

## 1.5 STRESS AT WORK

Domiciliary care can be a demanding and, consequently, stressful job. Handling clients with challenging behaviour can be a key contributor to stress. We also recognise that there are other ways in which stressful conditions can be created for staff as part of their daily duties. These can include continually working excessively long hours, lack of self-confidence, domestic worries and job security fears, all of which can lead to a gradual deterioration in health, and poor performance at work which, unless checked, could compromise our Health & Safety standards. We also recognise that stress is an insidious condition; it can creep up on you gradually without you realising what's happening.



The working policies of the Agency have been developed to ensure that stressful conditions are minimised. There is a documented Policy to this effect. Additionally, each staff member is asked to attend a short course, run in-house at the Agency, which concentrates on the identification and management of the causes of stress and the measures available to combat them.

## 1.6 MANUAL HANDLING TASKS

The majority of accidents and injuries to care staff arise through performing tasks that involve some degree of lifting, handling or moving. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that almost every job will involve lifting or carrying to some extent, and it is important that correct techniques are used when undertaking what is known as "Manual Handling" tasks.



These tasks are not restricted to simple lifting and handling, but can also involve sitting, stooping, bending, twisting and other ergonomic considerations.

Here are some examples of tasks undertaken in the domiciliary environment that will involve some form of stress on the human frame:

- assisting clients to move.
- lifting provisions in the kitchen.
- using floor washers / vacuum cleaners.
- sitting at a desk / keyboard work for VDU users (see part 1.7 on next page).

The fundamental legislation controlling all this is *The Manual Handling Operations Regulations, 1992*. Management of the Home have a duty to prevent, or at least reduce as far as possible, injuries and disabilities caused to staff through improper manual handling, and have developed policies accordingly.

We have produced a list of the manual handling operations involved in the domiciliary environment, and for each operation we have undertaken an appropriate RISK ASSESSMENT which will identify the hazards involved and the measures necessary to reduce each risk to a "manageable" level. From this we have prepared our policies and procedures that ensure safe manual handling techniques, and you will receive appropriate training in these techniques as they apply to your specific job. You MUST observe these correct manual handling techniques as you go about your daily tasks. As always, if in doubt don't be afraid to consult your immediate manager or supervisor for advice and guidance.