Lifestyle By Homecare Services

Fire Safety Policy

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014	12, 15
CQC Single Assessment Framework Topics **Safe Topic Areas:** Learning culture Safe systems, pathways and transitions Involving people to manage risks Safe environments Safe and effective staffing **Effective Topic Areas:** Assessing needs **Caring Topic Areas:** Treating people as individuals Independence, choice and control **Responsive Topic Areas:** Providing information **Well-led Topic Areas:**	

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Locally Responsible:

Governance, management and sustainability

Environmental sustainability – sustainable development

Please see the 'Quality Statements' section for full guidance

Scope

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is the driver for fire safety. In part, the regulation requires the responsible person to undertake a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions needed to comply with the order.

Every new employee will be given fire safety guidance when they join the organisation; each employee will be given refresher information, instruction, and training as is necessary to enable the safe performance of work activities. Adequate facilities and arrangements will be maintained to enable employees to raise issues of fire safety.

This policy applies to all staff, service users, visitors and contractors who may be working within or visiting the registered office.

Competent people will be appointed to assist us in meeting our statutory duties including, where appropriate, specialists from outside the organisation.

This policy and procedure are provided for the regulated activity of personal care.

Equality Statement

Our organisation is committed to equal rights and the promotion of choice, person-centred care and the promotion of independence. This policy demonstrates our commitment to creating a positive culture of respect for all individuals. The intention is, as required by the Equality Act 2010, to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in the nine named protected characteristics of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. It is also intended to reflect the Human Rights Act 1998 to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals.

Key Points

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- All staff must be familiar with this policy and the local procedures as it relates to both the registered office and the service user's home.
- A fire risk assessment undertaken by a 'Competent Person,' for example a professional risk assessor, will be in place for the registered office and reviewed as a minimum annually. A professional risk assessor is an individual or company with third party accreditation who is listed on a register.
- A Fire Drill will be carried out at least annually in the registered office, or as determined by the fire risk assessment. Following the Fire Drill the management team will develop an assessment of the services response, the response time, learning outcomes and an action plan will be developed to ensure continuous improvement. Consideration needs to be given where there is more than one shift so that all are involved in a Fire Drill.
- Fire Wardens will be in place to support the Fire Safety Lead. With at least one fire warden on for each shift.
- Staff must sign in and out of the office to ensure there is an accurate roll call in case of a fire and evacuation of the office.
- Fire safety checks will be in place, daily, weekly and annually, e.g. fire extinguishers are checked and serviced every 12 months.
- Fire safety update training will be provided to all staff annually. Service users will have in place a risk assessment which takes into consideration fire risk, e.g. smoking, use of emollients etc. Staff must make themselves aware of the risk assessment and any identified evacuation considerations from the service user's home.
- In 2018 the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued a safety alert and warning about the risk of severe and fatal burns from emollients. Emollients act as an accelerant and significantly increase the risk of fire and the intensity.
- Stay away from naked flames and heat sources when using the products. Wash clothing and bedding regularly. Wear apron over clothing when cooking. Use e-cigarette or safety lighter. Do not go near anyone using a naked flame.
- The people most vulnerable to fires are older people and those with mobility problems and it is these service users who tend to rely on emollient creams.
- On discovery of a fire staff should follow the local fire procedures in place. This document provides guidance on actions to be taken.
- Example fire safety risk assessments templates are provided as web links in the references at the end of this document.

Policy Statement

All staff and managers are required to read this policy and procedure, as well as implement it within the work place and the service users' homes. If staff and managers have any concerns related to fire safety they must be raised immediately with the Fire Safety Lead and/or the Registered Manager.

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The best way to ensure staff and service users are safe is an effective fire policy and associated procedures, supported by staff that are well-trained to cope with an outbreak of fire or an alarm in a service user's home.

