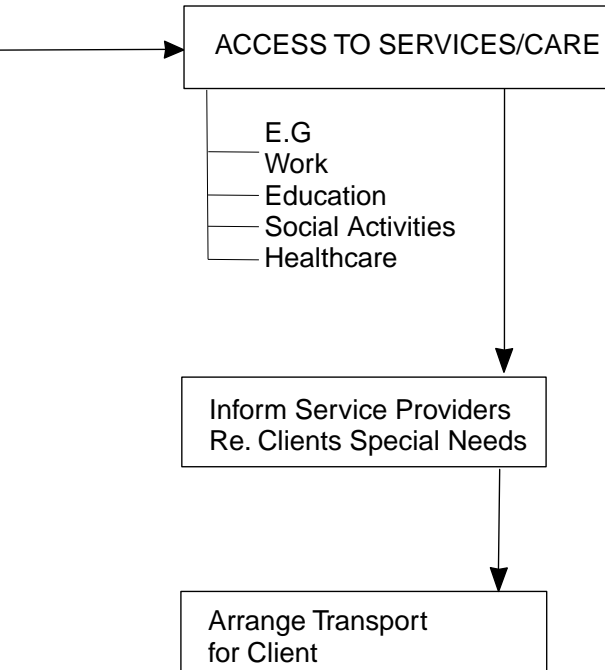
# Management Checklist for an Unplanned Hospital Admission and/or Clinical Emergency





# Management Checklist for Discharge and Community Aftercare







# Local Information

Please use this page to note information that is useful to you locally.

***Manual Handling Advisor:***

Name:.....

Contact details: .....

***Means of weighing client:***

What: .....

Where .....

***Equipment Required:***

***Procedures for obtaining equipment:***

***Relevant Policies, Procedures, Systems of Work, Protocols and where kept:***

***Other information:***

# Notes

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## About Chiltern Invadex

Leading supplier and manufacturer of Moving, Handling, Showering and Bathing equipment, Chiltern Invadex provides a range of products and services to aid mobility and help elderly and disabled people maintain independence. With its own installation and service teams, Chiltern Invadex offers a one-stop-shop for clients from initial enquiry, design, specification and installation, through to the maintenance of equipment in use.

**Clinical articles**

Clinical articles covering a variety of subjects can be accessed at <http://www.chilterninvadex.co.uk>