F5 Fire Prevention

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Policy

1. Introduction, Purpose, and Scope

Supported living enables people who require support to live within the community in purpose-built, or, more commonly, converted, houses.

Supported living arrangements are very flexible and are designed to give each person choice and control over their home and the way they live their life. In some instances, several individuals receiving support will share a property as joint tenants.

Cumberland Care Services will provide support to these tenants and the level of support will vary dependent upon the needs of the individual client. In many instances a member of staff will be required to be present on a 24-hour basis. In these circumstances sleeping accommodation will be provided for a support worker; this will result in the premises being classed as a workplace for the purposes of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

This guidance is primarily applicable to those properties where Cumberland Care staff are provided with sleeping accommodation.

2. Objectives

The objective of this procedure is to ensure that Cumberland Care Services (Cumberland Council) fulfils its legal obligations relevant to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, i.e. ensuring that the fire precautions provided within a property are suitable and sufficient for the purposes of providing sleeping accommodation for Cumberland Care support staff. (In addition, Cumberland Care Services will work closely with relevant landlords and make recommendations where necessary to ensure that the fire precautions are suitable and sufficient for tenants.)

It must be noted that supported living accommodation encompasses a diverse selection of property types. It is not possible to provide definitive guidance for every type of property in this procedure, but the general recommendations will be relevant in all cases.

In many instances properties used for the purposes of Supported Living have been in use for many years and prior to current guidance being published. It is therefore inevitable that not all properties will comply totally with the guidance provided within this document.

If a premises supervisor has doubts regarding the suitability of the fire precautions within a supported living property, they should bring this to the attention of their manager who will consult with their Fire Safety Advisor or Corporate Health and Safety Department for further advice and guidance.

There are some properties where Cumberland Care Services provide support, but the tenants do not require 24-hour support. Although a fire risk assessment is not required in respect of staff sleeping accommodation, an assessment will still be undertaken to ensure that the standards of fire safety are adequate for the tenants and Cumberland Care staff.

3. Definitions

Compartment: A wall common to two or more buildings should be so designed and constructed that it provides adequate resistance to the spread of fire between those buildings. If supported living homes are semi-detached or form part of a terrace, the wall between the different occupancies should have 60 minutes' fire resistance.

Containment: Precautions that contain the fire into the smallest possible area and control the threat to life safety and the extent of property damage.

Door release mechanisms: A device designed to retain a door in the open (or locked) position, which is electronically controlled via the operation of the fire alarm and detection system.

Escape lighting: That part of the emergency lighting that is provided to ensure that the escape route is illuminated at all material times.

Extinguishment: Precautions that ensure a fire can be quickly extinguished with the minimum disturbance to the function of and damage to the premises.

Final exit: The termination of an escape route from a building giving direct access to a place of safety outside the building.

Fire alarm and detection systems: Precautions that inform the occupants of a building and an external agency.

Fire door: Door or shutter provided for the passage of persons, air or objects which, together with its frame and furniture as installed in a building, is intended when closed to resist the passage of fire and /or gaseous products of combustion and is capable of meeting specified performance criteria to those ends.

Fire precautions: Measures that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of ignition occurring and/or mitigate the consequences should ignition occur.

Fire resistance: The ability of an element of building construction, component or structure to fulfil, for a stated period of time (30 minutes), the required load bearing capacity, fire integrity and/or insulation and/or other expected duty in a standard fire resistance test.

Fire stop: Seal provided to close an imperfection of fit or design tolerance between elements or components, to restrict the passage of fire and smoke.

Ignition sources: Sources of heat or flame which will cause ignition.

Inner rooms: A room from which the only escape route is through another room is called an inner room. It is at risk if a fire starts in the other room, called the access room.

Means of escape: Precautions that enable the occupants of a building to turn their back on a fire and escape to a place of safety away from the effects of the fire.

Place of safety: Place where no persons are in danger from fire.

Prevention: Precautions to control potential ignition and fuel sources, to ensure that fires do not start. Prevention also includes general fire precautions.

Supported living: Accommodation in the community provided for the care and support of people with learning difficulties, mental illness, or physical disability.

4. Responsibilities Under This Procedure

Corporate Directors: The relevant corporate director has overall responsibility for implementing this procedure.

Supervisors/Managers: Supervisors/Managers are responsible for ensuring that the recommendations within this document are followed as far as practicable and ensuring that any remedial measures identified in the fire safety risk assessment are implemented.

