

Specialist Equipment Policy

Our Vision

Building better lives through social care and housing in local communities.

Our Mission

We co-design and deliver services that offer innovative social care solutions and support people to thrive.

Our Values

We are
caring and
compassionate



We are
inclusive
and **trusted**



We focus on
excellence
and
innovation



We work in
partnership
and are
one-team



Cally Yard
439 Caledonian Road
London N7 9BG
T: 0333 010 4600

lookahead.org.uk



Look Ahead
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

Quick Links

[Specialist Equipment Graphic](#)
[Walking Frame/Rollator Checks Guidance](#)
[Manual Wheelchair Checks Guidance](#)
[Electric Wheelchair Checks Guidance](#)
[Bath/Shower Chair Checks Guidance](#)
[Commode Checks Guidance](#)
[Standing Transfer Aids Checks Guidance](#)
[Profiling Bed Checks Guidance](#)
[Bedrails Checks Guidance](#)
[Active Mattress Checks Guidance](#)
[Stair Lift Checks Guidance](#)
[Ceiling and Mobile Hoist Checks Guidance](#)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of our customers, employees, contractors and visitors to our services and offices. To support this commitment we will ensure that all specialist equipment used in our services and offices is:
- suitable and safe for its intended purpose
 - correctly installed, maintained and subject to regular inspection by the responsible party
 - operated only by individuals who are appropriately trained and competent
 - managed in strict accordance with the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 ('LOLER') and the Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 ('PUWER')
- 1.2 We recognise that the safe use of lifting and specialist equipment is essential to prevent injury, ill-health or damage to property. This policy establishes clear standards and procedures for the procurement, use, inspection, maintenance and management of specialist equipment used by our customers.
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 – Regulation 15: Premises and Equipment**
- 1.3 This regulation applies to CQC registered services and requires that all premises and equipment are safe, suitable, and properly maintained. It includes ensuring that specialist or community equipment is in good working order, regularly inspected, used safely, and that any associated risks are identified and effectively managed.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff, agency workers, contractors and volunteers who:
- operate, supervise or maintain specialist equipment
 - manage – or are responsible for – equipment under LOLER and PUWER.
 - are involved in lifting operations or the use of specialist equipment.

- 1.5 This policy also applies to equipment provided by external agencies – eg NHS, Occupational Therapists, customers’ families – used within our services. While we are not responsible for the servicing or maintenance of externally provided equipment, it is our duty to ensure that such equipment is not visibly damaged or unsafe to use. The [Customer Holidays & Day Trips Policy](#) sets out our approach to the use of mobility vehicles.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Under the Care Act 2014, ‘community equipment’ (aids and minor adaptations) means any aid or minor adaptation to property that assists with supporting a customer at home or in their daily living. For the purpose of this policy the term **‘specialist equipment’** refers – but is not limited to:

- **Mobility Aids, eg:**
 - Walking frames – Zimmer frames and rollators
 - Walking sticks and crutches
 - Wheelchairs – manual and powered
 - Mobility scooters
- **Transfer and Positioning Equipment, eg:**
 - Hoists – mobile and ceiling mounted
 - Transfer boards and sliding sheets
 - Standing aids
 - Adjustable beds and profiling beds
- **Bathroom and Toilet Adaptations, eg:**
 - Grab rails
 - Raised toilet seats
 - Shower chairs and stools
 - Bath lifts and bath boards
 - Commode chairs
- **Daily Living Aids, eg:**
 - Reachers and grabbers
 - Dressing aids – button hooks and sock aids
 - Specialist seating – pressure-relieving chairs
- **Assistive Technology, eg:**
 - Environmental control systems – voice-activated lights, smart home devices
 - Communication aids – speech-generating devices
 - Monitoring systems – fall detectors, seizure monitors
 - Telecare alarms – personal emergency response systems
- **Pressure Care Equipment, eg:**
 - Pressure-relieving mattresses and cushions
 - Dynamic air mattresses
 - Heel protectors

- **Sensory Support Equipment, eg:**
 - Hearing aids
 - Visual aids – magnifiers, glasses or talking clocks etc
 - Tactile markers for household items
- **Specialist Medical Support Equipment, eg:**
 - Nebulisers
 - Suction machines
 - Feeding pumps
 - Oxygen concentrators
- **Minor Adaptations, eg:**
 - Door widening
 - Threshold ramps
 - Lever taps
 - Stair rails
- **Any other equipment designed to:**
 - Promote independence and dignity
 - Reduce risk of injury
 - Support workers by making transfers and daily tasks safer
 - Enable customers to remain in their accommodation longer

- 2.2 **‘LOLER’** refers to UK regulations that cover the safe use, inspection and planning of lifting equipment and lifting operations.
- 2.3 **‘PUWER’** refers UK regulations covering the safe provision and use of work equipment, including specialist equipment, ensuring it is suitable, properly maintained and safely used.
- 2.4 A **‘competent person’** is an individual with the necessary knowledge, training and experience to identify defects and assess their significance.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

- 3.1 **Heads of Service** are responsible for:
- Ensuring that adequate resources are available for compliance with LOLER and PUWER
 - Reviewing and monitoring compliance reports and annual audits
- 3.2 Our **Property Compliance** and **Governance Teams** manage the compliance programme and the LOLER contract with our insurers.
- 3.3 The **Health & Safety Team** are responsible for:
- Providing advice and guidance on regulations relating to specialist equipment and ensuring staff understand their responsibilities under PUWER and LOLER.

