

# F5 Fire Prevention Policy & Procedure

Residential Services, Day Services & Support at Home Services

Version: New

Date: 01/10/2023

## Document version control

Document information type	Document information detail
Organisation	Cumberland Council Care Services
Document Title	F5 Fire Evacuation Procedure
Filename	Residential Services, Day Services, Support at Home Service
Document Status	New
Author	Jackie Leech
Document held by (name/section)	Jackie Leech
Contact email	<a href="mailto:Jackie.leech@cumbria.gov.uk">Jackie.leech@cumbria.gov.uk</a>
Date of publication	01/10/2023
Next review date	As and when required
Version Number	New
Approval date and by who (delegated / committee)	Leadership Team
For internal publication only or external also?	External
Document stored on Council website or Intranet?	Intranet

## Document change history

Version	Date reviewed	Reviewed by	Description of revision

## **Introduction**

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the **Corporate Fire safety procedure**.

The importance of fire safety in Care Services cannot be over emphasised given the county wide role in supporting vulnerable people. The vulnerability of those Care Services supports, whether that be in service user homes, day centres or in peoples own homes, means that procedures to ensure proper risk assessment, fire prevention and robust evacuation procedures are in place are critical. In the event of fire occurring the appropriateness of our response will be a reflection on our procedures, training and advance planning.

This policy and procedure provide the overall guidance on the key areas that managers need to deliver. Specific advice and support in any cases of doubt should be secured from the **Corporate Health and Safety Team**.

### **Approved by**

This document has been reviewed on the following dates:

- 01.10.23 - Following clearance by the Care Services Leadership team and Procedure group

### **Index / Appendices**

- F5 Fire Emergency policy / procedure
- Appendix A – Notes on test procedures and frequencies
- Appendix B – Training to support fire prevention and action including the training matrix
- Appendix C – Prevention measures and general fire precautions
- Appendix D – Service user fire evacuation procedure & stand-alone day centre fire evacuation procedure
- Appendix E - Evacuation arrangements
- Appendix E, section 1 – Staff Induction
- Appendix E, section 2 – Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for service users (PEEP)
- Appendix E, section 4 – Personal emergency evacuation notice for visitors.
- Appendix E, section 5 – GEEP spreadsheet (for recording hot spots)
- Appendix F - Opening doors in a fire

## **POLICY**

To ensure the safety of all service users, visitors and staff in the event of a fire.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Responsibilities**

The nominated responsible person for a building will be the senior manager within the building. In our service user homes this will be the registered manager and in facilities where the building is shared with other Council departments, or external partners, then the

responsible person will be the main occupier. In cases of any doubt, advice should be sought from the relevant operations manager to ensure that there is no ambiguity.

The responsible person must ensure that checks are undertaken by themselves or nominated trained fire wardens. Follow Appendix A. If the checks are not being carried out personally by the responsible person, they must assure themselves that checks are being carried out to the correct standard.

**Support at home employees must ensure they familiarise themselves with the fire exits within each service users' own home.**

### **Reducing the Risk of Fire**

Staff must be aware of their responsibilities for reducing the risk of a fire and must familiarise themselves with some of the ways in which this can be done using Appendix C (Prevention measures and general fire precautions) under the following headings:

1. Housekeeping
2. Arson
3. Electrical safety
4. Heating Equipment
5. Cooking
6. Smoking
7. Dangerous substances

### **Review – Fire Risk Assessment Review**

Risk assessment is an ongoing process, and the fire safety risk assessment must be reviewed regularly so as to keep it up to date. All fire risk assessments will be reviewed annually by the person with responsibility for fire safety in the premises.

Regular monitoring may reveal near misses or defects in preventive and protective measures. Adverse events such as a fire or other dangerous occurrence may take place even if a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been made and appropriate preventive and protective measures taken. Such events should be a trigger for reviewing the original assessment.

The person with responsibility for fire safety in the premises will also be responsible for amending the risk assessment if a minor change occurs that affects the assessment, for example, medical oxygen is in use where it had not been previously, or a new service user is a smoker.

The fire safety risk assessment must also require a review if developments suggest that it may no longer be valid. For example, if there has been a significant change to a property, for example:

- The building has been extended;
- Alterations to the internal layout;
- Near miss, occurrence of fire etc.

