

P11 Power Failure

Version: New

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Extra Care Housing Service	Support at Home Service	OA Day Services	Residential Services	DMH Day Services	DMH Supported Living Services	Community Equipment Services	Shared Lives Service
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Policy

To ensure staff are fully aware of the correct procedure to follow should a power failure occur.

Procedure

Power cuts can have a dramatic effect on service delivery and the health and safety of service user, staff, and visitors.

The following advice and tips may be of some use:

Ascertaining timescales of power failure

As soon as a power failure occurs, ascertain whether it is localised (one section of the building) or the whole building.

If it is localised, it may possibly be a tripped circuit breaker. If you are familiar with the fuse box in your building, this can be reset or if this does not work, report it to Facilities Management help desk Monday – Friday 01228 221106 (24 hrs), weekends and Bank holidays 01228 511061 or the registered landlord.

If you have no electricity, your supply is disrupted in any way, or in case of emergency, please contact your supplier (Contact details can be found in your emergency plan / box).

Dependent on the volume of calls to the Help Line, there may be a pre-recorded message detailing what areas are affected and a time when power is expected to be restored. Please note this expected time, as this may be the only information available.

Consequences of power failure

Initially, the first apparent effect of a power failure is lack of lighting.

All care homes have emergency lighting. These emergency lights are designed to give a maximum of 3 hours lighting, and the lighting will be significantly less than normal, but will provide sufficient background light. Supported Living Services have an emergency low lighting system in place, in the case of a failure the Landlords must be contacted immediately (including out of hours services).

Dependent on what time of day and the estimated duration of the power failure, it is important to be aware that you have limited hours of lighting via the emergency lights as these automatically switch on (even in daylight).

If the duration of the power failure is in excess of 3 hours, it is important to plan worst case scenario during hours of darkness. (Note, acquiring an emergency generator will not have

sufficient benefits as it will not be able to be connected into the existing circuit. At best it may provide 1 to 2 lights to an entrance area).

Some Residential Care Homes have generators attached to them which will start up automatically. Where in the event that the generator fails the contingency plans must be followed.

Ensure that the building has adequate numbers of torches and / or lantern type torches including spare batteries (batteries may only last a couple of hours). Previous experience has shown that limited illumination of corridors could be achieved by placing a lantern type torch on the floor at the end of the corridor shining the length of the corridor.

Each member of staff on duty should have a torch for personal use and for service delivery. For larger establishments, please make sure you have enough torches available.

Call bells rely on mains electricity and will be out of use for the duration of the failure. More frequent checks will need to be carried out to the service users, to ensure their safety and comfort.

Some fire alarm systems will not function during a power failure, increased vigilance will be required.

The heating system will shut down in the event of a power failure. Previous experience has shown that buildings retain their heat for a significant period (temperatures of 19°C were recorded 24 hours into the 2005 power cuts). It is important to conserve the heat by not opening windows and ensuring all external doors are only opened as required.

Most buildings have hot water stored in the boiler house. This hot water relies on a pump to circulate it around the building. It may be possible to draw some hot water by running the hot water tap for an extended period, but this will soon deplete the stored capacity and it will not be re-heated until power is restored. Please do not waste hot water during this time.

The majority of Cumberland Care Service buildings have gas for catering. In most instances electric power failure will mean no gas to the ranges and ovens.

Freezers should not be opened, as this will severely reduce the amount of time the contents will remain frozen.

Phone systems will not work during a power failure. Pay phones (where available) will still operate. All homes should have a free standing (ordinary) telephone available to plug into the office phone socket.

Specialist medical devices will not work e.g. airflow mattresses and oxygen generators. Guidance on the use of specialist equipment during a power failure should be detailed on the risk assessment.

In the event of a power failure, none of the security doors will work. Increased vigilance will be required. A general risk assessment needs to be completed for this and stored in the emergency box with your local plan.

Lifts will not work when power is off. More frequent checks will be needed for clients on upper floors. Risk assessments to be completed and stored in the emergency box.

For services using the Electronic Care Planning system (IAS), laptops and wi-fi will be unavailable. A paper copy (appendices relevant to your service) will need to be completed for all service users. A small supply of the form should be maintained in the event of needing to use them in a power failure. (Appendix 1 OA Residential & Appendix 2 DMH Residential).

Service delivery during power failure

To a certain extent normal service delivery can be maintained during daylight hours but significant planning needs to take place if the period is expected to go into hours of darkness.

Dependent on the duration of the power failure, an alternative provision for meals will need to be sought e.g. neighbouring homes, local take away. This can be paid for through petty cash.

There may be a need for increased staffing if the power cut is prolonged.

Long term power failures (over 24 hours) need to be discussed with The Service Managers / Facilities Management and Senior Managers for an alternative solution. Service Manager and / or the Cumberland Care Services out of Hours on call must be informed.

ACTIONS

- Contact Service Manager or Cumberland Care Service Out of Hours on 0300 303 3893 if out of office hours.
- Agree contactable phone number (mobile or pay phone) so communication can be maintained at all times.
- Notify Care Quality Commission (Registered establishments only).
- When power is restored, check the boilers, heating and fire alarms are working. If not contact Facilities Management / Landlord to arrange for checks as soon as possible.

- When power is restored, the detail from the appendices will need adding to the Electronic Care Planning system (IAS) for each service user. These can be placed in the confidential waste once inputted.