All Employees: All employees must adhere to the advice given in relation to fire safety (and health and safety). Where they are concerned about any hazards or defects, they must report their concerns to their line manager.

Agency Staff, Interim Appointees and Volunteers: The people identified in this section have a responsibility to cooperate with Cumberland Council's health and safety policy, safety procedures and local departmental rules.

Directorate Health and Safety Practitioners/Fire Safety Advisor: Are responsible for providing advice on health and safety matters to Building Management and Health and Safety Coordination Managers/Officers/Groups and Building Management and Health and Safety Record (Register) holders in the Directorate on request.

5. Commissioning of Properties

Adult Social Care are responsible for identifying clients that will benefit from a supported living environment and will also identify suitable properties to accommodate them.

It must be emphasised that Cumberland Care Services provides only support to the individual client and does not provide the accommodation.

Adult Social Care work with a number of social landlords, e.g. Impact, Dimensions etc. to identify properties suitable for supported living. The service user will choose the preferred property but ultimately the choice of property is limited to those that the relevant housing association/landlord has available at the time. In general properties are from a long-standing group of tenancies that have existed over a number of years.

Where a property becomes available that has not been used for supported living previously, it is imperative that it is assessed to confirm that it is suitable for the client's needs and also that it has adequate fire precautions.

To avoid additional expense to the landlord and Cumberland Council a check list has been provided in Appendix C to help identify those issues that should be considered when assessing a property.

Once a property is occupied Cumberland Care staff will continue to monitor the standard of maintenance and repair on behalf of the tenants to ensure landlords meet their responsibilities. Cumberland Care will formally notify the social work team and the commissioning team on behalf of Tenants if the houses are poorly maintained, or the landlord has failed to adhere to the terms of the tenancy. However, it should be noted that this can only be done with the clients, or their appointees, consent.

6. Fire Safety Risk Assessment

To comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Cumberland Care Services (Cumberland Council) must undertake a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment for each premises where employees work, i.e. in this instance, each supported living premises where staff are required to sleep on site. (A fire safety risk pro forma is provided in appendix A and guidance notes to aid in its completion are provided in Appendix B).

The assessment will identify the fire hazards present within the building and establish the suitability of existing fire precautions and will determine what additional control measures and fire precautions may be necessary.

A fire risk assessment will identify whether the general fire precautions are adequate to support the evacuation strategy that is in place. The fire risk assessment will also ensure that appropriate managerial arrangements, such as fire procedures and maintenance of fire safety measures, are in place.

Determining the suitability of the fire precautions the fire risk assessment should consider potential sources of ignition and sources of fuel present in the building.

Ignition Sources	Fuel
Electrical Sources of Ignition	Laundry Equipment
Smoking	Waste materials
Arson	Furnishings
Heating Installations/ Portable Heaters	Cleaning chemicals
Cooking	Medical Oxygen

The assessment will then consider the fire protection measures and procedures that are in place to determine if they are satisfactory, taking into account the nature of the occupants and the fire risks that are present.

Fire Protection Measures	Fire Safety Management
Means of Escape from Fire	Procedures And Arrangements
Measures to Limit Fire Spread and Development	Training and Drills
Emergency Escape Lighting	Testing and Maintenance
Fire Safety Signs and Notices	Records

Means of giving Warning in Case of Fire Manual Fire Extinguishing Appliances	

Cumberland Care Service staff may be required to assist occupants with a disability to evacuate in case of fire and in some instances an occupant's disability may extend the time required to vacate the building. This should be considered in the fire safety risk assessment and if necessary additional fire safety measures may be required to protect staff and Tenants. For example, fire doors might be provided to create a protected escape route thus extending the time available to make an escape.

Action Plan
The remedial measures required to achieve a satisfactory standard of fire safety will be summarised in an Action Plan at the end of the fire risk assessment document.

The Action Plan will prioritise the remedial measures. It is the responsibility of the designated property manager/supervisor to ensure that all remedial measures are implanted within the timescales indicated.

Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment
Current guidance provided in "*Fire Safety in Specialised Housing"* produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council recommends that a person-centred fire safety risk assessment should be completed for each tenant. However, this is primarily aimed at those instances where the tenant will occupy the property without constant support.

Within the context of properties supported by Cumberland Care Services this is not deemed necessary as in most instances care and supervision is provided on a 24-hour basis and tenants are assessed prior to taking up occupancy to confirm suitability of their domestic arrangements.

