

# Health and Safety Information Sheet

## Use of chairs fitted with castors on hard/smooth floor surfaces

Issue Date: 14 June 2021

Reference: HSI-2021-013



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board

**Risk Level HIGH**

### BACKGROUND

An incident has recently occurred at the Grange University Hospital whereby an office style chair moved away from a staff member as they went to sit down. This resulted in the staff member falling backwards, hitting their head on the desk behind them. This caused the staff member to temporarily lose consciousness. Injuries were also sustained to their wrist and shoulder from the fall.

### ISSUE

It has been identified that there are a large number of chairs fitted with hard castors being used in environments with smooth, hard floor surfaces. Hard chair casters and smooth, hard floor surfaces do not interact safely creating simple motion as the casters are able to roll too freely causing chairs to accelerate and “skate” away when a person is going to sit down or tries to get out of the chair.

ABUHB Corporate Health and Safety and Procurement Departments have been working collaboratively with our chair suppliers to source suitable soft-tread and automatic break casters to mitigate the risk of injury. Castor samples are being distributed and will be tested in the coming days; the most suitable castor will be procured in mass to replace any hard castors to chairs if used on smooth, hard surfaces.



**\*\* picture is for illustration purposes only – chairs and casters will differ across sites\*\***

### ACTION REQUIRED

Managers and risk assessors **MUST** undertake a risk assessment of the type of chairs being used on smooth, hard flooring in their area.

If deemed to be high risk *i.e. potential to move on hard flooring unexpectedly* the following should be considered:

- Taking chairs with hard castors that move too freely out of use and replace with a chair with legs.
- Removing hard casters from chairs. However, you must be mindful of how well the chair balances on the floor without castors and the potential damage this may cause to the floor surface.

The above are temporary measures to mitigate the risk of injury until suitable soft-tread castors are identified and sourced. A further communication will be distributed with ordering and installation details of soft-tread/automatic break castors shortly.

### FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

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