



# **Fire Safety Management Policy**

**For Core Council and Maintained Schools  
where SMBC is the Employer**

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Document Control:

Date of Policy:	January 2022	Approving body:	Corporate Health and Safety Board Governance Committee
Policy Version:	1.0	Approval date:	January 2022
Author:	Janet Payne, Mark Wills – Health, Safety & Risk Team	Review date:	January 2025
Consultation:	Corporate Property Services, Building Safety Delivery Group, Corporate Health and Safety Board, Trade Unions	Policy owner:	SMBC Corporate Health and Safety Board
	SMBC Fire Safety Management Policy – UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED	Equality Impact:	January 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Fire is a significant hazard to the safety of both buildings and their occupants. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under current fire legislation the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 and will proceed with due diligence to address these by the provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate fire precautions and management systems to enable the safe evacuation of employees and others from Council owned, managed or occupied premises, and to minimise fire damage should a fire occur.

This policy is applicable to all premises and activities under SMBC's control and where SMBC is the employer and includes corporate buildings; local authority run residential homes and day centres; community and voluntary controlled schools, community special schools and pupil referral units.

Other schools (foundation and voluntary aided schools and academies) are not covered by this policy but may wish to use this policy as a basis for their own employer fire safety policy and arrangements.

### 1.1 Key Legislation

**The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO 2005)** brought together different pieces of fire legislation. It applies to all non-domestic premises, including communal areas of residential buildings with multiple homes and external areas such as car parks, vehicle storage etc. RRFSO 2005 designates those in control of premises as the responsible person for fire safety and they have a duty to undertake assessments and manage risks. RRFSO 2005 is enforced by the Fire and Rescue Authorities.

**The Fire Safety Act 2021** sets out to amend the RRFSO 2005 and is designed to ensure that people “feel safe in their own homes and that a tragedy like the Grenfell Tower fire never happens again” in England. The Act clarifies that for any building containing two or more sets of domestic premises the RRFSO 2005 applies to the building's structure and external walls and any common parts, including the front doors of residential areas.

It also clarifies that references to external walls in the RRFSO 2005 include “doors or windows in those walls” and “anything attached to the exterior of those walls (including balconies).” These amendments to the RRFSO 2005 aim to increase enforcement action in these areas, particularly where remediation of aluminium composite material cladding is not taking place.

In summary, the Duty Holder/building owner for multi-occupied, residential buildings must manage the risk of fire:

- The structure and external walls of the building (e.g. cladding, balconies and windows)
- Entrance doors to individual flats that open into communal areas.

### 1.2 Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards

Solihull Community Housing (SCH) provide a managed housing service on behalf of SMBC for the housing stock owned by the local authority. SCH is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), owned by SMBC.

Under the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, all registered providers of social housing have an obligation for their tenants' safety, which includes fire safety. The objectives of the Regulator are set out in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

As the registered provider, SMBC remain accountable for overall tenant fire safety and are responsible for ensuring SCH fulfil its responsibilities to manage tenant fire safety on its behalf to ensure tenants feel safe in their homes and the requirement of the Home Standard duty is discharged/met.

Solihull Community Housing (SCH) has a separate Fire Safety Management Policy that applies to their employees and their portfolio of housing stock.

### 1.3 Scope of Policy

SMBC recognises the importance of fire safety management. This policy is applicable to all SMBC owned properties and workplaces (e.g. corporate buildings; local authority run residential homes and day centres; community and voluntary controlled schools, community special schools, pupil referral units and commercially leased premises [e.g. properties owned by SMBC via Mell Square Ltd]) with the exception of the residential units owned by SMBC and under SMBC control but managed by SCH. The objectives of this policy are to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that:

- Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clearly defined and understood to secure fire safety.
- Corporate and individual compliance with relevant legislation.
- Competent persons are appointed to provide fire safety advice.
- Employees and tenants are provided with appropriate information, instruction, and training at appropriate intervals about the fire precautions in SMBC owned, managed, or occupied premises.
- Risks from fire, or from dangerous substances which could lead to a fire, are assessed and control measures are implemented to either eliminate risk or to reduce identified risks as low as reasonably practicable.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to safely evacuate any building in the event of a fire.
- Fire safety equipment is maintained, by a competent person, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- This policy does not apply to domestic premises where employees work from home on a temporary or permanent basis. However, SMBC is responsible for ensuring the safety of electrical equipment provided to employees that is used to work from home. Advice is available to staff on the safe use of electrical equipment provided for work purposes and that is used to work from home, this can be found on the Health, Safety and Risk webpages for Core council staff and the Extranet pages for school employees.

**Note: This policy does not duplicate the general health and safety requirements as stated within the SMBC Corporate Health and Safety Policy.**

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The following describes roles and responsibilities in relation to fire safety management.

### **2.1 Chief Executive (Duty Holder)**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the fire safety management within the Council as defined in the key legislation detailed above and will ensure compliance with the RRFSO 2005 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 in relation to premises under their control by ensuring:

- An effective fire safety management structure exists within the Council that is regularly reviewed.
- Current fire legislation is met and implemented as appropriate in all premises owned or occupied by the Authority.
- The provision of appropriate financial and physical resources to support fire safety management arrangements.
- Health and safety audit arrangements exist to oversee fire safety compliance.
- That members of the public, employees and contractors are not unnecessarily exposed to fire risk.