In addition regular reviews of the tenants care plan are carried out and this would identify any propensity of the tenant to contribute to the likelihood of fire or fire development, the mental capacity of the resident to recognise and respond appropriately to fire alarm signals or signs of fire, and the ability of the resident to escape in the event of fire.

Fire Risk Assessment Review
The fire safety risk assessment must be reviewed at least once every 12 months or if there is reason to suspect that the fire risk assessment is no longer valid, e.g. there has been a significant change in the premises that has affected the fire precautions. (Note that any potential risk posed by any significant change should be assessed before it is introduced.)

Example of why a review might be necessary:
- Alterations to the building, including the internal layout;
- Substantial changes to furniture and fixings;

- The introduction, change of use or increase in the storage of hazardous substances;
- The failure of fire precautions, e.g. fire-detection and alarm systems;
- Significant problems reported by staff or Tenants;
- The presence of people with different or specific form of disability;
- Changes in staff ratios.

The review must confirm that any remedial measures detailed in the Action Plan have been implemented and that it is still adequately addresses the fire risks that are present giving due consideration to the nature of the tenants occupying the building.

If a fire or near-miss occurs, this could indicate that the existing assessment may be inadequate, and a re-assessment might be required. It is good practice to identify the cause of any incident and then review and, if necessary, revise the fire risk assessment in the light of this.

7. FIRE PREVENTION

The aim of effective fire safety management is to minimise the risk of an accidental fire occurring. This can be achieved by removing unnecessary ignition sources from the property, introducing effective control measures for those that remain and ensuring that any potential ignition sources are separated, as far as practicable, from combustible material.

Ignition Sources
The management of the premises should be such that all reasonable provision is made to reduce the possibility of accidental ignition of any combustible material.

Electrical sources of ignition
Faulty electrical wiring and equipment and overloading of electrical circuits can result in overheating or arcing that can then ignite combustible material

Fixed wiring
Regular inspection and testing of fixed wiring and electrical appliances and repairing or replacing faulty equipment can considerably reduce the likelihood of a fire developing.

The fixed wiring in workplaces and supported housing, and in the common parts of sheltered and extra care housing, should be subject to periodic inspection and test in accordance with current guidance.

This should be undertaken at periods not exceeding five years. This is the responsibility of the landlord, but Cumberland Care Services should have access to records to show that this work has been carried out at the correct intervals.

Periodic inspection and testing of electrical installations should be undertaken by suitably competent persons e.g. an NICEIC approved electrical contractor or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association. The inspection and test, and any necessary remedial work, should be undertaken in accordance with the current IET Wiring Regulations (BS 7671).

Portable Electrical Appliances

Any portable electrical appliances that might be present in premises should be subject to regular inspections and testing. A competent person should check electrical equipment prior to being used for the first time. It should be ensured that the equipment is in good working order, the power lead and plug are undamaged, and the fuse fitted to the plug is of the correct rating.

If the equipment has been provided by the landlord, then it is generally their responsibility to implement a suitable testing regime.

Tenant's own equipment and any equipment used by Cumberland Care Service staff will be tested by a Cumberland Council approved contractor.

The accepted approach is for portable electrical equipment to be tested on an annual basis although different testing frequencies may be acceptable (see HSE Guide, "Maintaining portable electric equipment in low-risk environments").

Electrical sockets should not be overloaded, and the use of plug adapters and multi-way sockets should be avoided, and were deemed necessary, only used under appropriate supervision.

Ideally there should be sufficient electrical outlets provided to minimise the need to use extension cables/socket adaptors.
Where the use of extension cables/socket adaptors cannot be avoided Cumberland Care staff and Tenants should be made aware of the risks associated with their use. For example, overloading electrical sockets must be avoided and electrical extensions must not be used in inappropriate locations, e.g. kitchens or bathrooms.
Where extension cables/socket adaptors are in continual use consideration should be given to installing additional fixed electrical outlets.
Extension cables/socket adaptors must be included in portable appliance testing and inspected regularly for signs of deterioration and damage.
The use of electric blankets should be discouraged. Where they are needed electric blankets should be used, stored and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Electrical equipment should only be used for its intended purpose and operating instructions should be readily available for all equipment.

Smoking

The preferred approach is to restrict smoking to outside areas of the building. However, as the accommodation is the client's home Tenants may choose to smoke and it may be difficult to introduce appropriate control measures.
If applicable, smoking should be restricted to a single room within the premises and there should be a sufficient number of suitable ashtrays provided. Where the premises are fully supervised, inspections should be made at regular intervals and 30 minutes after the room has been vacated to ensure there are no signs of carelessly discarded smoking materials.