Under such circumstances the Fire Safety Advisor or Health and Safety Department should be contacted for further advice.

## **Audits**

A fundamental part of this policy and procedure focuses on avoiding fire occurring in the first place. The tool used for reviewing the risk of fire is the establishment fire risk assessment held in the service user or day care establishment. During the latter part of 2009 / early 2010 a program of fire audits was undertaken by the Directorate Health & Safety Team, the Care Services Accommodation Manager and site managers. This audit included a fire risk assessment and identified actions that need to be taken to reduce the risk of fire. It is the role of the responsible person to ensure the requirements in the action plan are delivered.

Managers must follow the guidance given on the areas to consider when undertaking a review of fire precautions and the fire risk assessment and these guidelines are included as Appendix A Notes on test procedures and frequencies. Managers should undertake building checks monthly as part of their building responsibilities.

All checks and fire records must be logged in the Fire Safety Logbook. This is available for free download on the Fire and Rescue website.

The Fire Safety Logbook should be kept in line with archiving procedure.

Any issues of concern arising from these checks should be resolved immediately if possible or if advice is required on how to resolve the issue, then this should be sought immediately, and a record kept detailing actions towards gaining resolution.

## **Training**

Training has been reviewed to ensure all staff within Care Services are well equipped to appreciate fire risks, report those risks in order to support fire avoidance and trained in order that they can appropriately respond in the event of fire. The training is mandatory for the staff listed below.

When a new employee starts the Appendix E Section 1 must be completed.

The training provided is as follows:

Training	Staff to be trained
Induction	All new staff
Fire Warden (Not including support at home services)	All Managers, Supervisors & night staff (Not Support at Home)
Emergency action (Not including support at home services)	All staff except Support at Home

Fire Extinguisher Training	All staff except Support at Home
----------------------------	----------------------------------

Details of this training are included at Appendix B training matrix.

## **Fire Wardens**

Each Care Services facility needs to have a trained fire warden on duty at all times. It is Care Services policy that the manager, supervisors and all-night staff should be trained as fire wardens. If managers judge that there is a need to have additional people trained in order to meet this requirement, then they should request additional training through their local Training Department.

The duties of the fire warden may include:

- helping those on the premises to leave
- checking the premises to ensure everyone has left
- using firefighting equipment if safe to do so
- liaising with the fire and rescue service on arrival
- shutting down vital or dangerous equipment
- performing a supervisory / managing role in any fire situation
- assisting in the regular checking and testing of fire safety prevention, detection and protection measures as detailed in Appendix A.

To achieve this, the fire warden will need to know:

- The items listed in the emergency box
- The importance of fire doors and other basic fire prevention measures
- The appropriate use of firefighting equipment
- The importance of reporting to the assembly area
- Exit routes and the operation of exit devices
- General matters such as permitted smoking areas or restrictions on cooking other than in designated areas
- Detailed knowledge of the fire safety strategy of the premises including, where applicable, phased horizontal evacuation
- Awareness of human behaviour in fires
- How to encourage others to use the most appropriate escape route
- How to search safely and recognise areas that are unsafe to enter

Where phased horizontal or vertical evacuation is required to evacuate service users who have poor mobility, fire wardens need appropriate training in order to deploy and utilise evacuation aids or equipment quickly and efficiently, and with as little distress to the service users as possible.

(This does not include Support at Home Services).

## **Action in the Event of Fire**

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE.** The safe evacuation of service users in case of fire is of paramount importance. HM Government Guidance (Guide to Fire Safety Risk Assessment Service User Care Premises) recommends that care homes should aim to evacuate

service users to a place of reasonable or total safety within 2 1/2 minutes of the alarm being raised; however, it must be emphasised that this is not prescriptive guidance.

The care industry has highlighted that an evacuation time of 2 1/2 minutes should be considered to be an aspirational target and not necessarily achievable in all cases. In response to these concerns further guidance was produced following consultation with National Association for Safety and Health in Care Services (NASHiCS) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), Business Safety Group. (Additional Guidance Good Practice Guidance 2016 for application to HM Government Guide to Fire Safety Risk Assessment Service User Care Premises.)