Although overall responsibility for fire safety in the workplace rests with the Chief Executive, management responsibilities will be delegated through the organisational structure. Directors, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Headteachers and employees at all levels of the organisation are therefore responsible for fire safety, though the extent of this responsibility varies according to the individual's position in the organisation.

### **2.2 Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service**

Assistant Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring effective fire safety management within their areas of responsibility, ensuring that all managers and employees and any other persons under their area of control are held accountable for the specific application of their fire safety duties. This will be achieved by them:

- Providing clear and visible leadership and commitment.
- Making sure that where operational responsibilities for fire safety are delegated to lower levels of management, that those who have been nominated are competent, and understand and accept their delegated responsibilities.
- Ensuring that Managers have robust arrangements in place for the effective management of fire safety within their services/teams.
- Ensuring adequate and sufficient resources (time, human and financial) are provided. In principle this means considering cost versus risk: making sure a risk has been reduced as low as reasonably practicable; weighing the risk against the sacrifice needed to further reduce it; adopting measures except where they are ruled out because they involve grossly disproportionate sacrifices in terms of trouble, time and money needed to control the risk.

## **2.3 Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive**

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive is the appointed, named Director with lead responsibility for health and safety, including fire safety management, within the Local Authority and as such is responsible for ensuring:

- The regular review of fire safety performance within the Authority.
- That health and safety related policy statements reflect current priorities.
- That the management system provides effective monitoring and reporting procedures.
- That the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team are given the appropriate assurances that requirements of fire safety legislation and objectives of the Fire Safety Management Policy are being met.
- Providing support to the Corporate Responsible Person (Head of Corporate Property services).
- Supporting the Chief Executive to ensure that the Authority has in place a clearly defined Fire Safety Management Policy and associated protocols and procedures with sufficient resources and staff available to implement them.
- A deputy is nominated from within their own Directorate who will assist and deputise for the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive.

## **2.4 Director of Economy and Infrastructure (for Social Housing stock)**

The Building Safety Bill requires an Accountable Person, duty holder, to be nominated for the 'in-occupation' phase of the lifecycle of 'in-scope buildings' (currently defined by draft legislation as certain buildings exceeding 18 metres in height).

The Accountable Person is legally responsible for a range of key statutory obligations under the Building Safety Bill.

Within SMBC, the Director of Economy and Infrastructure is the named appointed Accountable Person within the Bill. They will ensure that they:

- Carry out their responsibilities as defined within the Building Safety Bill.
- Have in place suitable and sufficient systems for monitoring building safety and fire safety compliance relating to the social housing stock that SMBC is responsible for.
- Ensure obligations are met for overall tenant safety under the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards.
- Take appropriate action where any standards are not met that may affect the safety of tenants.
- Ensure robust performance monitoring is undertaken through the Quarterly Monitoring Board between SMBC and SCH.

*Section 2.4 may require further updates as the Building Safety Bill progresses through the various stages of the parliamentary process.*

## **2.5 Head of Corporate Property Services (Corporate Responsible Person for Core Council Buildings Only)**

The Head of Corporate Property Services (Corporate Responsible Person) is the designated Head of Service nominated within the Resources Directorate to deputise for the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive in terms of fire safety related issues.

For Council premises under their immediate control (this excludes the social housing stock, SMBC maintained schools and commercially leased premises), the Corporate Responsible Person will also ensure that:

- Persons appointed by Property Services and Maintenance Partnership (PSMP) to undertake fire risk assessments on behalf of SMBC meet the requirements of the Fire Sector Federation Approved Code of Practice (ACOP): A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency, and their Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor
- A schedule is in place to ensure fire risk assessments are undertaken on a regular basis ensuring they are kept up to date and reviewed to take into account any changes to the premises that may affect the fire safety e.g.:
  - Where there are any significant changes to the structure or layout of a building.
  - Where there are changes to how a building or room is used.
  - Substantial changes to the number of people using the premises or the hours in which the premises are occupied/operate in the event of any fire incident.
- Advise on and provide solutions for fire building recommendations and premises risks identified within fire risk assessments.

## **2.6 Managers in Control of Buildings (Site Responsible Person / Building Manager)**

This section identifies the additional responsibilities for Managers who are in control of a premise or sites including the maintenance, facilities, plant and equipment and as such are determined the 'Site Responsible Person'. The Site Responsible Person will normally be a Headteacher where the property is a school, a Building/Service Manager where the property is a corporate building or the Facilities Manager where one is appointed in a corporate property. Where there is no Facilities Manager currently allocated to a building, these responsibilities remain with the Building/Service Manager. Managers will ensure that general precautions are in place for the safety of employees, service users, visitors and pupils by:

- Making the necessary arrangements to manage the controlled evacuation of the building/site.
- Providing any necessary equipment and training for workers delegated to provide assistance in the event of a fire e.g. evacuation chairs/sheets/mattresses and training for those expected to implement an emergency evacuation using such equipment; information and instruction to support the implementation of a personal emergency evacuation plan or general emergency evacuation plan.
- Where required, ensure a sufficient number of Fire Wardens are appointed for their service area, taking into account the Council's approach to blended working where applicable and including sufficient cover for annual leave and other absences; Service Managers will be required to ensure their staff are given time to complete appropriate training and undertake their role effectively. In the absence of appropriate numbers of Fire Wardens in the event of an alarm, Managers will be required to take charge.
- Ensuring that fire risk assessments are undertaken and recorded by competent persons (see section 3.4 of this policy) via the corporate provision.
- Being available to accompany the Property Services Team representative to undertake an annual review of the fire risk assessment to check there have been no significant changes since the last fire risk assessment that would prompt a review or new fire risk assessment to be carried out by competent persons.