On no account should smoking be permitted in bedrooms.

In certain situations, where risks associated with smoking are identified, and it is recognised that Tenants are particularly vulnerable, it might be appropriate to engage the assistance of relatives, or outside agencies to identify potential solutions that could be considered to reduce the risk to the individual as part of a person-centred approach.
This might include additional automatic smoke detection, fire-resisting bedding and, potentially, specialised suppression systems.

Heating
Wherever possible the fixed heating installation, e.g. gas-powered central heating, should be sufficient to heat the building.

Where it is necessary to supplement the fixed heating system with portable heaters they must be closely managed. In each instance where a portable heater will be used it should be subject to a suitable risk assessment. The assessment must pay particular attention to the behavioural profiles of the tenants relative to the hazard created by using portable heaters.

The use of LPG naked flame or exposed element heaters should not be permitted.

The use of open fires or log burners located within a specifically designed fireplace should be subject to a detailed risk assessment of their use. In all cases, an open fire should be provided with a suitable fireguard.

There should be an effective programme of planned preventative maintenance. Fixed heating installations, e.g. gas boilers, should be serviced and inspected regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
There should be an agreed procedure for the reporting of faults and where necessary action should be taken to ensure that Tenants and staff are not placed at risk whilst awaiting the repair of defective heating equipment.

Cooking
Cooking should be restricted to the kitchen areas only and no cooking appliances used outside of the kitchen area, within the premises.

All cooking appliances should be kept clear of combustible material at all times and isolated from the power supply when not in use.
The use of deep fat fryers should be avoided.

Laundry
Tumble dryers have been implicated in a number of domestic fires.
To reduce the risk, it must be ensured that the lint filter is cleaned prior to, and on every occasion, that the appliance is used.

Laundry and other combustible material should not be stacked on top of the dryer.

If the dryer exhaust hose is installed permanently, i.e. it passes through a hole in the wall it is recommended that the hose is checked periodically to ensure that it has not become obstructed by a build-up of lint and fluff.

Where a flexible extract hose is used it should be free from kinks as this can restrict the air flow through the appliance.

Combustible Materials
Controlling combustible materials by good housekeeping can reduce the likelihood of fire occurring. Some of the good practices to be followed are indicated below. The list is not exhaustive.

- Avoid the use of highly flammable materials and liquids where possible.
- Store, use and dispose of aerosols in a safe manner.
- Stack and store linen in an orderly manner.
- Dispose of waste and other combustible waste promptly.
- Make adequate arrangements for unwanted items and recycling to be collected regularly.

There should be regular inspections undertaken within the premises, at least weekly, to ensure the likelihood of fire is not increased through the accumulation of excessive amounts of textiles, furniture or other combustible material.

Combustible material should be kept clear of ignition sources at all times. Ignition sources include all electrical equipment and heating appliances.

Arson - Refuse and recycling containers

Wheelie bins used for waste and recycling have been used as a source of fuel for arson. A fire in a bin close to a property building has the potential to spread into the building via a window or door. For this reason, wherever possible, wheelie bins and other waste containers should be sited as far from the building as possible or located within a secure outbuilding or garage.

Under no circumstances should they be positioned close to doors or windows.

If possible, they should be sited to the rear of the building where they are inaccessible, or at least out of site, to unauthorised visitors to the property.

If there is a risk of antisocial behaviour and malicious ignition consideration should be given to locking the lids of the wheelie bins.

Combustible Materials – Textiles and Furniture
The hazards associated with textiles and furniture being involved in a fire is dependent upon the overall environment. Whilst advances in materials and technology may reduce the risk, they will not entirely eliminate it.

All textiles and furniture should comply with the requirements The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993). These regulations set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery.

If tenants propose to purchase curtains/soft furnishings they should be advised to purchase only products made of a durable flame-retardant fabric or inherently flame-retarded fabric.

Cleaning Chemicals
All cleaning chemicals must have a suitable COSHH assessment in place.

Giving due regard to the tenants, it might be necessary to store any cleaning chemicals in a designated, lockable, cupboard.

Wherever possible the use of products in aerosol containers should be avoided.

Medical Oxygen
In some instances, a tenant may require the use of medical oxygen. Oxygen equipment must be carefully managed; oxygen leaking from a cylinder will accelerate fire development and create an explosion risk if the cylinder becomes involved in fire.

