

FOI 0174/2025 Response

Response

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information in relation to the response provided in FOI 0132/2025 regarding Manual Handling duties offered to Health Instructors:

1. Please confirm how Health Instructors within the Physiotherapy team were invited to express interest in taking on Manual Handling responsibilities (e.g. via meeting, email, memo, or other communication).

The previous Manual Handling Officer left the organisation in approximately 2017. Following their departure, the role was re-advertised by the Regulation and Compliance team—where the position was originally based—as a generic Health and Safety Officer post.

An unintended consequence of this revised role specification was later identified by the Dementia and Frailty Physiotherapy Team. Due to the specific needs of their patient cohort, they recognised a gap in access to specialist manual handling advice and guidance. These concerns were escalated by the team to their Service Lead, who then raised the issue with the Lead for Regulation and Compliance.

At that time, the Health and Safety Officer position had already been filled, and there was no additional funding available to recruit a dedicated Manual Handling Specialist. In response, the Service Lead and the Lead for Regulation and Compliance undertook a review of the manual handling knowledge and skills available within the existing workforce. This included gathering input from team members, which was subsequently discussed at relevant Team meetings to determine how best to address the identified needs within available resources.

2. Please provide the date and method of this communication, and confirm whether a record of it exists (e.g. meeting minutes, internal email, or note to file).

Team members who were interviewed recalled these discussions taking place in 2017, although they were unable to specify the exact month or locate meeting minutes from that time.

3. Please confirm whether any Health Instructors outside of the Physiotherapy team were consulted or invited to express interest at the time. If not, please state the rationale.

While the Service Lead recalls undertaking this process, they are unable to recall the specific skill sets and backgrounds of all individual team members. These discussions were held during team meetings to explore how existing resources could be utilised to support manual handling needs.

4. Please confirm whether any equality impact assessment or parity check was undertaken before or after the opportunity was assigned to a single individual.

As part of this process, an individual who was already familiar with the clinical area where the manual handling support was initially required was assigned the additional duties. This individual had existing experience with relevant medical devices, such as wheelchairs, and already carried out peripheral manual handling responsibilities as part of their day-to-day role.

5. Please confirm whether the assignment of these additional duties was subject to internal advert, expression of interest process, or formal panel consideration.

The manual handling responsibilities were initially incorporated into an informal job plan, with 0.4 WTE (whole-time equivalent) allocated to these duties. The individual subsequently undertook additional training to develop the required competencies. Upon successful completion of the training, all manual handling responsibilities were formally incorporated into the individual's job description. This revised role underwent a formal job evaluation process.