- Making sure that the results of fire risk assessments, inspections and spot checks feed into routine business planning processes so that appropriate resources are made available to implement any additional actions.
- Ensuring fire protection and detection equipment is maintained and regularly serviced.
- Ensuring the necessary local checks of fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting, fire alarm and detection systems are completed daily, weekly or monthly as required and recorded in the premise fire logbook.
- Ensuring that the evacuation process is practised: at least termly in schools; twice yearly in all SMBC corporate buildings (fire drills must be undertaken annually as a minimum to satisfy legislation)
- Ensuring the management and maintenance of the premises' fire logbook.
- Dealing with any fire safety concerns and seeking advice and support from appropriate professionals e.g. Health, Safety and Risk Service (HSRS) and/or Property Services and Maintenance Partnership (PSMP)
- Making appropriate arrangements to publicise the names and contact details of the appointed Fire Wardens in their building(s) so that everyone is aware of who they are.

**The Council is in the process of developing a 'Corporate Landlord' model for managing its assets. Individual service managers will be consulted about any changes to responsibilities as individual buildings transfer into the Corporate Landlord. In the interim, the above responsibilities remain with the individual building /service managers.**

## 2.7 Managers / Headteachers

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'manager' relates to all employees and interim/ agency personnel who manage staff and/or services/schools, or to any extent has control at work over people and projects. **Managers and Headteachers are responsible for:**

- Understanding and implementing the Fire Safety Management Policy and site-specific procedures.
- Ensuring that the Fire Safety Management Policy documentation, in terms of local hazards and procedures, is available in relevant areas.
- Ensuring staff commitment to the Fire Safety Management Policy, site specific procedures and to fire safety in general.
- Ensuring that each employee:
  - Undertakes appropriate fire safety training and refresher training at appropriate intervals and at a level relevant to each individual's role.
  - Is aware of and complies with safe working arrangements related to fire safety.
  - Participates in fire drills.
  - Observes basic fire precautions.
- Making sure that new employees are provided with a fire safety induction of the site or where employees have been absent for longer periods are re-inducted to their work location.
- Ensuring sufficient plans and arrangements are in place to support those who are unable to evacuate the building unaided i.e. complete Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) when an employee needs assistance evacuating a building and making sure that the Site Responsible Person is aware when PEEPs are in place.
- Making available employees that are willing to be a Fire Warden when requested by a Site Responsible Person (or equivalent role).

- Raising any hazards or issues to the Site Responsible Person so that they can be remedied.
- Considering fire safety when reorganising workplaces, changing systems of work or introducing new plant or machinery.
- Ensuring that any visitors and contractors are provided with sufficient information and instruction to enable them to comply with the fire safety arrangements in place.
- Undertaking regular workplace inspections and spot checks to identify any fire related issues, such as poor housekeeping.
- Taking precautions against arson, such as making sure the perimeter of the premises is secure and good housekeeping is maintained.
- Should an evacuation occur early morning or late afternoon, there may be limited numbers of appointed Fire Wardens to take control of the evacuation. In such instances, Heads of Service or the appropriate Manager should be prepared to make the necessary arrangements to manage the controlled evacuation of the building/site. Therefore as covered in bullet point one of this section, all Managers should be familiar with the site-specific procedures.

## 2.8 Corporate Health and Safety Board

The Corporate Health and Safety Board is attended by senior managers from all directorates within the organisation; representatives from all Trade Unions; is chaired by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive who is the Corporate Health and Safety Champion and nominated Director within the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). The Board reviews health and safety within the organisation including:

- Updates in legislation and related guidance.
- Contact with enforcing authorities.
- Feedback from fire investigations.
- Fire related objectives.
- Information relating to new and/or revised Corporate Health and Safety Policies which have been developed/reviewed by the Health, Safety and Risk Service or other representatives in SMBC.

## 2.9 Fire Wardens

All appointed Fire Wardens will attend the corporate Fire Warden training. This training should be repeated in line with the requirements and controls detailed within the fire risk assessment for their work premises but as a minimum every 3 years. Although the specific duties can be agreed at local level having taken into account the findings of the relevant fire risk assessment, typically these duties will include:

- Act as a focal point on fire safety issues for local staff.
- Organise and assist in the fire safety routine within local areas.
- Raise issues regarding local area fire safety with the relevant management.
- Assist with coordination of the response to an incident within the immediate vicinity.
- Participate in regular Fire Warden training and apply the information and duties to the workplace.
- Following any evacuation situation, Fire Wardens will provide feedback to the Site Responsible Person on problems encountered, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- As appointed by the Site Responsible Person, may be required to act as immediate liaison with the Fire and Rescue Service during an incident.

