

**PWYLLGOR IECHYD A DIOGELWCH  
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

<b>DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:</b>	10 September 2024
<b>TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	Health and Safety Update
<b>CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:</b>	James Severs, Executive Director of Allied Health Professions and Health Science
<b>SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Tim Harrison, Head of Health, Safety & Security Adam Springthorpe, Health & Safety Manager

**Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)**

**Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)**

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

**ADRODDIAD SCAA  
SBAR REPORT**

**Sefyllfa / Situation**

This report is presented to the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) to provide an assurance update on compliance with both the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 and the Work at Height Regulations 2005 within Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB).

This report also includes information on a governance review and items escalated from the Trade Union Health and Safety Group.

**Cefndir / Background**

**Control of Vibration**

Exposure to vibration for prolonged periods, through regular working with hand-held power tools, such as concrete breakers, percussion drills, and hand-guided equipment such as lawn mowers, trimmers, hedge trimmers, or by holding materials being processed by machines such as pedestal grinders, can have adverse effects on the hands and arms of users. Without effective controls, workers using such equipment may suffer various forms of damage, including impaired circulation and damage to the nerves or muscles.

Although there are many names for the injuries caused by excessive exposure to vibration, such as “vibration induced white finger”, they are collectively known as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), as well as specific diseases such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

The primary cause of HAVS, is from work that involves holding vibrating tools or work equipment. The risk depends on both the vibration magnitude of the piece of equipment and how long people are exposed to that vibration, in effect a daily ‘vibration dose’. Other factors that have an effect on dose include grip, push and other forces used, exposure pattern, pre-existing conditions, individual susceptibility etc.

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005, requires HDdUHB to protect employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks posed to staff when working with

vibratory tools in the workplace. HDdUHB aims to achieve this by putting measures in place to control vibration exposure levels at work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

As reported to the HSC in March 2023, Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) received two Improvement Notices from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2019 for their management of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), mainly regarding risk assessment and training. These Improvement Notices were confirmed as completed in April 2020, however the HSE's investigation into the historic cases continued, resulting in PTHB being fined £160,000 + Costs (£5599) + Fees for Intervention (FFI) (c £10,000) for their HAVS-related failures. They will also likely face personal injury claims following the prosecution.

### Work at Height

Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries in the UK. The Work at Height Regulations 2005, provide a legal framework to protect people who work at height and aim to prevent death and injury resulting from a fall from height. 'Work at height' is defined as work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

The regulations require HDdUHB to protect employees that work at height, those that could be affected by work being undertaken at height and others who may be contracted to work at height on Health Board premises.

Under the Regulations, when selecting controls to manage the risks associated with work at height, HDdUHB must apply the hierarchy of controls as set out in the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Work at Height Regulations 2005. HDdUHB should therefore avoid work at height where it is reasonably practicable to do so. Where work at height cannot be avoided, all activities must be properly planned and organised, forming part of a risk assessment and safe system of work.

All work must also be suitably supervised and carried out by competent people, with the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. Additionally, HDdUHB should:

- Provide employees with suitable information, instruction and training;
- Ensure that equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, suitably maintained and checked regularly, including periodic inspections by a competent person.

Falls from height are rare within the Health Board, however a RIDDOR reportable 'over-7-day injury' in 2023, highlighted improvements that could be made to existing work at height arrangements in HDdUHB.

### Asesiad / Assessment

#### Control of Vibration

Work already completed, as reported at the last update to the Committee in March 2023:

- The Health and Safety Team met with their equivalents in PTHB to discuss the circumstances that led to the issuing of their Improvement Notices and led to their eventual prosecution.
- Initial assurance work completed:
- Confirmation that HDdUHB no longer have any employees whose main duties are grounds maintenance (which were the basis of the PTHB prosecution). These tasks are primarily undertaken by third party grounds maintenance contractors.

- Confirmation from the Occupational Health Lead that there are currently no known cases of HAVS-related conditions within the Health Board according to their records.
- Confirmed that the All-Wales Full Occupational Health Questionnaire already includes the question: *'What are the specific requirements of the job which require health surveillance?'* and a specific selective choice of *'Hand Arm Vibration, specify vibration tool'*.