149.00_Specialist-Equipment

- Conducting audits across services to ensure compliance with pre-use checks and verifying that servicing and maintenance are carried out by the responsible party through a competent person.

3.4 **Service Managers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff are trained and competent to use equipment safely
- Liaising with external agencies to report equipment faults or maintenance needs and holding them accountable for meeting their statutory and regulatory obligations,
- Ensuring that statutory inspection and maintenance schedules are adhered to
- Removing unsafe or defective equipment from use immediately
- Maintaining and retaining records of all inspections and maintenance
- Checking that all new equipment is CE/UKCA marked (where applicable)
- Risk assessing all new equipment before it is introduced and informing the Health & Safety and Compliance Teams of any new equipment so that it can be added to the relevant compliance programme.
- Ensuring that specialist equipment is installed by a competent person

3.5 **Employees and operators** are responsible for:

- Using equipment only for its intended use
- Completing pre-use checks before each use and maintaining records of each check.
- Reporting defects immediately to the Service Manager or Team Leader
- Following safe systems of work and complying with any training provided.

3.6 **Competent Persons** are responsible for:

- Carrying out LOLER and PUWER inspections at required intervals and advising on any corrective actions required
- Providing written reports of examinations and highlighting defects requiring remedial action

4. **Inspection, Testing & Maintenance**

4.1 Detailed guidance for visual pre-use checks are linked to this policy for different types of equipment most commonly located in our services.

Equipment Owned by Look Ahead

- 4.2 Equipment covered by LOLER regulations will be thoroughly examined by a competent person before its first use and every 6 months for equipment lifting people or every 12 months for other lifting equipment. Records must be retained for at least 2 years by the Compliance Team who oversee the servicing programme.
- 4.3 Equipment must be serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions, usage and the risk assessment.

Equipment Provided by External agencies

- 4.4 We will only accept responsibility for the ongoing inspection, maintenance and repair of specialist equipment provided by external agencies – eg the NHS, Occupational Health or family members – in exceptional circumstances. Where this is deemed necessary, this must be approved by the Head of Service. We will be clear with the provider that they are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the equipment and any costs associated with it.
- 4.5 External agencies hold the sole responsibility for the servicing and maintenance of specialist equipment under the relevant regulations. As such we will not take any responsibility for undertaking compliance checks on equipment that does not belong to us. Where external agencies install equipment in our buildings they must gain permission to do so, in writing, from the Property Services Team before any such work takes place.
- 4.6 Staff must conduct a visual safety check before any specialist equipment is used and record this. Any defects must be reported to the Team Leader or Service Manager immediately. Staff must not attempt to repair or maintain specialist equipment themselves.

5. Training & Competence

- 5.1 All staff will be trained in the safe use of all relevant specialist equipment. Refresher training will be provided at least every 3 years or sooner if the equipment is changed, modified or if any incidents occur that would prompt re-training.
- 5.2 Any external agency (including equipment manufacturers) that have been given permission to install specialist equipment in any of our buildings will be responsible for providing the relevant training to staff on site. They will also be responsible for providing training manuals and/or video guides for staff.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

It is the Policy Owner's responsibility to update the Asset & Liability Register with any s and data arising as a result of this policy.

We will comply with our Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy which can be found by clicking [Here](#) or visiting our website at www.lookahead.org.uk

Inclusion and Diversity

Services provided should be appropriate to the child and not discriminate for any reason, including - but not limited to - disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture or lifestyle. We will strive to ensure action taken is sensitive to and takes account of the child's gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race.

Policy Sign Off and Ownership

Document Name	140.00_Specialist-Equipment
Version	1.0
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A
Who was consulted?	Senior Safeguarding & Quality Managers Head of Service (Complex LD) Head of Compliance Head of Repairs & Voids Senior Information Governance Officer Head of Service (LD/MH) Head of Positive Behaviour Support
Approved By/Date	Policy Group, 18 March 2026
Date for Review	March 2029
Author	Health & Safety Manager
Policy Owner	Executive Director of Group Operations & Customer Experience
Related Policies/Procedures	Asset & Liability Register Customer Holiday & Day Trips Policy
Relevant Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 ('LOLER') Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 ('PUWER') Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 - Regulation 15: Premises and Equipment

Version History

Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author
1.0	March 2026	New Policy	