



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIABLE AND DURABLE SAFE PATIENT HANDLING EQUIPMENT IN HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY CARE SETTINGS

**Acting Manager of the Joint Loan Equipment Service for Falkirk Council, Brian Stewart, discusses his experience of working with Hillrom to provide quality equipment to hospitals and the community in the Forth Valley Health Board area.**

### How long have you been working with Hillrom and Hillrom's Safe Patient Handling products?

I have been working with Hillrom and Hillrom's Safe Patient Handling programme for over 15 years now. As an equipment service, we made the move from various competitor products to using Hillrom exclusively around 10 years ago. Both the Forth Valley Health Board hospital and community teams use Hillrom's equipment and products to support patient care across the Falkirk health and social care partnership. Currently, the Loan Store works and services provides over 300 Hillrom hoists and over 900 Hillrom slings to help improve patient outcomes across the area.

### Why has Hillrom been your chosen supplier of Safe Patient Handling equipment for this period?

The main reason for us moving to use exclusively Hillrom equipment was that NHS Forth Valley had begun using some of the Hillrom Liko hoists and we felt that it would be effective to keep the transition of equipment between the hospitals and the community the same. This meant that families and carers could be trained to use these specific hoists and slings making discharge from hospitals easier and more straightforward for both the patient, their families and the care staff involved. Our move to purchasing hoists and slings from Hillrom also became more cost-effective for us at this time.

### Can you share some specific examples of Hillrom's Safe Patient Handling equipment that is valued by you and your clients?

From the point of view of movement, mobility and handling, Hillrom always provides top quality products that are easy to use and fit all situations across care settings. Hillrom also provides a wide range of options to help fit the equipment to the needs of the patient rather than trying to fit the patient to the equipment. Hillrom is a well-known and trusted brand, so we know the equipment will work and if there were to be any issues, we know we can rely on their support and backup to help us sort out any problems.

### How important is product build quality and durability to you and your clients?

The quality and durability of equipment is really important for us. We use over 900 slings across the Forth Valley Health Board area and we haven't had any issues in terms of quality. There have not been any faulty slings, they are long-lasting and compared to our previous suppliers we don't have any issues in terms of supply, contacting customer services or arranging training. The same goes for the hoists, the quality of the equipment is brilliant, over the 10 to 15 years that I have worked alongside Hillrom I couldn't come up with a time where I've had a problem with any of the Hillrom hoists or slings.

### How does the longevity, durability and quality of Hillrom products compare to competitor products?

Talking in terms of the slings in particular the quality compared to other competitors is always of a very high standard. They can all be used multiple times, washed and then reused again, the longevity and life you get out of the equipment is great compared to some other brands.

### How do you and your team work alongside Hillrom to service and maintain your Hillrom Safe Patient handling Equipment?

For the entire 15 years that I have worked with the Joint Loan Equipment Service I have always been able to contact our Hillrom representative, whether it is for a pricing query or any other problem. If we do have any issues, I can always contact our Hillrom rep via email and they come always come back to me very quickly. It is so much easier than some other companies I have worked with, because you have an allocated representative, this makes resolving problems much quicker and more effective as you know who to contact. It is also very easy to refer other colleagues to our Hillrom rep for further information if we are unsure or do not know the answer, they always get back to each of them very quickly. Hillrom are very hands on and will happily spend the time to get to the bottom of any problems or issues that may arise.



### How important is this support? Does great support outweigh product price for you?

When you work with Hillrom the support they provide is to a high standard. If you purchase a new hoist for example, the Hillrom team will visit, build the equipment and run tests to ensure that every part is in good working order, this means when the hoists are used in the field, we know that they are good to go. We are also confident that if there are any issues, be it supply, accessing parts or training there is always someone on hand that we can contact. From a pricing point of view I'd say that Hillrom are in-line with other suppliers and when you weigh up the quality of equipment too, as a package it's very cost-effective.

### How has Hillrom's products and wider support impacted on your day-to-day decision-making in relation to equipment?

We now purchase Hillrom's hoists and slings as standard for all of our clients, we have been doing this now for over five years and we have had no issues. We know if there is a problem, we can easily feed it back to Hillrom, who then get it resolved quickly. Everything works very well. We know their products well and that there is always support from our Hillrom representative. The NHS Forth Valley manual handling teams, know the Hillrom Liko hoists particularly well — they are always happy with the quality and durability of the equipment they use.

Hillrom's reps often liaise directly with our specialist teams, which allows us as the JLES to step back, removing an added complication in the communication chain. This results in any questions or issues that these teams may have being handled and sorted much more quickly and efficiently.

### Does Hillrom's support help you to support the wider Forth Valley Health Board community?

It certainly does, the wider community know that there is a dedicated Hillrom representative that they can contact to help. For example, I'm not personally trained in manual handling so instead of the healthcare teams contacting me and then me liaising with Hillrom on their behalf, there is direct liaison between healthcare teams and Hillrom. This allows questions to be answered and problems to be solved much more rapidly. Having a dedicated rep from Hillrom is a huge time saver for us, meaning communication times are much shorter, I know I can go directly to our rep with anything, as we have

established a very productive relationship. Everyone in the Forth Valley Health Board community, from those who work in the hospitals to members of the council, know who our Hillrom rep is and this just saves so much contact time, as they all have established a strong working relationship with them as well. It is a much more time-efficient and seamless way of working.

### How do you and your team work together with Hillrom for service and maintenance of your Hillrom equipment?

In terms of reliability, we have our own servicing team made up of three technicians that have all been trained by Hillrom, they are very knowledgeable about our equipment in terms of the parts' diagrams, building equipment and ability to access any spare/replacement parts. It also makes sourcing spare parts much easier. We are always in the loop with how long it would realistically take for these parts to arrive and for products to be fixed. Any faults we tend to have with Hillrom products and equipment, generally come from user misuse rather than any equipment or product issues to be honest. Hillrom are time-efficient, helpful and the products just work.

#### More about the Hillrom Liko® Patient Handling Solutions:

With more than 30 years of experience in lifting and transferring people in a safe and careful manner has given us expert knowledge, technology and methodology. Our goal is to develop the world's easiest, safest and most efficient aids for use during lifts and transfers, designed to mitigate risk of injury by manually transferring and moving patients.

Today we have a wide, functional range of patient lifts, slings and accessories. Combined with other solutions from Hillrom's wide product range, we can provide total room solutions for hospitals and other care facilities worldwide.

For more information on the Hillrom Liko® Patient Handling Solutions range please visit: [hill-rom.co.uk/uk](http://hill-rom.co.uk/uk)