



WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Falls Prevention, Management and Response Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP43
Category	Operational Policies — Health & Safety, Clinical Practice
Version	3.0 (merged with a separately produced redraft)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP43 - Falls Policy - DRAFT v2.0; Falls Prevention, Management & Response Policy 2026 (separately produced redraft)
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All employees, Personal Assistants, Home Support Workers, Coordinators, Managers, agency staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and service users of West Limerick Independent Living CLG ("WLIL")
Related Policies	WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy; WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy; WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy; WLILP23 - Risk Management Policy; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy; WLILP57 - Digital Risk Assessment Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, or sooner following a serious incident or legislative change

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees and representatives of West Limerick Independent Living CLG (WLIL) regarding the prevention, management, reporting, and review of falls involving service users, staff, contractors, or visitors during the delivery of services.

WLIL recognises that falls may result in serious injury, distress, reduced independence, or deterioration in wellbeing, particularly for individuals with mobility difficulties, disabilities, age-related conditions, neurological conditions, or other vulnerabilities.

The organisation is committed to:

- reducing avoidable falls risks where reasonably practicable,
- supporting safe and person-centred service delivery,



- ensuring appropriate response procedures,
- promoting awareness and preventative measures,
- and learning from falls incidents through review and risk management processes.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Personal Assistants (PAs)
- Home Support Workers
- Coordinators
- Managers
- Agency staff
- Students and volunteers
- Contractors acting on behalf of WLIL
- Service users receiving WLIL services

This policy applies during:

- home support services,
- Personal Assistant services,
- community activities,
- transport-related support,
- and any activity undertaken as part of WLIL service delivery.

3. Legislative & Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015



- Health Act 2007
- HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024)
- HSE Incident Management Guidance
- WLIL Health & Safety Statement
- WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy
- WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy
- WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy
- WLILP23 - Risk Management Policy; WLILP57 - Digital Risk Assessment Policy

4. Policy Statement

WLIL is committed to promoting safe and person-centred services while recognising the rights of service users to autonomy, dignity, independence, and choice.

WLIL acknowledges that:

- some falls risks cannot be entirely eliminated,
- individuals have the right to make decisions involving positive risk-taking,
- and services are frequently delivered within private homes and community settings not directly controlled by WLIL.

The organisation will take reasonable and proportionate steps to:

- identify falls risks,
- implement preventative measures where possible,
- support safe service delivery,
- report and review incidents,
- and liaise with relevant professionals or agencies where concerns arise.

5. Falls Risk Assessment

5.1 Risk Assessment Process



WLIL operates an electronic risk assessment system which includes a dedicated Falls Risk Assessment section.

Falls risk assessments are completed:

- at commencement of services,
- during care planning,
- following a falls incident,
- following hospital discharge,
- where mobility or health changes occur,
- where environmental concerns arise,
- and during regular review processes.

Assessments may consider:

- mobility and transfer ability,
- balance and gait,
- medications,
- medical conditions,
- fatigue,
- cognition,
- environmental hazards,
- use of mobility aids,
- footwear,
- history of falls,
- manual handling requirements,
- and the need for additional supports.

Risk assessments are reviewed and updated as circumstances change.

6. Environmental Risk Management

WLIL staff may identify environmental risks within service users' homes or community settings during service delivery.

Examples may include:

- clutter,



- poor lighting,
- unsafe flooring,
- loose rugs,
- inaccessible layouts,
- unsafe bathroom facilities,
- uneven pathways,
- or unsuitable furniture arrangements.

WLIL will take reasonable steps to:

- identify,
- document,
- report,
- and where reasonably practicable, reduce identified risks.

However, WLIL recognises that services are frequently delivered within:

- private homes,
- rented accommodation,
- family environments,
- or properties managed by third parties.

WLIL does not have direct control over privately owned or externally managed environments.

Where significant concerns are identified, WLIL may:

- discuss concerns with the service user,
- liaise with family members or representatives,
- refer concerns to Occupational Therapy,
- liaise with Public Health Nursing,
- engage with social workers,
- liaise with landlords or housing authorities where appropriate,
- or recommend environmental reviews or adaptations.

Recommendations made by WLIL or external professionals may remain subject to:

- service user choice,
- funding approval,



- landlord approval,
- or third-party action.

7. Prevention Measures

WLIL promotes falls prevention through:

- ongoing risk assessment,
- care planning,
- staff training,
- environmental awareness,
- safe moving and handling practices,
- and communication with service users and professionals.

Staff are expected to:

- remain vigilant regarding changing risks,
- encourage safe use of mobility aids,
- follow moving and handling guidance,
- report concerns promptly,
- and comply with risk assessments and care plans.

