

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

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	11 November 2025
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Heavy Patient Compliance (Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992)
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	James Severs, Executive Director of Allied Health Professions and Health Science
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Jeni Bryant, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

ADRODDIAD SCAA

SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

To assess the current provision of bariatric patient care within Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB), a review of the current role of the Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist is being undertaken with a view to retaining and formalising the role, exploring the expansion of the role and recognising this role as essential for ensuring patient safety and protecting staff wellbeing. The following report outlines the progress of this work to date.

The prevalence of obesity in Wales is rising. As the number of patients with obesity and severe/bariatric obesity increases, so too does the demand for specialist equipment (beds, hoists, slings, seating, mattresses etc.) capable of providing safe, dignified, and effective care. At present, HDdUHB lacks a substantive dedicated role to coordinate advice, risk assessment, procurement, training, and maintenance related to bariatric equipment. This has previously led to inefficiencies, variation in patient and staff safety, and potential non-compliance with Welsh Government policy and regulatory standards.

This report advises on establishing a substantive Senior Nurse Specialist (0.6 WTE) with defined responsibilities and governance, to address these gaps. The existing 0.2 temporary role has seen outcomes to include improved patient and staff safety, cost efficiencies, more equitable access to appropriate equipment, and enhanced compliance with standards.

The purpose of this report is to examine the need for, and benefits of a Senior Nurse Specialist role within HDdUHB to coordinate and advise on equipment. It includes data on obesity in Wales and specifically in Hywel Dda, relevant policy context, assessment of current challenges, and actionable recommendations to improve patient care, staff safety, and operational efficiency.

Cefndir / Background

According to Public Health Wales data, about 60% of adults (aged 16+) in Wales are overweight or obese. Approximately 25–26% of adults are classified as obese (Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30+).

The Child Measurement Programme for 2022–23 shows that among children aged four to five, across Wales 11.4% are obese; in Hywel Dda UHB specifically, 28.9% of four- and five- year-old children are classified as overweight or obese.

These figures indicate a sizeable and growing patient population in need of bariatric care and associated equipment. They also imply increasing pressure on health services, facilities, staff, and budget.

This role aligns with legal, regulatory, and strategic priorities, below are key policies and standards:

- Health and Care Standards (Wales), Standard 2.9: Medical Devices, Equipment and Diagnostic Systems. Requires health services to ensure appropriate selection, procurement, maintenance of equipment, training of staff, monitoring of equipment faults, etc.
- Health, Safety & Manual Handling Legislation: Employers are legally obliged to reduce risk in manual handling, including patient handling, through risk assessments, appropriate equipment, training etc.
- Medical Devices Regulations (UK): All medical devices, including bariatric equipment, must meet legal safety, performance, maintenance, post-market surveillance obligations.
- Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, particularly the duty of quality: NHS organisations in Wales have to continuously improve safety, effectiveness, experience of care.

Welsh Government Strategies:

- Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales (2019) – strategic framework tackling obesity prevention and weight management.
- All Wales Weight Management Pathway (2021) – mapping from early intervention to specialist support.

These policies create obligations and expectations that patient care is safe, equipment is suitable and maintained, staff are trained, and services are responsive to population needs.

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease as well as some types of cancer. This will make the overweight and obese population more likely to need to access healthcare services. In 2022, it was acknowledged that HDdUHB needed to understand its current provision of services, and how, if necessary, they could be improved to meet the statutory duty and standards listed above.

Asesiad / Assessment

The temporary appointment of a Senior Nurse Specialist at 0.2 WTE has provided an invaluable contribution to the safe, efficient, and cost-effective management of bariatric equipment across the Health Board. In this capacity, the postholder has assumed oversight of the bariatric equipment library, successfully rationalised the procurement and hire process, introducing streamlined pathways, and embedding clinical expertise into equipment selection and deployment. The additional capacity has been achieved through an increase of 0.2 WTE in this role, made possible by the post holder's employment on the nurse bank.

Prior to the introduction of this role, bariatric equipment provision was fragmented, inconsistent, and often reactive. Wards and departments sourced equipment independently, sometimes through multiple external providers, leading to duplication, delays, and variation in the both quality of patient care and cost. The absence of centralised oversight meant that equipment tracking, maintenance, and return processes were poorly coordinated.

The Senior Nurse Specialist has addressed these inefficiencies by implementing a single point of accountability for all bariatric equipment for both the Health Board's equipment library and external hire. By consolidating external hires to a sole provider, Medstrom, the service has reduced administrative complexity and created a uniform process for equipment requests. Staff now have clear lines of escalation, standardised ordering procedures, and assurance that the equipment supplied meets both clinical and regulatory standards.

Operationally, this has translated into improved turnaround times for equipment delivery, better utilisation of existing Health Board stock, and fewer delays to patient care. Wards and community teams have reported increased confidence in accessing appropriate equipment, when needed. Notably, the establishment of a centralised bariatric equipment library has enabled systematic cataloguing, maintenance, and deployment, replacing the previous ad hoc approach.

One of the most significant outcomes attributable to this role is the achievement of an estimated £213,861 annual cost avoidance (table 1). This figure has been realised through multiple approaches:

- **Supplier consolidation:** By limiting external hires to a single provider, duplication of charges has been eliminated and favourable contractual terms have been secured.
- **Reduced reliance on short-term hire:** Through effective stock management and proactive equipment planning, the organisation has reduced avoidable ad hoc hire requests, many of which resulted in inflated costs.
- **Optimised utilisation:** The library model allows equipment to be redeployed quickly once no longer required by a patient, avoiding unnecessary new hire costs.
- **Staff guidance:** By providing expert advice, the Senior Nurse Specialist has ensured that the correct equipment is requested first time, preventing costly errors and returns.