Within Core Council there is a remuneration payment made to Fire Wardens, further information can be sought from Human Resources.

## 2.10 Employees

All employees (including part-time, temporary, agency, supply and volunteers) have a duty to take care of their own and others' health and safety and must:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and the fire evacuation procedures for their workspace i.e. what to do and where to go in the event of a fire alarm.
- Undertake fire safety training as and when required.
- Comply with fire safety procedures, safe systems of work, information, instruction and training provided.
- Not do anything that will put themselves or other people at risk from fire.
- Report any problems relating to fire issues to their line manager without delay.
- Not interfere with or misuse any fire safety equipment e.g. wedging open fire doors, misuse of fire-fighting equipment or similar acts.
- Co-operate in undertaking fire drills and evacuation.
- Follow the instructions given by appointed Fire Wardens and leave the building in the event of a fire or other emergency.

*Any person who refuses to comply with such instructions and remains in the building without proper authority, will do so at his/her own risk and may be subject to disciplinary action, without prejudice to any action that might be taken by other appropriate authorities, for example, the HSE or Fire and Rescue Service.*

- Inform their immediate manager of any temporary or permanent disability or impairment that may impact their ability to safely evacuate from the premises in the event of a fire or emergency.
- Report without delay any work situation that represents a serious danger to fire safety or a shortcoming in the Council's fire protection arrangements.
- In conjunction with other colleagues, maintain a safe and tidy work area and not to place items into evacuation routes which may hinder staff leaving the building.
- In the event of a fire alarm, direct visitors, students etc., to the nearest escape route and ensure that all visitors, students leave the building and report to the fire assembly point.
- If undertaking an activity where you are responsible for the safety of others (e.g. visitors, training delegates, students etc.), ensure that evacuation procedures are adhered to in the event of an emergency.
- Unless trapped and with no other choice, employees must not attempt to tackle a fire unless appropriately trained and confident that it presents no risk to themselves or others. Fighting fire should be an absolute last resort.

## 2.11 Health, Safety and Risk Service

The Health, Safety and Risk Service will:

- Provide advice and assistance as the Council's competent persons on fire safety matters.
- Review any reported fire safety related incidents to ensure appropriate action is taken and that they are monitored and reviewed.

- Develop corporate policies, procedures and standards on fire safety.
- Advise on suitable fire safety training for employees.
- Undertake planned health and safety audits and reviews to ensure this policy has been implemented.
- Escalate to the appropriate senior manager any concerns of non-compliance or policy failures and recommendations for improvements.
- Liaise with statutory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Fire and Rescue Service as necessary.

### **3. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The range of fire protective measures within a building will be determined by risk and in addition to fire extinguishers/blankets, smoke detection, fire alarm etc., may also include automatic sprinkler systems, dry/wet risers, emergency voice communication systems, fire hydrants etc. The application of appropriate fire protection and fire precautions are identified as necessary through the fire risk assessment process.

The following section provides the day-to-day arrangements that are in place for some of the more commonplace protective measures – although this list is not exhaustive - found in premises to minimise the risk of fire across the Council and in Schools. These arrangements apply to all employees.

#### **3.1 Standard for Fire Safety in Commercial Buildings**

British Standard *BS 9999 Fire Safety in the Design, Management use of Buildings – Code of Practice* is intended to provide practice to safeguard lives of building occupants and fire fighters. BS 9999 provides recommendations and guidance on the provision of measures to control or mitigate the effects of fire, including business continuity and the environment.

The primary objective of the Standard is to ensure that a reasonable standard of life safety can be achieved in the event of fire in a building. The Standard is applicable to the design of new buildings and to material alterations, extensions and material change of use of an existing building. BS 9999 aligns with standard and current good practice, new technology, and consistency with other fire safety standards, namely BS 9990 and BS 9991.

#### **3.2 Corporate Management**

The corporate approach to managing the risks of fire is underpinned by:

- A programme of corporately managed fire risk assessments for all workplaces to assess the risk from fire and to evaluate the adequacy of the protection measures and compliance with all relevant legislation.
- The provision and maintenance of appropriate fire detection, alarm systems, emergency lighting, fire-fighting equipment, evacuation signage, appropriate means of escape and protected escape routes.
- Regular fire drills and emergency evacuations.
- The provision of essential training for all employees and appointed Fire Wardens.
- Appropriate instruction for contractors and other visitors on the action to be taken in the event of a fire.
- Good housekeeping practices to minimise the risk of fire.

- Strict enforcement of the smoke free policy to support the fire safety arrangements.

### **3.3 Fire Risk Assessments**

All employers have a duty under fire safety legislation to carry out a fire risk assessment of premises under their control or where they have a degree of control, this includes empty buildings.

A central contract is in place for the provision of fire risk assessments at SMBC this is arranged by the Property Services and Maintenance Partnership (PSMP) for Core Council workplaces, it excludes maintained schools where fire risk assessments are arranged as part of a service level agreement in place between the school and PSMP. Whilst generally PSMP arrange for these to be undertaken as part of a rolling schedule at a frequency determined by the fire risk assessment for the premises, it is the duty of the Site Responsible Person – e.g. Headteacher or Building/Facilities Manager – to ensure the fire risk assessment is reviewed at the appropriate interval and that all control measures are in place and adhered to.

