Quick Guide: Preventing Falls from Windows and Balconies Policy

This policy applies to those vulnerable patients who use health care services and who are as a result of their vulnerability are at risk from falls from windows or balconies at a height likely to cause harm

Managers must:

- Identify competent persons to carry out risk assessment who will consult with staff and staff side representatives whilst undertaking these tasks.
- Ensure, through the risk assessment process that all hazards which contribute to falls from windows and balconies are assessed, that control measures are identified, implemented and reviewed annually, when there is significant change or upon receipt of any relevant safety alerts. This is in addition to the requirement for individual patient clinical risk assessments.
- Any risks which cannot be adequately controlled locally should be escalated to the appropriate senior manager.
- Carry out and record regular checks of windows and balconies, the frequency of these are to be determined by the risk assessment.
- Ensure local procedures are in place for the effective control of windows and balconies.
- Ensure all staff have read and understood/been trained in these local procedures. This should be recorded.
- Ensure actual and near miss events are reported on DATIX, thoroughly investigated and are reviewed to identify any trends.
- Ensure staff have read and understood their responsibilities within the Preventing Falls from Windows and Balcony Policy. This should be recorded.
- All documentation e.g. records of assessments, requests to estates/PFI providers and training should be retained for 10 years NHS Lothian’s Retention and Destruction of Records Operating Procedure.
- Review the implementation of the Preventing Falls from Windows and Balconies Policy and report on this through the Quarterly Review programme.
- Ensure anyone undertaking maintenance they secure the windows and balconies when they have finished and that they report defects immediately.

Staff must:

- Be vigilant and ensure that windows are not opened more than 100mm; that restrictors are not overridden and that windows and balconies are secured.
- Co-operate and assist staff identified to carry risk assessments
- Follow the local procedures designed to ensure ways of minimising adverse events associated with the use of windows and balconies.
- Report defects or misuse of restrictors to Estates. Where ever possible the window/balcony must be secured in the closed position
- Report actual and near miss events on DATIX
- Read and understand the policy, risk assessment(s) and any relevant procedural controls.
- Attend any training identified through the risk assessment process
- Follow the local procedures designed to ensure ways of minimising adverse events associated with the use of windows and balconies.