The additional guidance acknowledges that, *“the 2.5 min should be seen as a starting point upon which to make an assessment and that longer evacuation times could be accepted, so long as every effort is made to reduce the time taken and the risk is mitigated by adjustment of other appropriate factors. Other appropriate factors could include:*

- ◆ *Automatic Water Suppression Systems;*
- ◆ *Additional compartmentation;*
- ◆ *Additional staff;*
- ◆ *Reduced compartment sizes.*

To satisfy these recommendations and ensure the safety of service users in case of fire at all times Care Services will install water-based fire suppression systems in all new build care homes.

In addition, all existing care homes, without a fire suppression system, have had compartments sizes reduced; each compartment in most instances is limited to six service users.

Care Services will ensure that there is a minimum of two staff covering a night shift. New build care homes with fire suppression will have larger fire compartments as this is acceptable under current guidance and compliant with building regulations. In these instances, the minimum staffing levels will be commensurate with the numbers of service users.

Action in the event of fire varies depending on the type of service and building concerned. Typically, our service user’s accommodation is built on the basis of evacuation from one compartment of the building to another (horizontal evacuation). This design ensures that a minimum of 30 minutes protection is provided by evacuating from a compartment that is on fire to an adjoining compartment (on the other side of a recognised fire door). The policy, therefore, for service user’s homes is to evacuate horizontally from one compartment to another. This will be challenging when moving frail or vulnerable service users and it is important that each service user has a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) see Appendix E section 2.

As part of the overall evacuation arrangement the responsible person will also need to be mindful of the need to avoid having a single compartment inhabited by extremely immobile service users making rapid evacuation even more challenging.

Two calls to the emergency services must be made. The first to raise the alarm and the second call must be made once the fire has been confirmed.

To assist with the smooth running of an evacuation and to support the emergency services on the arrival to the establishment Appendix E, section 5 GEEP spreadsheet must be completed, and a two copies must be held in the emergency box / file. One can be passed to the emergency services when they arrive.

In day services, it is less likely to be compartmental based evacuation, and, in most cases, it will be total evacuation of the building. Day services DO NOT need to complete an Appendix E Section 5 GEEP spreadsheet. In the event of a fire day service staff must ensure they use the register and information from the PEEP to ensure total safe evacuation of staff and service users.

Action in the Event of Fire is documented in Appendix D. This should be displayed in staff areas. A “general fire action notice” must be displayed adjacent to each fire exit.

Where the alarm is raised and staff need to open doors to ascertain if there is a fire in a room, every precaution must be taken, and the Appendix F procedure followed.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans – Appendix E (Sections 2, and 5)**

It is important that all service users have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) where there is an identified need. This is an integral part of their person-centred care plan. The PEEP must be reviewed at least annually or earlier if the needs of the service user change and updated if necessary.

A copy of the service user PEEP must be held on the person-centred care plan.

Once the service user PEEPs have been completed and the score from page 1 has been established, ensure this is added to Appendix E, section 5, personal emergency evacuation spreadsheet (electronic version held on the intranet). Two copies of the personal emergency evacuation spreadsheet must be held in the emergency box / file. It can be held for reference.

In many cases PEEPS rely on staff to provide physical assistance to service user in the event of evacuation. It is each member of staff’s responsibility to inform the manager immediately if they feel physically incapable of providing the necessary assistance to a service user in the event of an emergency. If this is the case this will than form part of the management supervision plan.

Care Services operates a system of assisted escape for disabled visitors. Each establishment must have a specific Care Services fire evacuation notice displayed in each entrance for visitors to read – see Appendix E, Section 4.

The notice asks any disabled visitor to report to the manager / supervisor. Any visitors who ask for assistance must have the escape procedures explained to them and / or a suitable escape plan provided e.g., assigned to a member of staff to assist in the event of a fire.



## **Support at Home Services**

Support at Home staff will obviously not be in attendance for protracted periods of the day although support at home staff can provide a valuable source of protection to those that live alone at home. Care Services has excellent links with the Fire and Rescue Service and works with them to offer free fire checks and the installation of smoke alarms. Support at home staff must contact their supervisor / local office if they have any concerns around fire and safety.

As part of the Care Services assessment and review process, checks will be offered and can then be arranged by contacting The Older Persons Advocate Fire and Rescue Service or any of the team, who will be able to arrange a visit.