A fire risk assessment identifies possible hazards and actions to be taken to keep people who occupy the premises safe and must be carried out by a competent fire risk assessor. It must be kept up to date and reviewed at regular intervals, in particular when something changes that could affect fire safety or where there is any other reason to suspect that it is no longer valid e.g. a change: in occupancy; in the building; in nature of contents or after a fire.

The Site Responsible Person has the duty to ensure that control measures are in place and any action plan findings are acted upon within the timeframe given and recorded within the fire risk assessment action plan. The fire risk assessment should be shared with all building occupants. The most up to date version should be kept in the premise fire logbook and made available to any visiting authority.

The frequency of fire risk assessment to be undertaken by competent persons will be determined by the nature of the activities carried out on the premise, the complexity of the building and the fire safety risks identified but in any circumstances will not exceed 3 years. In some workplaces and buildings such as residential care homes; day centres providing services for members of the public with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and/or older people; any services where there is sleeping accommodation or other high risk activities fire risk assessments may be required to be undertaken more frequently.

In addition to the fire risk assessment and to ensure that control measures are revisited and reviewed frequently, and that there have been no significant changes, an annual review will take place. This will be the responsibility of the Site Responsible Person, however, PSMP will schedule the review programme and a competent person from PSMP will support the Site Responsible Person in undertaking the review. PSMP will arrange a new Fire Risk Assessment where this is found to be required as an outcome of the annual review.

### **3.4 Fire Risk Assessors**

Regardless of who carries out the fire risk assessment, the employer retains the responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of that assessment and as such must take all reasonable steps to appoint a specialist who is competent to do the job properly. This can be done by ensuring:

- Those providing the service have independent registration with, or certification from, a professional or certification body.
- They meet the competency criteria established by the Fire Sector Federation.
- As a minimum they hold a Level 5 Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) higher education award.
- They have experience of undertaking fire risk assessments for the type of business and premises.

Accredited third party certification and professional body membership is deemed essential for fire risk assessors. Competence of fire risk assessors can be assured by either certification of the individual fire risk assessor or through a company providing fire risk assessments under a third party certification scheme accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS), or by registration of the fire risk assessor by a Professional Engineering Institution (PEI) that is licensed by the Engineering Council (EngC).

In the event that major change occurs within the building, be it either structural, change of processes or substantial increase of population, the Site Responsible Person must ensure that any proposed work meets fire safety legislative requirements and that a fire risk assessment review is undertaken by a competent person who meets the criteria detailed above. Any structural changes to a building should be notified to Property Services and Maintenance Partnership to ensure that building plans are maintained up to date.

### **3.5 Fire Detection and Alarm Systems**

Where appropriate, buildings will be fitted with automatic fire detection and alarm systems or a manual fire alarm system (a series of break glass units which are installed at each point of exit in a building) in line with current regulations, standards and guidelines. Where these systems are in place they must be periodically serviced and inspected by a competent service provider in line with the relevant British Standard. The period between visits to undertake inspection and service should be based upon a risk assessment and manufacturer's guidance but the maximum period between visits should not exceed six months. All visits should be recorded in the site's fire logbook.

Other manual fire alarm systems for example rotary or hand bells must be visually inspected and tested on a weekly basis to ensure they are maintained in good working order, a record of each inspection and test should be recorded in the site's fire logbook.

The Site Responsible Person should ensure that regular weekly checks and testing of the alarm system are carried out on a local level in line with the manufacturer's instructions. All activations of the fire alarm should be recorded within the fire logbook – testing, maintenance and false alarms.

### **3.6 Emergency Escape Lighting**

Emergency escape lighting is lighting that comes on when the power supply to the normal lighting provision fails. It provides illumination for the safety of people leaving a location or attempting to terminate a potentially dangerous process beforehand. Emergency lighting must be periodically serviced and inspected by a competent service provider in line with the relevant British Standard. The period between visits to undertake inspection and service should be based upon a risk assessment and manufacturer's guidance but the maximum

period between visits should not exceed twelve months. All visits should be recorded in site's fire logbook.

The Site Responsible Person should ensure that regular monthly checks and testing of the emergency lighting are carried out on a local level in line with manufacturer's instructions. Tests should be recorded in the fire logbook.

### 3.7 Fire Fighting Equipment

Suitable and sufficient fire-fighting equipment must be provided in all properties, including fire extinguishers and fire blankets (recommended for all kitchen areas).

The Site Responsible Person must ensure that any fire-fighting equipment is inspected annually by a competent person to ensure it remains in an operational condition and is kept in an easily accessible position. A record of these services must be recorded in the fire logbook.

In addition to an annual service, the Site Responsible Person must ensure that fire extinguishers are always kept in good order and available for use. This can be achieved by regular inspections by a nominated person and should include checking:

- a) That the tamper indicator is not broken - this is usually a plastic tag or disc to show the pin has not been removed or tampered with.
- b) That the pressure gauge needle is in the green area - if there is no pressure gauge, the extinguisher is discharged using an internal gas cartridge, therefore no check is required.
- c) The unit has no signs of corrosion, dents, damage, discharge or deterioration.