Work completed since the last Committee update:

- HAVS Management Training completed by the Health and Safety Team, Estates Operations Compliance Team and an Occupational Health (OH) Representative.
- A Control of Vibration at Work Policy was developed and approved by the Committee in September 2023. This includes an advice sheet for equipment purchasers with suggested questions to ask tool manufacturers when investing in new equipment.
- Template created for Estates Managers to log their staff that require health surveillance for HAVS. This has been completed for all four sites and supplied to OH and health surveillance questionnaires sent to all identified staff. The opportunity was taken to expand the health surveillance requirements to also include noise, respiratory health, vaccinations and those staff designated as confined spaces entrants/rescuers.
- The Health and Safety Team have visited all 4 Estates Departments and identified every vibrating tool in each location, creating a comprehensive inventory. This has then been used to identify manufacturer indicative vibration magnitude values for every tool where available, then used to convert these values into simplified HSE Exposure Points.

Current Work:

- Identifying staff at risk of exposure to vibration. The Health and Safety Team are meeting with Estates Leads at each site to look at tasks undertaken and considering the vibration values now identified for each tool, taking a risk-based approach. If necessary, monitoring of individual exposure duration (trigger time) will be undertaken.
- Where identified by the above risk assessments, replace any high-risk vibration equipment or accessories (i.e. blades, drill-bits etc.) with lower-risk equipment.
- The Health and Safety Team are currently designing a training presentation to be delivered by the Estates Compliance Officer(s). The training will provide all Estates vibrating tool users with suitable information, instruction & training on the control of vibration and the associated risks.
- Following the findings of PTHB the Health Board has decided to focus on Estates staff in the first instance as they were identified by PTHB as the highest-risk users. Once the current Estates work is completed, the work on HAVS will be extended to consider other areas potentially using vibrating equipment, such as Hotel Services, Dental staff, Plaster-Room staff and Mortuary / Post-mortem staff.

### Work at Height

Work already completed, as reported at the last update to the Committee in November 2023:

- All Estates staff that undertake high-risk / long-duration work at height had received suitable and sufficient training in work at height.
- A generic risk assessment was in place covering all work at height, particularly work on fragile surfaces.
- The Health and Safety Team had already provided advice and guidance to departments that regularly undertake low-risk / short duration work at height, such as Pharmacy.

- Work at Height and Persons / Objects Falling was already a section of questions on the Workplace Inspection Checklist Form which all managers are recommended to undertake for the work areas that they manage every six months.
- An investigation had been undertaken by the Health and Safety Team into an Estates fall from height incident that occurred in July 2023. The report had been issued to the Estates Department and made a number of recommendations.
- The Health and Safety Team had developed and distributed an Estates-specific Local Safety Notice in which it highlighted the risk of working near fragile surfaces.

Work completed since the last Committee update:

- A work at height working group was established to formalise the Health Board's work at height arrangements. The group included representatives of Health and Safety and the Operations Compliance Team in Estates. This has since merged to be a working group covering work at height, vibration and noise and continues to meet quarterly.
- The new Safe Working at Height Policy was developed with key stakeholders and approved at the Committee in November 2023. The Policy formalises the Health Board's arrangements for the management of work at height.
- A 'Team Brief' was included in the Policy, which was designed to be delivered via local management, with the purpose of ensuring that all employees undertaking low-risk, short duration work at height receive suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training on the management of work at height. This brief has been promoted at all Quality and Safety / Governance Group attended by the team and also included on the Quarter 3-4 Health, Safety and Security Team 7 Minute Briefing.
- Ladder Inspector Training has been completed by selected staff from Estates Maintenance, Estates Operations Compliance and the Health and Safety Team. The training allows the Health Board to ensure that work at height equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job, suitably maintained and periodically inspected by a competent person.
- The Site Operations Teams now ensure that job cards are raised for all work high-risk / long-duration work at height by both the Estates Department and contractors, and that the correct Work at Height Permits are completed for every job, regardless of duration.
- A new fence (with an escape gate) has been erected near to where the fall from height incident occurred (see adjacent photo). This prevents access to the fire escape stairs, as concerns were raised that the roof could potentially be accessed by unwanted persons.
- The Operations Compliance Team have conducted toolbox talk-type training sessions for all Estates Maintenance staff covering both risk assessment and working at height.



Current Work:

- The newly trained competent Ladder Inspectors continue to identify and inspect all work at height equipment, including the tagging of equipment with unique identifiers and the development of a full database of work at height equipment across HDdUHB. It has been identified that Ladder Inspector training will need to be extended to include the Facilities Team, as they also have/use a selection of work at height equipment.