8. Dignity of Risk & Person-Centred Practice

WLIL recognises the importance of balancing safety with:

- independence,
- autonomy,
- personal choice,
- and dignity of risk.

Service users may choose to undertake activities involving a degree of personal risk.

Where appropriate, WLIL will:

- discuss risks openly,



- support informed decision-making,
- implement reasonable safeguards,
- and document agreed supports and risk management measures.

The aim of this policy is not to unnecessarily restrict independence, but to support safer participation and quality of life.

9. Response to Falls

If a fall occurs, staff must:

1. Remain calm and reassure the individual.
2. Assess the immediate situation safely.
3. Do not move the person unless:
 - o it is necessary for immediate safety,
 - o they are appropriately trained,
 - o and it is safe to do so.
4. Follow moving and handling guidance and training.
5. Seek emergency assistance where required.
6. Contact emergency services (999 or 112) immediately where:
 - o serious injury is suspected,
 - o head injury is suspected,
 - o the individual cannot be safely assisted,
 - o loss of consciousness has occurred,
 - o or staff have concerns regarding the individual's condition.
7. Seek appropriate medical advice where concerns remain.
8. Inform the designated Coordinator or Manager as soon as practicable.
9. Notify family members or representatives where appropriate and in line with care arrangements.
10. Continue monitoring for delayed symptoms or deterioration where appropriate.
11. Complete incident reporting procedures.

10. Staff Limitations & Safety



Employees must:

- work within their training and competence,
- follow manual handling guidance,
- avoid unsafe lifting practices,
- and prioritise safety.

Staff must not attempt:

- unsafe lifting,
- inappropriate manual handling,
- or actions likely to place themselves or others at risk.

Where risk assessments identify that:

- two staff are required,
- specialist equipment is required,
- or additional supports are necessary,

those requirements must be followed.

11. Reporting & Incident Management

All falls incidents, near misses, or falls-related concerns must be reported.

WLIL operates an electronic reporting system which allows:

- falls incidents,
- hazards,
- risk concerns,
- and related issues
to be documented and escalated appropriately.

Staff are required to:

- report all falls,
- report near misses where appropriate,
- record concerns promptly,



- and cooperate with review procedures.

Incident reports should include:

- circumstances of the fall,
- injuries sustained,
- actions taken,
- contributing factors,
- and follow-up measures.

Serious incidents may require escalation in line with safeguarding, health and safety, or incident management procedures.

12. Post-Fall Review

A post-fall review may be conducted following a falls incident.

Reviews may involve:

- the Coordinator,
- Personal Assistant/support staff,
- the service user,
- family or representatives where appropriate,
- and relevant professionals where required.

Reviews may consider:

- contributing factors,
- environmental issues,
- equipment needs,
- staffing requirements,
- mobility changes,
- safeguarding concerns,
- or additional support requirements.

Risk assessments and care plans will be updated where necessary.

Recurring falls may result in:

- referral recommendations,



- environmental review,
- review of service arrangements,
- or additional supports being considered.

13. Safeguarding Considerations

Falls incidents may occasionally indicate:

- neglect,
- self-neglect,
- unsafe environments,
- abuse,
- inappropriate care arrangements,
- or safeguarding concerns.

Where concerns arise, staff must follow:

- WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy,
- reporting procedures,
- and escalation pathways.

14. Roles & Responsibilities

Staff & Personal Assistants

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy,
- remaining vigilant regarding falls risks,
- following risk assessments,
- reporting concerns and incidents,
- and working safely.

Coordinators

Coordinators are responsible for:



- overseeing risk assessments,
- reviewing incidents,
- ensuring follow-up actions occur,
- updating care plans where necessary,
- and supporting staff and service users.

Management

Management is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate systems are in place,
- monitoring incidents and trends,
- supporting training,
- ensuring policy compliance,
- and promoting continuous improvement.

15. Training

Employees will receive appropriate instruction and training relating to:

- falls awareness,
- falls prevention,
- moving and handling,
- incident reporting,
- safeguarding,
- and emergency response procedures.

Training may be refreshed periodically and following significant incidents where required.

16. Monitoring & Review

Falls data, trends, incidents, and near misses may be reviewed periodically by management as part of organisational governance, quality, safeguarding, and health and safety processes.

This policy will be reviewed:



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- annually,
- following serious incidents,
- following legislative or operational changes,
- or where improvements are identified.



17. Records Retention

Falls risk assessments, incident records, and related documentation generated under this policy are retained in accordance with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy, which is the single authoritative source for WLIL's retention periods.

Appendix A – Falls Incident Report Form

Staff should use the SBAR incident reporting form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3, rather than a separate falls-specific form, so that all incidents are recorded consistently in one place.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:

Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: 09-10-2026