In addition, the organisation has in place compliant systems of work to ensure that fire safety policies and procedures and appointed fire wardens are in place in accordance with the law in the organisation's offices.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('the Order'), came into force on 1 October 2006 and requires the 'responsible person' to provide and maintain sufficient fire precautions within the organisation.

Within the organisation, the Registered Manager will be the 'responsible person'; however, responsibility for fire safety at board level will be the Managing Director, or similar senior manager. The Registered Manager, where necessary, will nominate in writing specific people to carry out tasks if there is a fire, for example Fire Wardens for each shift. Where applicable, the organisation will make arrangements whereby regional or area managers will monitor and check that individual managers are meeting the requirements of the fire safety law.

The Policy

This organisation aims to ensure that staff and service users are as safe as possible from the threat of fire or from injury in the case of an outbreak of fire.

All workers at the service, including volunteers and contractors, are shown the fire alarm central panel position, this policy and local procedure on induction. The internal and external fire meeting points are physically shown to the person for the Registered Office.

Procedures

Registered Office

Fire alarm tests are performed every week and recorded in the fire log book.

Emergency lightning is tested monthly and recorded.

Every six months there will be a fire drill in the office, with evaluation of the results, and this is recorded in the logbook and on the staff training matrix.

Learning from the evaluation will be undertaken and an action plan developed to ensure that the systems of work, staff training and competency improved where necessary.

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The fire drills will take place throughout the shift cycle staff are in the office, e.g. if open 7am to 10pm, drills will be arranged at different times between these hours.

Once a fire alarm sounds, even if a false alert, staff are reminded that the Fire Plan must be followed.

For the purposes of carrying out the Fire Plan, the most senior manager on duty who has had Fire Warden training will be the person in charge.

There will always be one person on a shift who has been trained as a Fire Warden, and the Registered Manager will be responsible for ensuring sufficient office staff have had the requisite training and that each shift has a Fire Warden assigned.

For health and safety reasons all staff will sign in and out of the office to ensure that the Fire Warden has an accurate register of staff in case of evacuation of the building due to fire. The signing in book will be kept at the reception desk or main entrance to the office and staff and visitors will be required to sign in and out, including times and dates.

Fire Safety Checks

Daily checks (end of day or routine check):

- Fire doors are closed.
- Fire exits and stairways are free of clutter.
- Electrical equipment and heaters are turned off.
- Storerooms free from fire risks.
- Rubbish areas do not have lit ashes or smouldering fires.
- Contractors have left work areas free of fire hazards.

Weekly checks:

- Alarm systems function correctly.
- Firefighting equipment is fit for purpose and in date.
- Stocks of flammable materials are kept to a minimum and are stored safely.
- Goods and boxes are safely stored away to minimise clutter and a fuel source for a fire, and to enable people to exit the building without hindrance in an emergency.
- Fire Instructions and No Smoking notices are in place and visible.
- Rooms do not contain obvious fire hazards such as overfull waste baskets or portable heaters placed close to curtains.
- That all electrical equipment is free of obvious defects such as worn cables and exposed leads.
- That organisation security arrangements are all in place discouraging arson.

Other Checks

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- Fire extinguishers in the office will be serviced every 12 months and the fire alarm every six months in line with BS5306 and British Standard BS 5839 respectively.

Fire Safety Records

Full records of fire precautions will be kept in the Fire Log. The information will be entered by the Fire Safety Lead or by one of the trained Fire Wardens and should include:

- The times and dates of drills, and the time between sounding the alarm and the last person leaving the building.
- The times and dates of tests fire alarm tests.
- The times and dates of inspections, of replacements and of servicing of firefighting equipment, alarms and fittings such as emergency lighting.
- Times and dates of training events, who attended and what was covered.
- The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff and visitors sign in and out, with times and dates to support the roll call in the event of a fire.

Personnel

- The Fire Safety Lead is responsible for ensuring that the correct fire procedures and arrangements are in place.
- The Fire Safety Lead for the organisation is Ryan Godwin.
- Fire Wardens are responsible for supporting the Fire Safety Lead.
- Nominated Fire Warden posts will be reviewed every year.
- The organisation's fire advisor is Geoff Shaw.