Where oxygen equipment is in use in the property support staff are advised to consult the Health and Safety Teams & Cumberland Care guidance note O1.

Fire Prevention – Management
Adequate management controls need to be in place to safeguard Tenants, support staff and visitors against the risk of fire.

There should be a suitable, up-to-date, emergency plan based on the fire risk assessment and the needs of individual tenants. Staff must be familiar with the plan.

The number of staff available should be appropriate with regard to the tenants and risks present.

The means of escape must be kept clear and accessible at all times.

Equipment provided for firefighting, emergency lighting and giving warning in case of fire, must be correctly maintained in efficient working order. Regular tests and inspections must be completed by a competent person, in accordance with the requirements of the current relevant British Standard.

Note
It is important that staff are familiar with the locations of the fire safety provisions. It is sometimes beneficial to have a simple line drawing of the premises indicating the locations of smoke alarms, fire-fighting equipment, escape routes and utility service isolation.

8. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Fire Alarm and Detection Systems
For life safety, early detection of fire is of vital importance. Early detection will allow for a more orderly evacuation and offers the potential for the fire to be tackled at an earlier stage, thereby reducing the risk to life and minimising damage to property.

All supported living premises providing sleeping accommodation for Cumberland Care Services staff will have a fire alarm system that, as a minimum, complies with the requirements of British Standard 5839: Part 6. The minimum grade of system will be a Grade C, with a protection level of LD1 (see Note below for clarification of the system required). Detectors should be provided throughout all parts of the premises. On the basis of the findings of the fire risk assessment, there may be no requirement to install fire detection in roof, ceiling or floor voids, bathrooms, or small cupboards (less than $1m^2$).

The smoke/heat alarms must be permanently wired to a separate fused circuit at the distribution board and may be operated at a low voltage via a transformer. The alarm installation should incorporate a stand-by power supply. No other equipment should be connected to this circuit. Connection should be via a protective device (a fuse or miniature circuit breaker) and should be labelled “Fire Alarm – Do Not Isolate.”

The power supply to the alarm installation must be monitored. There must be either a visual or audible warning of the failure of the mains supply.

Smoke alarms should not be fixed next to or directly above heaters or air-conditioning outlets, or within 1½ times the radius of any ceiling-mounted cooling fans.

Smoke detectors should not be installed in bathrooms, showers, cooking areas or garages, or any other location where steam, condensation or fumes could give rise to unwanted alarms. In these locations heat detectors should be installed and linked into the smoke alarm circuit.

It is important to consider those persons in the premises who may have a hearing or visual impairment. Where necessary, arrangements must be in place to supplement the audible alarm with visual and/or sensory devices. Any signal forming part of the fire warning system should be clearly distinguishable from any other form of warning device.

Where it is identified that a person with hearing impairment will be alone in the dwelling at any time, other suitable means of giving warning in the event of fire will be necessary. Great care is necessary to ensure that any fire alarm devices provided for a person with a hearing impairment are suitably located, reducing exposure to undue risk from fire as a result of inadequate means of warning in any room or area of the dwelling. The fire risk assessment should determine the specific design requirements.

Due regard must be given to where staff sleep. Any potential for future changes to the sleeping accommodation should be subject to an assessment of the audibility of the alarm to ensure it is sufficient to awaken sleeping staff.

Note
A Grade C system is a system of fire detectors and alarm sounders (which may be combined in the form of smoke alarms) connected to a common power supply, comprising the normal mains and a standby supply, with an element of central

control. If two or more detectors are installed, they should normally be interconnected to maximise the extent of the audible warning when one detects a fire. It is essential that interconnected smoke alarms are all supplied from a single common circuit.

For a fire alarm and detection system to achieve a detection level of LD1, smoke alarms must be installed in all rooms and areas of the house, except those, such as kitchens, that are unsuitable for smoke alarms; heat detectors should be installed in these rooms. Toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms, that contain no fire risk, do not require detection to be fitted.

If people are present in a room where a fire originates, they will normally detect the fire before it is detected automatically. Therefore, in a very large property manual call points are of benefit, so that a warning of fire can be initiated before it is detected by automatic fire detectors. Manual call points can readily be incorporated within a Grade C system.