- The Estates Site Operations Team and the Operational Compliance Team are working together to review and improve their work at height risk assessments and developing new safe systems of work / procedures for work for all roofs that need to be accessed. Risk assessments also now include the risks associated with working on Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Drone surveys are currently underway to further improve the risk assessments. All roof surfaces will be categorised into High / Medium / Low risks due to their fragility and shown on a drone image to support the risk assessment and subsequent procedures needed.
- Additionally, Operational Compliance Team are working with the design team to develop an Estates Maintenance portal. This portal will serve as a central location for storing all Estates-related Health and Safety files, making them easily accessible at the click of a button.
- New working at height courses have been scheduled for all recent Estates new starters.

### **Health and Safety Governance Review**

As announced at the July Committee, the Executive Lead for Health, Safety and Security has passed to the Executive Director of Allied Health Professions and Health Science. Following on from this change, the Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary is assisting the new Executive Director in a review of the Health & Safety governance arrangements under the current Health & Safety Committee. Further details will be shared as this work progresses.

### **Items Escalated from the Trade Union Health and Safety Group – 12/08/2024**

At the August 2024 meeting Trade Union Health and Safety Group three issues were raised by Trade Union representatives (TU Reps) for escalation to the Health and Safety Committee.

- DiffX. Continued discussions on member concerns. See separate paper on the agenda on DiffX.
- Concerns were raised around mechanisms in place for dealing with bullying and/or harassment in HDdUHB. Specifically ensuring fair hearings, support processes for those raising concerns and training for managers in dealing with concerns raised. The Health and Safety Team are liaising with Workforce / Organisational Development (OD) / Culture colleagues to ensure that these concerns receive due consideration via the correct channels.
- Concerns were raised from members about incident location coding on Datix. This specifically related to the difficulty of correctly recording where an incident occurred when reporting an incident. Concerns were raised that staff may not complete the Datix if they cannot find the correct incident location. The Health and Safety Team relayed these concerns to the Datix Team for their consideration, and their response is included below:
  - I can confirm that this is being discussed across Wales and was recently discussed with RL Datix in a workshop in Cardiff that was attended by all the Local Leads across Wales and their teams. HDdUHB have submitted a development request form to the Once for Wales Team to amend the way the service and location are captured.

In the meantime, we have developed location mapping guides to assist staff members. These are uploaded to our SharePoint page and we direct staff

members to these when we receive queries and during training. The guides can be found here: [Datix user guides and templates](#)

### Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Health & Safety Committee is asked to:

#### **TAKE ASSURANCE**

- That positive progress has been demonstrated towards compliance with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 and the Work at Height Regulations 2005.
- That concerns raised via Trade Union Representatives have been listened to and relayed to the appropriate teams for due consideration.

### **Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)**

#### **Objectives: (must be completed)**

Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	2.1 Provide assurance around the UHB arrangements for ensuring the health, safety, welfare and security of all employees and of those who may be affected by work-related activities, such as patients, members of the public, volunteers, contractors etc.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	N/A
Parthau Ansawdd: Domains of Quality <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	1. Safe
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality: <a href="#">Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)</a>	6. All Apply
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	Not Applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	8 Estates plans
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: <a href="#">Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022</a>	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS

**Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol:  
Further Information:**

Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Contained within the body of the report and associated Health Board policies.
Rhestr Termau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report.
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Ansawdd Iechyd a Diogelwch: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Health and Safety Committee:	Health and Safety Advisory Group Work at Height, Vibration and Noise Working Group

<b>Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)</b>	
<b>Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:</b>	There will be costs to procure further equipment / safe access systems to facilitate safe high-risk / long-duration work at height by Estates Department staff. Where work cannot be safely undertaken by Estates Department staff, there will be costs in using specialist contractors to complete the work. There will also be ongoing training costs. HAVS assessment and monitoring may also have associated cost implications.
<b>Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:</b>	There is a positive impact on staff and patient safety, health and wellbeing through compliance with health and safety regulations.
<b>Gweithlu: Workforce:</b>	Potential for adverse future staffing impacts if this legislation is not complied with as it relates to employee safety.
<b>Risg: Risk:</b>	Risk to Health and Safety management.
<b>Cyfreithiol: Legal:</b>	A breach of health and safety regulations can result in the issue of prohibition or improvement notices or criminal proceedings.
<b>Enw Da: Reputational:</b>	Prosecutions and claims due to breaches in legislation or personal injury claims can lead to negative publicity.
<b>Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:</b>	Not Applicable.
<b>Cydraddoldeb: Equality:</b>	No evidence gathered to indicate a negative impact on any protected group/s.  Evidence gathered indicates a positive impact on the protected characteristics of human rights and pregnancy / maternity by providing a safer workplace.