



Diocese of Middlesbrough

Lourdes Pilgrimage

Bed Rails Policy

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Purpose

- To support volunteers to make individual decisions around the risks of using and of not using bed rails.
- To ensure that volunteers understand how to reduce the potential harm to supported pilgrims caused by falling from a bed or becoming trapped in bed rails.
- To ensure that all volunteers undergo a risk assessment prior to the decision to use bed rails.

Scope

The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Brancardiers
- Handmaids

The following users may be affected by this policy:

- Supported Pilgrims

Objectives

Lourdes Pilgrimage takes all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and independence of its supported pilgrims and respects the rights of supported pilgrims to make their own decisions about their care. Bed rails when in use, are risk assessed, used safely and well maintained, meet legal requirements and are used for the right reasons. Supported pilgrims have been provided the opportunity and accessible information to make an informed decision about their use.

Lourdes Pilgrimage will work in partnership with agencies who provide loan equipment in order to meet an individual supported pilgrim's assessed needs.

Volunteers are competent and trained in their practice with the safe use of bed rails.

Bed rails will only be used on the pilgrimage if the following can be satisfied:

- Thorough consideration of the supported pilgrim's environment and what other equipment is or may be present.
- They are only provided when they are the right solution to prevent falls.
- A risk assessment is carried out by a competent person, taking into account the bed occupant, the bed, the mattresses, bed rails and all associated equipment.
- The rail is suitable for the bed and mattress
- The mattress fits snugly between the rails
- The rail is correctly fitted, secure and subject to rigid inspection and maintenance checks
- Gaps that may cause entrapment of the neck, head and chest are eliminated
- Volunteers are trained in the risks and safe use of bed rails

Staff Responsibilities

Duty leads are responsible for the following:

- Implementation of this policy.
- Effective delegation, ensuring that risk assessments for the use of bed rails are carried out and acted upon.
- Managing and/or delegating the responsibility for ensuring that volunteers hold the knowledge base for the safe use of bed rails.
- Investigating incidents where supported pilgrims have sustained injury following the use of bed rails.
- Ensuring that lessons are learnt and action is taken to prevent a recurrence of any incident where bed rails have been implicated in a supported pilgrim sustaining an injury.
- Ensuring appropriate statutory notifications are completed in the event of incidents and accidents involving bed rails.
- Ensuring that there is a sufficient stock of bed rails and protectors available for supported pilgrims.

Volunteers are responsible for:

- Maintaining and adhering to this policy and accepting accountability for their own practice
- Attending training and for the safe use of bed rails
- Reporting all incidents and near misses involving the use of bed rails
- Cooperating with any relevant audits
- The completion of accurate and contemporaneous documentation

All efforts will be made to ensure that the supported pilgrim is given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process as to whether bed rails are used. If the supported pilgrim lacks capacity, Lourdes Pilgrimage has a duty of care to decide if bed rails are in the supported pilgrim's best interests, and this must be documented in the supported pilgrim's Care Plan.

Assessments

Volunteers must only consider the use of bed rails if the benefits outweigh the risks and this must be documented. Bed rails will not be used until a full, individual assessment has taken place. This includes the completion of a risk assessment. Volunteers must be competent and trained in completing a bed rails risk assessment. Prior to the pilgrimage an appropriate designated person will complete the risk assessment and Care Plan documentation.

Bed rails must not be used if:

- The supported pilgrim is agile enough or confused enough to climb over them
- The supported pilgrim would be independent if the bed rails were not in place

When a Supported pilgrim chooses to have bed rails without having a determined risk, volunteers must ensure that the appropriate strategies are in place to allow the supported pilgrim to get out

of bed when necessary and that the decision is recorded clearly.

Volunteers will be aware that the following supported pilgrims may be at greater risk of incidents relating to entrapment in bed rails. These include:

- Older people
- Communication problems
- Confusion, agitation or delirium
- Learning disabilities
- Dementia
- Repetitive or involuntary movements
- High or low body mass (which may change entrapment risk)
- Impaired or restricted mobility
- Variable levels of consciousness, or those under sedation

Therefore, risk assessment must include any of the above factors which could place that supported pilgrim at higher risk.

Consent

Consent must always be sought in the first instance from the supported pilgrim. If the supported pilgrim is shown not to have capacity, then a best interests meeting must take place which includes the supported pilgrim's family or advocate.

If it has not been possible to gain consent, this must be documented on the pre-assessment and sought at the earliest opportunity. Where it has been identified that the Supported pilgrim may not have the capacity to consent, an assessment under the Mental Capacity Act must be undertaken.

Fitting Bed Rails

Where possible, when bed rails are in use, these will be integrated rails and the practice of using bed rails that are required to be manually fitted to bed frames will be avoided. Where this is not possible, or when bed rail extenders are being fitted, volunteers responsible for fitting these devices will be trained to do so with competence.

Beds must usually be kept at the lowest possible height to reduce the likelihood of injury in the event of a fall, whether or not bed rails are used. The exception to this is independently mobile supported pilgrims who are likely to be safest if the bed is set at the correct height for them to sit on the side of the bed.

Bed rails must not be used for moving and handling purposes unless they are integrated bed rails which are deemed by the manufacturer to be suitable for this purpose.

When volunteers are attending to the supported pilgrim to deliver personal care, the bed must be positioned at a height that meets the moving and handling preferences of the volunteers attending. Bed rails will be in the down position during personal care delivery until volunteers are ready to move away from the bed.

Bedrails must be locked into the upright position if volunteers move away from the bed at any time.

Bed rail protectors are used to prevent impact injuries but they can also reduce the potential for limb entrapment when securely affixed to the bed or rail, according to the instructions for use. However, bumpers that can move or compress may themselves introduce entrapment risks.

For supported pilgrims who are assessed as requiring bed rails but who are at risk of striking their limbs on the bed rails, or getting their legs or arms trapped between bed rails, bed rail bumpers must be used. Where a supported pilgrim declines the use of bed rail protectors, this decision will be respected and documented with other strategies discussed and implemented.

Volunteers have a duty, where these are used, to ensure that they are clean and well maintained. The risk assessment must include the rationale for the use or exclusion of bed rail protectors.

Before each use, staff must check the protector for any rips, tears or deficits. Where these are found, the duty lead must be notified immediately so that the defects can be reported and action taken to remove, replace or repair the faulty equipment.

Medical Device Requirements

Bed rails are medical devices and therefore all responsibilities in relation to safe practice will need to be adhered to. As a minimum, the following must be adhered to:

- The bed rails are CE marked and meet the recognised product standards that include acceptable gaps and dimensions when fitted to the bed.
- Volunteers will only be using this equipment if trained and deemed competent to do so.
- Equipment must be well maintained, serviced, clean and fit for purpose.
- Manufacturers' guidance must be accessible.
- All volunteers should report any defects immediately and condemn the item until it is proven safe for use.
- Any accidents or incidents in relation to bed rails must be reported to duty lead and an accident/incident record completed.

Any adverse incidents caused by bed rails must be reported through the accident and incident reporting system for the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