Any issues found must be reported to the contracted service provider and entered into the fire logbook.

*It must be emphasised that employees are not expected to put themselves at risk by fighting fire. However, if they have been given training in the use of extinguishers or are familiar with the operation of and appropriate use of extinguishers, small fires, no bigger than the size of a wastepaper basket, may be tackled. This must only be done after raising the alarm. It is imperative that, if employees feel themselves to be at risk, they leave the fire and make their escape.*

### 3.8 Emergency Evacuation Plan

The overriding aim is to be able to completely evacuate the building within a reasonable time, without having to rely on the Fire and Rescue Service to rescue people from the building. As such, current fire legislation requires the Site Responsible Person in each property to produce a current, written emergency evacuation plan for all people that are likely to be in a building, including people requiring assistance. The plan should describe:

- The action employees should take if they discover a fire.
- How people will be warned if there is a fire.
- Who takes charge in the event of an evacuation.
- How the evacuation of the workplace should be carried out.
- Identification of key escape routes, how people can gain access to them and escape from them to places of safety.

- Arrangements for the safe evacuation of people identified as being especially at risk, such as young children and babies, contractors, those with disabilities, members of the public and visitors.
- Where people should assemble after they have left the workplace and clear directions to the assembly point.
- Procedures for checking whether the workplace has been evacuated.
- How the Fire and Rescue Service and any other necessary emergency services will be called and who will be responsible for doing this.
- The fire-fighting equipment provided.
- The duties and identity of employees who have specific responsibilities in the event of a fire.
- Where appropriate, any machines/processes/power supplies which need stopping or isolating in the event of fire.
- Specific arrangements, if necessary, for high-fire-risk areas of the workplace.
- Arrangements for emergency plans to be drawn up by other users of the premises
- Contingency plans for when fire protection measures (fire alarms, emergency lighting, sprinklers etc.) are out of order.
- Procedures for liaising with the fire service on arrival and notifying them of any special risks, e.g. the location of highly flammable materials.
- Procedures for investigating and confirming fires (including false alarms)

There is a requirement in legislation to test these evacuation plans at least annually. Schools are recommended to test evacuation drills a minimum of once a term, for Core Council buildings the recommendation is twice per year. Where services/units operate outside of office hours i.e. evenings, overnight and weekends, arrangements also need to be put in place for practices during these times.

These unannounced drills are to be arranged by the Site Responsible Person in conjunction with local managers who will attend to isolate services as necessary, trigger the alarms and reset them once the drill is completed. The outcome of the drill should be recorded in the fire logbook.

### **3.9 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)**

At no time must the Fire and Rescue Service be part of your evacuation plan, people cannot be left in a building to be rescued by them, there must be a strategy in place to ensure everyone can safely evacuate a building in an emergency.

A more detailed Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) must be produced for any employee (whether full or part-time, including temporary, agency staff, or staff on a short term or interim contract), pupils and contractors who may require assistance in an emergency evacuation because of, for example:

- limited or lack of mobility affecting movement horizontally, or down steps. This includes temporary injuries or pregnancy that may affect mobility
- the width of some evacuation routes for wheelchair exit
- difficulty in opening doors
- a visual impairment
- a hearing impairment
- a pregnant or nursing mother



If the individual works or visits multiple locations, a PEEP must be completed for each building.

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring a PEEP is completed rests with the appropriate Line Manager. However, all PEEPS will be undertaken in consultation and partnership with the person who is the subject of the PEEP. Core Council employees can find a blank [PEEP](#) document on the health and safety webpages, maintained schools can find the document on the Extranet in the health and safety document library.

All staff involved with assisting in evacuation should receive appropriate and documented training.

All staff expected to use specialist evacuation equipment e.g. Evac Chair must have documented training and certification to demonstrate competency in their ability to use the equipment. Training should be refreshed in line with manufacturer's guidance, for example Evac Chair recommend training in the use of their equipment is revisited every three years however, frequency of refresher training will depend upon the type of equipment in situ.

Staff who are trained in the use of specialist evacuation equipment must undertake regular practice sessions in using the equipment to ensure their training remains effective in the event of an emergency, the frequency of such practice will be determined upon the level of risk and the findings of the fire risk assessment.

PEEPs **must** be shared with the Site Responsible Person for the purpose of providing assurances that suitable processes are in place to ensure all occupants are able to evacuate the premise quickly and safely.

### 3.10 General Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEPs)

In buildings used by the public, a GEEP is required. These are focused on members of the public or visitors to a building who have a disability or mobility impairment and may not be able to evacuate a building unaided. They help the individual become familiar with the building layout, evacuation procedures and the equipment. The designated Site Responsible Person needs to ensure there are adequate procedures, staffing and equipment in place to facilitate everyone's prompt and safe egress.

When devising an emergency evacuation plan in a public access building, the Site Responsible Person will need to devise a GEEP, it needs to be practical and robust in order to accommodate everybody; essentially ensuring the service/department/school are prepared for any eventuality.

- A GEEP needs to be in place for all buildings where there is public access.
- Evacuation procedures should be made visible with notices for those that may require assistance (*see Appendix 1*).
- Regular drills and a system to test methods should be implemented.
- All assistive devices e.g. Evac Chairs must be maintained on a regular basis and in line with manufacturer's guidance.
- All staff involved with assisting in evacuation should receive appropriate and documented training.