All new staff are required to read the policy on fire safety as part of their induction process. All members of staff should be aware of the procedures in case of a fire at the organisation premises.

They should also all be aware of how they must respond in the event of an emergency in both the office and service users' homes.

All new and existing staff should know:

- Who is responsible for ensuring the correct fire procedure is carried out?
- Who are the fire wardens on each shift?
- The location and usage of all fire extinguishers and where special extinguishers (e.g. those suitable for use on electrical equipment) are located.
- The location of break-glass fire alarm points.
- The emergency fire evacuation procedures.
- How to use the internal telephone systems to call for the fire brigade.

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Update Training

In-house training sessions for existing staff will be arranged so that all relevant staff can attend a session every year.

All staff will receive annual update training on fire safety, relevant to the service delivered and their role.

Fire safety training should include instruction on fire prevention, on what to do in the event of a fire and on firefighting. Records should be kept in the Fire Log of who attended each session. Staff who do not attend should be reminded to attend the next session.

All Fire Wardens will receive accredited training to ensure they are competent for the role, which will be updated in line with guidance.

On Evacuation

Where safe to do so the Fire Warden will collect the signing in/out book when evacuating the offices.

Staff will/should on the discovery of or suspicion of a fire:

- Remain as calm as possible.
- Raise the alarm immediately by operating the nearest break-glass fire alarm or by shouting 'fire.'
- When seeing smoke coming from under a door, or smoke in a closed room, staff must not attempt to open the door but raise the alarm and summon the fire brigade immediately.
- Deal with small fires with the appropriate fire extinguisher, where it is:

- Safe to do so,
- The individual has received training and
- The alarm has already been raised.

In the event of a fire, or of the fire alarm sounding, staff should:

- Evacuate the building immediately and go to the nearest designated fire assembly point.
- Help any service users, visitors, disabled persons, or contractors on the premises to evacuate.
- Where safe to do so, check all rooms, e.g. toilets to ensure nobody is in them or trapped.
- Close all doors, especially fire doors.
- Ensure that any person not accounted for is immediately reported to the nominated Fire Warden or directly to a fire brigade officer.

Staff should never:

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- Stop to collect valuables or possessions.
- Use lifts.
- Open doors where they can see smoke coming through, unless that is the only means of escape.
- Attempt to re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by a nominated Fire Warden or by a fire brigade officer.

The organisation's manager or Fire Warden is responsible for ensuring that:

- The fire brigade has been called to any fire, i.e. dialling 999 and requesting the fire service.
- Meeting fire brigade on arrival.
- The signing in/out book is removed from the building and used to account for staff and visitors by roll call.
- Unaccounted individuals are immediately reported to the fire brigade upon arrival.

The Fire Warden is responsible for:

- Supervising evacuation assembly points.
- Carrying out roll calls.
- Liaising with the fire brigade on arrival.

It is the organisation's policy that an appointed Fire Warden should be on each shift.

In the Service User's Home

The service user's home potentially offers unique challenges from a fire safety perspective as each one is different. Service user practices may increase risks of fire, e.g. smoking in bed or whilst dozing in an arm chair.

As part of the assessment of need and the development of the service user's care and support plan, an environment risk assessment of their home will be undertaken which will include fire safety risks to make staff aware of:

- Escape routes.
- Fire risks (e.g. smoking habits, use of electric bar fires, etc).
- Evacuation risks (e.g. is the service user immobile or disabled? Is the evacuation route restricted?)
- Use of emollient creams and smoking.

Where evacuation or fire risks are assessed as high, then professional fire advice should be sought, and the service user will be signposted to fire safety information or support.