Consideration should be given to the audibility of the alarm throughout the premises. No particular sound pressure level is certain to rouse all occupants of a dwelling in all circumstances. Depth of sleep varies during the course of the sleep period and also varies from one person to another. BS 5839-1 recommends that, if an audible alarm is intended to rouse sleeping persons, a sound level of 75 dB (A) should be achieved at the bedhead when all doors are shut, although this will not guarantee that every person will be awakened, particularly if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A Grade C system, with a protection level of LD1, should provide adequate levels of audibility as each smoke or heat detector will incorporate a sounder; all detectors are interconnected and will sound simultaneously; and detectors must be installed in all rooms and areas of the house.

Means of Escape

There should be adequate means of escape in case of fire, capable of being used safely and effectively at all times.

Means of escape in one or two storey premises is relatively simple. There are few provisions necessary beyond ensuring that each habitable room either opens directly into a final exit or into a hallway or stairway that leads directly to a final exit

The maximum distance to be travelled within any room, avoiding all obstructions, should be 9m. The maximum distance to be travelled to reach a place of safety should be 18m.

The design of stairways should be such that it is possible to evacuate tenants by the most appropriate method, dependent upon their mobility.

All doors opening onto the escape routes from staff bedrooms (stairways, halls, corridors) should be FD30s fire doors (30 minutes fire resistance; fitted with self-closing device; fitted with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals).

There should be no cupboards located within stairways. Any cupboard located within a stairway should be enclosed in 30-minute fire-resisting construction.

Where stair lifts are considered essential, they should only be provided on the basis of a risk assessment taking particular account of the nature of the client group; width of the stairway and the provision of staff.

Note
Open plan stairways are not acceptable without the provision of a residential sprinkler system installed throughout the premises. Where an open plan stairway already exists within a property currently used for the provision of supported living, remedial action must be taken.

Where an open plan stairway forms part of the escape route, it will be necessary to either:
1. Fully enclose the stairway;
   or
2. Install a residential sprinkler system throughout the premises to an appropriate standard.

Alternatively, the upper storey should be separated from the lower storeys by 30-minute fire-resisting construction and be provided with its own independent means of escape.

Means of Escape – Escape Lighting
Escape lighting is that lighting provided for use when the power supply to the normal lighting fails.

External sources of illumination, not supplied by the household electricity supply, e.g. street lighting, may provide adequate supplementary lighting for emergency purposes. This should be assessed giving consideration to the visual acuity of Tenants.

In some instances, a torch powered by a rechargeable battery might be sufficient for the purposes of providing emergency lighting. Where it has been determined that a rechargeable torch is suitable it should be stored permanently on the recharging stand and be designed to illuminate automatically on a failure of the mains power supply.

Conventional fixed emergency lighting systems are designed to illuminate specific areas, e.g.:
• Escape routes and exit doors;
• Outside each exit and external escape routes;
• Emergency escape signs;
• Stairways and changes in floor level;
• Large rooms and windowless rooms;
• Firefighting equipment;
• Fire alarm call points;

In supported living premises with a fixed emergency lighting system, it might be deemed adequate to provide emergency lighting to cover common escape routes, i.e. stairways and entrance halls only.

If a fixed emergency lighting system is installed it should comply with the requirements of British Standard 5266: Parts 1 and 7:

Safety Signs and Notices
The need for appropriate signs should be balanced against the need to maintain a homely domestic environment as required in supported living properties.

In small single storey, or single stairway, sheltered or extra care housing, there will be no requirement to provide 'FIRE EXIT' signs.
Tenants will be familiar with the fire exit routes, as they will be used on a daily basis for normal access and egress from the building.

Similarly, in most supported housing that resembles a single-family dwelling, there will be no requirement for 'FIRE EXIT' signs. In the majority of these environments, the fire exit routes will be simple and straightforward, and the Tenants will be familiar with the layout of the premises and the location of exits.

If the risk assessment indicates that risks can only be avoided or reduced by the provision of safety signs, then such signs must be provided. For example, signs displayed next to fire extinguisher ensure that those likely to operate them, i.e. support staff, are informed of the type of extinguisher and correct method of operation.

Fire Action Notices give concise instructions on the action to take on discovery of a fire and on hearing the alarm: these are unlikely to be required in the areas occupied by tenants unless specifically identified in the fire risk assessment. However, it is recommended that a fire action notice is provided in the staff bedroom and office.

Where signs are displayed, they should comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996

Measures To Limit Fire Spread and Development
In order to prevent fire and smoke travel between properties or over large areas of a building, it is important to ensure an adequate degree of fire separation. This is achieved through the provision of compartment walls and floors.