Medstrom Costs Avoided (Jan 25 - Jun 25)

Equipment	Requests	Days	Hire	Collection & Delivery	Total Cost
Bed & Mattress	24	1,207	101,625	1,680	103,305
Bed	3	224	13,440	210	13,650
R/R chair	5	181	4,778	350	5,128
Chair	6	360	4,320	420	4,740
Mattress	5	154	3,788	350	4,138
Bed, Mattress & R/R chair	1	14	1,495	70	1,565
Commode	4	124	893	280	1,173
Totals	48	2,264	130,340	3,360	133,700

Hywel Dda Bariatric Library Costs (Jan 25 - Jun 25)

Expenditure	Total Cost
Delivery & Collection (Just Wales)	- 5,350
Storage (Just Wales)	- 7,200
0.4 WTE Band 7	- 14,219
Total Costs	- 26,769

6 Month Cost Avoidance **106,930**

Annual Cost Avoidance **213,861**

Table 1: Shows the cost avoidance realised over a 12-month period

This cost avoidance is particularly notable given the modest investment in the temporary role itself (0.2 WTE). The scale of the financial benefit strongly suggests that without continuation of the role, previous inefficiencies and escalating hire costs would quickly re-emerge.

The provision of appropriate bariatric equipment is not only a logistical and financial challenge, but a matter of patient safety, dignity, and equitable care. Patients with bariatric needs are at higher risk of pressure injuries, falls, and manual handling incidents if not supported by equipment designed to their weight and size. Prior to the intervention of this role, staff occasionally experienced difficulties in sourcing suitable equipment promptly, resulting in clinical risk and delays to care delivery.

Through the leadership of the Senior Nurse Specialist, the organisation now benefits from expert clinical oversight of equipment suitability. Staff are supported in selecting items that match patient requirements, reducing the likelihood of inappropriate provision. Furthermore, the role ensures that the equipment supplied complies with infection prevention standards, safe working load regulations, and quality checks.

Equally significant is the benefit to staff wellbeing. Bariatric care often involves complex manual handling, which places staff at risk of musculoskeletal injury if the correct equipment is not readily available. The Senior Nurse Specialist has delivered guidance, training, and reassurance to staff, ensuring that safe systems of work are maintained. Feedback indicates that staff feel more confident when caring for bariatric patients, knowing that they have access to timely expert advice and reliable equipment.

The role of the Senior Nurse Specialist extends beyond operational improvements to broader organisational priorities. NHS frameworks emphasise the importance of delivering high-quality,

efficient, and equitable care, while reducing unwarranted variation and financial waste. The bariatric equipment library initiative embodies these principles by ensuring that a vulnerable patient group receives safe, consistent, and dignified care, while avoiding unnecessary expenditure.

Furthermore, the postholder's input provides a model of how specialist nursing expertise can deliver measurable system-wide benefits. By combining clinical knowledge with operational oversight, the Senior Nurse Specialist has bridged gaps between procurement, frontline care, and strategic planning. This is particularly valuable given increasing demand for bariatric services nationally, driven by rising prevalence of obesity.

The temporary Senior Nurse Specialist role has delivered demonstrable improvements in the management of bariatric equipment, achieving substantial cost avoidance, improving patient and staff safety, and aligning strongly with organisational priorities. Despite its limited 0.2 WTE capacity, the role has acted as a catalyst for service efficiency, provider rationalisation, and culture change.

The assessment clearly indicates that continuation of this role is essential to maintain current gains and drive further improvements. The cost avoidance of £213,861 per annum provides robust financial justification, while the qualitative benefits to staff confidence, patient dignity, and clinical governance underscore the strategic importance of sustained investment.

In summary, the temporary role has proven both highly effective and cost-efficient, providing a strong foundation for future recommendations around its continuation and potential expansion. It represents a proven, high-value intervention that supports organisational priorities, delivers tangible financial and clinical outcomes.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

The Health & Safety Committee is asked to:

TAKE ASSURANCE on the progress made to date in fulfilling the Health Board statutory obligations under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, including compliance with Heavy Patient Handling requirements and alignment with both national and local guidelines, particularly in relation to the safe handling of patients.

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 Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	7. All apply
Galluogwyr Ansawdd: Enablers of Quality:	6. All Apply

Quality and Engagement Act (sharepoint.com)	
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	All Strategic Objectives are applicable
Amcanion Cynllunio Planning Objectives	Not Applicable
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report 2021-2022	9. All HDdUHB Well-being Objectives apply

Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for the Manual Handling of Plus-Size Patients - HDdUHB guidance; • Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales; • NICE-Obesity: Identification, Assessment, and Management Clinical Guidelines [CG189] Published: 27 November 2014 Last updated: 08 September 2022; Standards for the Provision of Services to People with Overweight and Obesity in Wales.
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report.
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Ceisiadau Gofal Sylfaenol: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Health and Safety Committee:	N/A

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	May have financial impact.
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	There is a positive impact on staff and patient safety, health, and wellbeing through compliance with health and safety regulations.
Gweithlu: Workforce:	Potential for adverse future staffing impacts if this legislation is not complied with as it relates to employee safety.

Risg: Risk:	Risk to health and safety management.
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	Potential for enforcement action including Improvement Notices/Prosecutions and claims due to breaches in legislation.
Enw Da: Reputational:	Potential for enforcement action including Improvement Notices/Prosecutions and claims due to breaches in legislation.
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	N/A
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	<p>No evidence gathered to indicate a negative impact. Manual Handling procedures for plus-sized patients promote and encourage good safe working practices for everyone.</p> <p>There is the potential for an adverse impact where staff have a disability for example back/shoulder pain. This is addressed via the risk assessment process, Manual Handling Team training and advice, the Occupational Health Department and incident reporting.</p>