

# Guideline E1: Assisting a person to transfer from one seat to another

**Remember - carers are twice as likely as people in most other professions to injure their backs through moving and handling activities. To help minimise these risks always consider the following guidance before assisting a person to transfer from one seat to another:**

<b>Self help</b>	Can the activity be avoided i.e. can the person transfer independently? Some people may be able to stand, step round and sit down. Others may be able to pivot without reaching a fully upright position provided that suitable equipment is available (see method 1 below). Those with good balance and arm strength may be able to use a transfer board.
<b>Ergonomics</b>	The height of the two seats should match. Folding or removable armrests greatly assist a transfer. Seats should be at a convenient angle and distance for the person. Other equipment to consider includes; turning disc, standing turner, transfer board, grab rails/levers.
<b>Communication</b>	It may be helpful to give guidance with words such as "look this way" or "push on the arms of the chair" to encourage the person to position their body appropriately.
<b>Safety</b>	A number of assisted transfers are considered unsafe e.g. front assisted transfers (bear hug, drag holds/lifts). The following options are recommended for routine care situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Independent pivot transfer (see method 1 below).</li><li>▪ Stand, step, and sit (see method 2 below).</li><li>▪ Mechanical standing/turning aids (see method 3 below).</li><li>▪ Stand, exchange seat and sit (see method 4 below).</li></ul>

## Method 1: Independent pivot transfer

This method is only suitable for those who have good upper body strength and can give good cooperation.

### Preparation

1. Ensure the height of the receiving surface is matching or nearly matching.
2. If the person is in a wheelchair, remove armrests/footplates as appropriate.
3. Place the seats and any other equipment at a convenient angle.

### Providing prompts to encourage a pivot transfer

1. Encourage the person to move to the front of the seat and bring the hip closest to the receiving seat as near to it as possible then place the foot nearest that seat ahead of the other (where appropriate a transfer board and/or turntable may be introduced at this point). Encourage the person to reach for the far side of the chair.
2. Once in position encourage the person to look away from the chair they will move to and push with their arms (this facilitates the body to rotate).
3. Use verbal or tactile prompts to encourage the correct direction of movement.

## Method 2:

### Stand, step and sit transfer

This method is suitable for those who can step with the assistance of 1 or 2 carers.

#### Preparation

1. Assess if 1 or 2 carers are needed and if 2 which will give the instructions.
2. Position the surfaces to allow sufficient space for the transfer, yet near enough together so that the person can step between the seats.

#### Assisting To Transfer

1. Assist the person to stand, walk and sit (refer to guidelines; C1: Assisting a person to stand, C2: Assisting a person to walk and C3: Assisting a person to sit).
2. The carer may need to facilitate the person to turn towards the chair as they walk towards it. The carer also needs to ensure that they do not position themselves between the person and the chair since this will mean that the person has to walk backwards or that the chair has to be moved. When 2 carers assist it is inevitable that one gets between the person and the chair. This will mean that the person needs the ability to step backwards or that the chair needs to be brought to them.

## Method 3:

### Transfer using mechanical standing/turning aids

Standing turning aids are suitable for those who can reliably stand and sit but who have difficulty stepping. Standing hoists are useful for those with upper body control but whose weight bearing ability may be unreliable. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for guidance on mechanical equipment.

#### Preparation

1. Assess if 1 or 2 carers are needed and if 2 which will give the instructions.
2. Ensure sufficient space to use the equipment and position seats appropriately.

#### Assisting To Transfer

1. Introduce and operate the equipment according to manufacturer's instructions.
2. Once the person is standing turn the equipment until they can sit on the second seat. Remember to use the principles taught for pushing/pulling/turning to avoid twisting (Figs: 1 - 4).



Fig: 1



Fig: 2



Fig: 3



Fig: 4

## Method 4: Stand, exchange seat and sit

Suitable for those who can stand and sit, but are unable to turn. Where the person needs support to stand while the chairs are exchanged another carer will be needed since it is not safe to move chairs while supporting a person.

### Preparation

1. Assess if 1, 2 or 3 carers are needed and which one will give the instructions.
2. Ensure the surface to be transferred to is positioned within easy reach.
3. If the person is sitting on a wheeled seat ensure that the brakes are on until they are safely standing.
4. Remove/swing back footplates and armrests as appropriate.

### Providing Assistance to Transfer

1. Assist the person to stand (refer to guideline C1: Assisting a person to stand).
2. Encourage the person to support themselves once standing if able (a rail or equivalent may facilitate this), alternatively 1 or 2 carers may support the person, whilst another carer exchanges the seats.
3. Assist the person to sit down taking care that the brakes of wheeled chairs are on (refer to guideline C3: Assisting a person to sit).

### Warning

- Ensure that the correct method is being used according to the person's capabilities.
- Do not lift most or all of the person's weight.
- Do not use the drag lift or holds that anchor you to the person.
- Do not stand in front of a person to help them to stand unless a risk assessment has been undertaken to show that this is appropriate and training has been provided by a therapist or appropriately qualified person. Those teaching such techniques must write down procedures to follow and ensure that those who will perform them are competent to do so. Records must be kept to show this has been done.
- Do not manually support a person and at the same time adjust clothes etc.
- Ensure that seats cannot move during the transfer.