- All staff expected to use specialist evacuation equipment e.g. Evac Chair must have documented training and certification to demonstrate competency in their ability to use the equipment. Training should be refreshed in line with manufacturer's guidance.
- All GEEPs will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain current and suitable.
- The GEEP should form part of your overall Emergency Evacuation Plan (refer to section 3.8 of this policy)

### **3.11 Managing Contractors**

*(Refer also to sections 2.6 and 2.7 Managers'/Headteachers' duties)*

Contractors are required to:

- Co-operate with the Council and follow any instructions relating to fire safety given by their Council contact (e.g. the project manager overseeing their works).
- Ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training (including induction training provided by the Council) to enable them to comply with this policy and the Council's emergency arrangements.
- Provide risk assessments, method statements and safe system of works and ensure sufficient control measures are in place to eliminate or reduce the risk of fire as a result of their undertakings.

### **3.12 Contractors - Passive Fire Protection**

*(Refer also to sections 2.6 and 2.7 Managers'/Headteachers' duties)*

Passive fire protection (PFP) consists of products installed in a building to improve its fire safety rating. PFP keeps people safe and limits damage to a building's structure and its contents by restricting the spread of fire and smoke and shielding escape routes long enough for occupants to exit the building calmly and safely. PFP products include but are not restricted to:

- Fire protection to the structural frame of the building
- Fire-resisting doors and fire door furniture
- Fire shutters
- Compartment walls and floors
- Fire-resisting walls and partitions
- Suspended ceilings
- Fire-resisting glazing
- Fire doors and hardware
- Industrial fire shutters and curtains
- Fire-fighting shafts and stairwells
- Fire-resisting ductwork
- Fire-resisting service ducts and shafts

PFP can sometimes be damaged or even removed during building and maintenance works or the installation of cabling and ductwork. When commissioning contractors or when any in-house works are undertaken the Site Responsible Person must ensure that PFP is maintained intact or suitably replaced or repaired with like for like materials to ensure the fire integrity is preserved.

### 3.13 Visitors

Staff who invite visitors onto the site must take responsibility for their safe evacuation at all times. In the event of an evacuation situation, the member of staff responsible for the visitor should assume responsibility for escorting them to the assembly point or safe area when the fire alarm sounds.

Visitors must be made aware that Fire Wardens have authority to instruct all persons to leave the building, in the event of a fire or other emergency. Any person who refuses to comply with such instructions, and remains in the building without proper authority, will do so at his/her own risk and may be subject to action taken by other appropriate authorities, for example, the Health and Safety Executive or Fire and Rescue Service.

Where an event involves groups of visitors for example school productions or assemblies, training workshops or conferences, the emergency arrangements should be explained clearly at the beginning so that everyone understands the action to take in the event of an emergency evacuation.

If a visitor's whereabouts cannot be confirmed and it is possible that they could be stranded within the building, staff must report this immediately to a Fire Warden or other senior manager.

### 3.14 Fire Logbook

Fire regulations require that any tests, maintenance and safety training can be audited by visiting Enforcement Agencies or internal Health, Safety and Risk Service (HSRS) to ensure they are being carried out. The most effective way of demonstrating compliance is to keep records in a well-maintained fire logbook.

The logbook must be kept up to date and readily available for inspection by any visiting authority when required. It should contain:

- Fire alarm system – record of testing, maintenance and false alarms.
- Emergency lighting – record of testing and maintenance.
- Fire drill – a record of the last fire drill and any findings.
- Staff fire training – basic fire awareness and fire warden training.
- Portable fire-fighting equipment – a record of maintenance and checking (fire extinguishers, fire blankets etc.).
- A record of any visits by the Fire Service or other enforcing authorities and visits by the HSRS.
- Hose reel(s) – a record of monthly visual inspections.
- Dry/wet riser – a record of monthly riser inspections.
- Hose reel and hydrant servicing, testing and Inspection - record of hose reel and hydrant maintenance.
- Dry/wet riser – a record of dry/wet riser test and inspection.
- Refuge point communication - record of refuge point communication test and Inspection.

All records of servicing by nominated contracted servicing companies must be retained and kept within the fire logbook, it is recommended that records are held for three years.

### 3.15 Smoking and E-Cigarettes (Vaping)

The Health Act 2006 prohibited all smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces with effect from 1st July 2007. In practice, this means that smoking is not permitted in:

- Any Council managed buildings (including doorways and refuse areas).
- The grounds of all Council workplaces including internally situated car parks.
- All council owned or hired vehicles whether or not carrying the Council logo.
- Private vehicles carrying service users on council business.

Whilst they fall outside of the scope of smoke-free legislation the Council prohibits the use of e-cigarettes/vaping in the same way. Refer to SMBC's No Smoking Policy for further information.