A compartment wall or floor should form a complete barrier to fire between the compartments they separate.

Any wall separating flats, semi-detached houses or terraced houses should be constructed as a compartment wall.

Where a garage is attached to a property or forms an integral part of the property, any opening between the garage and the occupied part of the premises must be at

least 100mm above the floor level of the garage, and achieve the required standard of fire resistance (30 minutes).

Any openings in a compartment wall or floor must achieve the same standard of fire resistance as that required for the compartment wall or floor.

In a protected escape route, where the corridor should be sub-divided to prevent fire or smoke affecting two alternative escape routes simultaneously, the above the corridor enclosures must be carried full storey height, or (in the case of a top storey) to the underside of the roof.

Internal fire resisting and smoke stop doors must be maintained in good condition. The door must be close-fitting within the door frame and intumescent strips and cold smoke seals must be intact. Self-closing devices must be capable of closing the door securely.

Fire hazard rooms are rooms or areas that because of their function and/or content present a greater hazard of fire occurring and developing than elsewhere. Within the context of this guidance such rooms would include:

- kitchens;
- storerooms over 1m^2;
- boiler rooms;
- lounges
- laundry rooms;
- designated smoking areas;
- bedrooms;
- under stair stores.

Wherever possible fire hazard rooms should be enclosed in 30-minute fire-resisting construction.

They must be enclosed in 30-minute fire-resisting construction if they open onto the only means of escape from the building. Positive action self-closing devices should be fitted to the fire doors unless the door is for a store cupboard that will be kept locked.

Manual Fire-Fighting Equipment

The purpose of providing fire-fighting equipment is to allow people in the home to make good their escape or tackle a small fire, if it is safe to do so. It is imperative that the use of fire-fighting equipment does not result in a delay in calling the fire service. Staff who are expected to use the equipment must be suitably trained to do so.

Any equipment provided must be of the correct type and of sufficient capacity to be effective.

Fire-fighting equipment should only be provided in unstaffed or unsupervised accommodation where an assessment of the capability of the Tenants has identified that it would be appropriate.

A fire blanket and a carbon dioxide extinguisher should be provided in the kitchen

Portable fire extinguishers should be provided at the rate of at least one per floor, with a minimum of two extinguishers of an appropriate type being provided within the premises.

9. MAINTENANCE OF FIRE PRECAUTIONS

All fire precautions provided in a property must be subject to regular inspection, testing and maintenance.

In all instances the results of routine testing and maintenance of all fire precautions should be recorded in the fire safety logbook held on the premises.

Any defects should be reported to the landlord immediately and should be addressed as soon as possible.

Fire Alarm
Supported living properties will either have a fire alarm system with a fire alarm control panel, detectors and manual call points (red break glass boxes), or alternatively a system of interconnected automatic smoke detectors with no control panel or call points.

Where a fire alarm control panel is installed, this will be checked at least every 24 hours to ensure there are no specific faults.

Weekly test – Systems with a control panel

Every week, the fire alarm should be activated by inserting a test key into a manual call point. It should be confirmed that the alarm activation is indicated on the control panel and that all the fire alarm sounders operate.

Any instances of poor audibility of the fire alarm signal should be recorded and reported.

A different manual call point should be used at the time of every weekly test, so that all manual call points in the building are tested in rotation over a prolonged period.

The duration for which any fire alarm signal is given at the time of the weekly test by the user should not normally exceed one minute, so that, in the event of a fire at the time of the weekly test, occupants will be warned by the prolonged operation of the fire alarm devices.

Any equipment that operates automatically on activation of the fire alarm, e.g. door-release mechanisms, auto release locks on electronically secured doors, should also be checked to ensure that they operate correctly.

Systems without a control panel.

Where the fire alarm system does not have a control panel and consists of ceiling mounted detector/sounders only, the weekly test will require each detector to be tested via the integrated test button on the detector.

The detectors in this type of system are interlinked such that if any one detector is activated the sounders in all the detectors will operate. When testing a ceiling mounted detector/sounder it should be ensured that on activation, the sounder in all detectors operates.

Servicing of the Fire Alarm by an approved contractor.

The fire alarm system will be inspected a by a qualified fire alarm technician or engineer; the period between successive inspection and servicing visits should not exceed six months.

Routine inspections will normally be arranged by the landlord.
Grade A systems should be inspected and serviced at periods not exceeding six months in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1.

An inspection and servicing certificate should be issued.