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Where service users need additional care and/or health assessment to support management with associated fire risks, e.g. ramp to aid egress from their home, then with their permission the organisation will liaise with family or escalate the concerns to social service and/or healthcare professionals. The aim will be to support service users to adopt fire safety behaviours, e.g. to install smoke alarms, and ensure effective evacuation arrangements are in place where there is limited mobility, e.g. wheelchairs or sensory impairment.

Service users who smoke are encouraged to not smoke in bed or other times when they are likely to fall asleep, e.g. dozing in a chair. Staff are trained to discuss with them sensitively the dangers of risk to life to themselves and any others living in the property.

Emollient Creams

Staff are aware of the dangers of using flammable emollient creams when the service user is known to smoke. Dropping cigarettes or matches onto clothing or bedding is dangerous, but when flammable creams are involved the paraffin or other ingredients in the creams and ointments act as an accelerant and significantly increases the chance of a fire and it being intense.

The people most vulnerable to fires are older people and those with mobility problems and it's exactly these service users who tend to rely on emollient creams.

In 2018 the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued a safety alert and warning about the risk of severe and fatal burns from emollients. This includes all paraffin-based emollients regardless of paraffin concentration and some paraffin-free versions. It reminded health and care professionals to:

- Advise people who are using emollient creams of the risks the creams may pose, and:
- Not to smoke
- Not to use naked flames
- Not to go near anyone smoking or using naked flames.

- Change people's clothing and bedding regularly because emollients soak into fabric and can become a fire hazard - people need to be aware that washing does not remove the risk.
- Be aware that fabric such as bedding or bandages that have dried residue of an emollient on them will easily ignite and to report any fire incidents with emollients or other skin care products to MHRA's Yellow Card Scheme.

In July 2020, MHRA updated its guidance. It advises people who use an emollient or skin cream to:

- Avoid smoking.
- Change and wash clothes and bedding .
- Keep cream off furniture.
- Tell relatives and carers.
- Tell your healthcare professional.

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- Health professionals where possible may consider switching to prescribing non-flammable brands.

Note: in situations when service users using emollient creams have an airflow mattress, in effect, the bedding with the cream soaked in acts as a wick and when the mattress comes into contact with a flame, the mattress essentially can act as a blow torch, intensifying the fire.

Staff will ensure at both the care and support assessment and in the care planning stages that these risks are considered, and that service users are made aware of the risks identified within the MHRA alert and CQC guidance.

See 'CQC - Fire risk from use of emollient creams.'

Discovery of Fire in a Service User's Home

On the discovery of or suspicion of a fire, staff should:

- Remain as calm as possible and raise the alarm immediately to everyone in the house.
- Evacuate the house immediately everyone has been made aware of the danger, helping any service users, visitors or relatives on the premises to evacuate as per the evacuation plan in the care and support plan.
- Ensure that everybody who was in the house is accounted for.
- Close all doors when leaving to slow the progress of the fire.
- Call the fire brigade as soon as it is safe to do so, if not already done.
- Ensure that any person not accounted for is immediately reported to a fire brigade officer on arrival.
- Contact the organisation's head office and report the fire.
- Record the details of the incident in the Incident Book in the registered office and complete relevant accident forms in the event of injuries.
- Do not go back in the building until the fire brigade give the all-clear.

Note: if the suspicion of fire is raised by seeing smoke coming from under a door, or by seeing smoke in a closed room, staff should on no account attempt to open the door but should raise the alarm and summon the fire brigade as quickly as possible.

Staff should never:

- Stop to collect valuables or possessions.
- Use lifts.
- Open doors where they can see smoke coming through, unless that is the only means of escape.
- Attempt to re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by a fire brigade officer.

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The use of a service user's stairlift to transport a service user downstairs must be risk assessed. This is because fire could attack the electrics, resulting in the stairlift stopping part way through the service user's evacuation.

Supported Living and Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Supported living premises may be registered as an HMO, which has in place processes regulated by an enforcement officer employed by the local authority. The enforcement control includes fire; it is important that where a supported living accommodation is registered as an HMO, fire requirements set out by the local authority are complied with and staff need to be trained and aware of their role and responsibilities. The fire control information should be included within the service user's care plan, and staff made aware of and trained in the landlord's fire controls.