Emergency lighting
To test an emergency lighting system, a mains power failure on the normal lighting circuit / circuits or individual luminaries must be simulated. This will force the emergency lighting system to operate via the battery supply.

A simulated mains failure can be achieved by providing a switch to isolate all lighting circuits / individual circuits / individual luminaires.

The test may require test switches to be operated for each individual emergency light. Alternatively, it might be necessary to isolate the lighting circuit at the electrical consumer unit. If this method is used staff must be provided with appropriate training to undertake this test.

After simulating the mains failure check all emergency luminaire are operating correctly. After restoring the mains supply, check that the emergency lights are recharging (this is usually indicated by an illuminated red or green LED in the emergency light unit).

Routine inspections and tests
The following minimum inspections and tests shall be carried out at the intervals recommended below.
If the emergency lighting consists of rechargeable torches, they should be tested weekly to confirm that they are operating correctly.

Monthly emergency lighting tests
All emergency lighting systems must be tested monthly. The test is a short functional test in accordance with BS EN 50172:2004 / BS 5266-8:2004.
The period of simulated failure should be sufficient for the purpose of this test while minimising damage to the system components, e.g. lamps. During this period, all emergency lights should be checked to ensure that they are clean and functioning correctly.

Annual
A test for the full rated duration of the emergency lights (e.g. 3 hours) must be carried out. The emergency lights must still be working at the end of this test. The result must be recorded and, if failures are detected, these must be remedied as soon as possible.

Because of the possibility of a failure of the normal lighting supply occurring shortly after a period of testing of the emergency lighting system or during the subsequent recharge period, all full duration tests shall, wherever possible, be undertaken just before a time of low risk to allow for battery recharge. Alternatively, suitable temporary arrangements shall be made until the batteries have been recharged.

Fire Extinguishers
All fire extinguishers should be subject to a monthly visual inspection.

When carrying out these visual inspections, it should be ensured that:
a) Each extinguisher is correctly located in the designated place;
b) Each extinguisher is unobstructed and visible and has a suitable sign affixed to the wall adjacent to the extinguisher;
c) The operating instructions of each extinguisher are clean and legible and face outwards;
d) Each extinguisher has not been operated and is not obviously damaged or has any missing parts;
e) The reading of any pressure gauge or indicator fitted to an extinguisher is within operational and safety limits;
f) The seals and tamper indicators of each extinguisher are not broken or missing.

The person conducting the inspection should record the results and arrange for corrective action, where necessary, by a competent person. In the event of doubt, the responsible person should arrange for a competent person to examine the extinguisher.

Extinguishers should be subject to an annual service and inspection by a qualified technician, unless the extinguisher is ‘maintenance free,’ in which case it should be replaced once it has reached the end of its service life (a date is usually indicated on the appliance label).

10. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

All staff (including temporary and agency staff), and where appropriate, Tenants, should be given information, instruction and training about the precautions provided in the property. This information must include the action to take in case of fire and how to call the fire service.

Information, instruction and training should be given at the start of a person’s employment.

If an employee is not familiar with a property where they will be working, they must be provided with relevant fire safety training specific to the property.

Training should be repeated at regular intervals and not less than annually.

Fire safety training should be specific to the premises and should cover:

- Action to take on discovery of a fire.
- Action to take on activation of the fire alarm.
- Fire prevention.
- Action to take on discovery of a person with their clothing alight.
- Advice on the importance of fire doors and their correct use.
- Use of manual fire-fighting equipment.
- Evacuation and escape routes.

Where it is deemed appropriate, Tenants should be included in the training sessions.

Fire drills should be held as often as required and at least twice per year.

All Supervisor / Staff will be trained to fire warden standard and this training will be repeated at three yearly intervals where support staff are required to undertake routine (Weekly) tests of the fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire extinguishers provided in a property they will be provided with relevant training.

Records of training should be kept for the appropriate retention period and any training should be recorded through the Organisational Workforce Development team and will be recorded electronically.

11. AUDITING COMPLIANCE AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Fire Audits will take place a minimum of annually. A report and action plan will be generated from this visit.
It is the manager's responsibility to ensure the action plan is actioned and completed. The action plan and report will be visibility by managers and senior management.

12. REFERENCES & RELATED DOCUMENTS

"*Fire Safety in Specialised Housing*." The National Fire Chiefs Council

Housing – Fire Safety Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing (LACoRS)

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Sleeping accommodation (ISBN: 978 1 85112 817 4)