Stay Put Schemes

Flats, especially in high rise buildings, often utilise a fire plan which includes a Stay Put position. Concerns following the Grenfell Tower fire has raised questions about this principle, but this is still in place and supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) (see references).

As part of the environment risk assessment and the development of the care and support plan for service users living within a flat or maisonette, especially in a high rise, the fire plan will include whether the Stay Put position is in place for the building. Staff will then follow the fire plan in line with the guidance from the local fire brigade.

The Stay Put position is set out in the following from the NFCC:
'The advice provided by fire and rescue services is based on effective fire safety arrangements that are required, proposed, and then provided in the building – these include compartmentation of the building and suitably protected means of escape amongst others.
If there is a fire inside a flat or maisonette the advice is to alert all the people in the flat and leave the property and close all doors. They should follow a pre-determined escape plan and if there is a lot of smoke within the flat, people should crawl along the floor where the air should be clearer and the temperature cooler. They should always use the stairs rather than the lift and call 999 as soon as they are in a safe place.
If there is a fire elsewhere in the building then the structure of the flat – walls, floors, and doors – are designed to give appropriate protection. It is important for responsible owners to ensure that high-rise buildings are properly constructed, and any refurbishment or maintenance is carried out to compliant standards of fire safety.
If there is a fire in your building but not inside your own home, then you are usually safer to stay in your flat unless the heat or smoke from the fire is affecting you. If you 'stay put' you should still immediately call 999 for advice and to ensure that the fire and rescue service along with attending emergency crews have been notified.
Once a 999 call is made, and firefighters arrive at the fire, then the advice may be reinforced or changed, depending on the nature and development of the fire, the building and its tenants.'

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In the event of a fire, you need to understand the procedures you must follow, if the building you are working in has the Stay Put Position.

References and Further Reading

Fire safety in the workplace, (2020)

Fire risk from use of emollient creams, CQC

Fire safety for homecare providers: Questions and Answers, UKHCA

Free fire risk assessment download, Surrey Fire and Safety Ltd

Generic Fire Risk Assessment Template, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

How To Find a Competent Risk Assessor

IFSM Fire Risk Assessors Register

BAFE Fire Safety Register

IFE Fire Risk Register

Quality Statements

Learning culture

We have a proactive and positive culture of safety based on openness and honesty, in which concerns about safety are listened to, safety events are investigated and reported thoroughly, and lessons are learned to continually identify and embed good practices.

Safe systems, pathways and transitions

We work with people and our partners to establish and maintain safe systems of care, in which safety is managed, monitored and assured. We ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services.

Involving people to manage risks

We work with people to understand and manage risks by thinking holistically so that care meets their needs in a way that is safe and supportive and enables them to do the things that matter to

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them.

Safe environments

We detect and control potential risks in the care environment. We make sure that the equipment, facilities and technology support the delivery of safe care.

Safe and effective staffing

We make sure there are enough qualified, skilled and experienced people, who receive effective support, supervision and development. They work together effectively to provide safe care that meets people's individual needs.

Assessing needs

We maximise the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, well-being and communication needs with them.

Treating people as individuals

We treat people as individuals and make sure their care, support and treatment meets their needs and preferences. We take account of their strengths, abilities, aspirations, culture and unique backgrounds and protected characteristics.

Independence, choice and control

We promote people's independence, so they know their rights and have choice and control over their own care, treatment and well-being.

Providing information

We provide appropriate, accurate and up-to-date information in formats that we tailor to individual needs.

Governance, management and sustainability

We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance. We use these to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.

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Environmental sustainability – sustainable development

We understand any negative impact of our activities on the environment and we strive to make a positive contribution in reducing it and support people to do the same.

Key questions and quality statements - Care Quality Commission

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