**Exception:** *Where smoking/vaping takes place immediately outside Council premises and it is considered that this arrangement is potentially hazardous or damaging to the Council, employees, or members of the public, the Council will give consideration to designating an open smoking area on Council premises. This will be subject to the suitability of such an area and a risk assessment being undertaken.*

*Due to the nature of their role, where employees working in residential care settings - or other premises as determined within the fire risk assessment - are unable to leave the premises for the duration of their shift e.g. for an offsite break, an outside designated smoking/vaping area is permitted at these sites. It must be provided with a suitably sited bin specifically designed for the disposal of cigarette butts. It must be monitored and maintained in a safe manner and must not be accessible by service users or members of the public.*

### 3.16 Communication

All relevant staff shall be informed of the contents of the Fire Safety Management Policy. All SMBC employees and stakeholders are required to immediately report any concerns regarding fire safety directly to their line manager.

SMBC will liaise with external emergency services, where required, to minimise the potential risks that could arise from activities where there is a reportable incident related to fire within properties that they manage.

### 3.17 Shared Occupation/Lettings

In the case of shared buildings or sites, where the responsible person does not have control of all parts of the building and it is shared with other persons, they should be informed of significant risks identified. The person who does have control (landlord, owner or other employer etc.) has a responsibility to make sure fire regulations are complied with in the parts they do control. Clear arrangements should be made as to who is responsible and all the above considerations should be agreed with all parties with reasonable steps taken to cooperate and coordinate in all matters.

This may require communication and cooperation between all parties to ensure coordination of fire safety provisions, fire-fighting measures, evacuation procedures etc.

In the event that part of the school or other building may be let – the Site Responsible Person has the responsibility to ensure that those hiring the site are aware of the fire risk

assessment for the site, evacuation procedure, call points, assembly points and contact names in the event of an emergency. It is strongly recommended that a Letting Policy and Hire Agreement are in place that clearly detail how the hirer will comply with the school's/building health, safety and fire arrangements for example: restrictions on use of dangerous or flammable substances (e.g. fireworks, gas); not interfering with the school's/buildings property; not allowing smoking on the premises; ensuring the hirer is aware of fire exits and emergency evacuation procedures; the hirer must ensure the safety of those attending during the hire period including ensuring means of escape from fire are not blocked or impeded; accident and incident reporting procedures (this list is not exhaustive)

### 3.18 Fire Related Accidents and Incidents

Any incidents of fire regardless of how minor must be reported via the [Assure](#) incident reporting system.

### 3.19 Training and Instruction

It is a legal requirement that all employees undergo basic fire safety training at induction and periodically thereafter. SMBC shall ensure that adequate information, instruction and training are available to their employees. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure employees undertake the applicable training.

It is essential that all new members of staff complete the basic fire awareness training. This is currently provided to all employees including maintained schools through an e-learning module.

In addition, on or before the first day of employment each new member of staff will be instructed by their line manager in the following:

- What to do if there is a fire
- What to do if the fire alarm sounds
- The location of the nearest fire alarm
- The location of the nearest fire exit, as well as a secondary route
- The location and route to the designated assembly point(s).

All employees are required to complete regular refresher training. The period between fire awareness refresher training should be based upon the premises fire risk assessment but must not exceed three years. Residential care premises and services which include sleeping accommodation or other high-risk activities must undertake fire awareness training on an annual basis.

Training table:

<b>Training</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Fire Awareness e-learning	All staff	Every 3 years (or more frequent as determined by the fire risk assessment)  Annually for residential care premises, services

<b>Training</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
		which include sleeping accommodation; other high-risk activities
Fire Warden Training	Fire Wardens	Every 3 years (or more frequent as determined by the fire risk assessment)
Fire Risk Assessors	Level 5 Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) higher education award (as a minimum) Accredited third party certification and professional body membership is deemed essential for fire risk assessors	

#### 4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy has been subject to a Fair Treatment Assessment. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 equality and diversity issues have been considered in the development of this policy and no equality issues were identified.

#### 5. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed and updated by the Health, Safety and Risk Service in conjunction with Corporate Property Services every three years or if there are any significant changes to current fire Legislation, HSE approved codes of practice or guidance, or as the result of the outcome of an incident review. However, an interim review will be carried out to coincide with the introduction of the Corporate Landlord Model (2.6)

Policy reviews will be reported to the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Board.

#### 6. FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The Health, Safety and Risk Service has an extensive intranet site where further advice and guidance is available on all aspects of health and safety. Alternatively, please contact the Health, Safety and Risk Service, telephone 0121 704 6328, or via email [healthandsafetysupport@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafetysupport@solihull.gov.uk)

#### 7. TABLE OF ROLES

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Duty Holder Chief Executive	The representative for the organisation on whom the statutory duty falls

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Head of Corporate Property Services (Corporate Responsible Person)	The person to take managerial responsibility and to supervise implementation of a fire risk assessment schedule for Council buildings within their immediate control and to appoint competent Fire Risk Assessors
Site Responsible Person Heads of Service / Headteachers / Facilities Managers / Building Managers	The person(s) in control of a premises or site including the maintenance, facilities, plant and equipment and general day to day running of the building. The contact for the occupants.
Site Team Site Managers, Porters etc.	The person responsible for the implementation of the organisation's operational / maintenance issues in accordance with the policy.
Helpdesk Team Property Services & Maintenance Partnership 0121 704 6576	The team appointed to take the calls from building managers for repairs.
Health, Safety and Risk Service 0121 704 6328	The team appointed to provide competent health and safety advice.
Competent Fire Risk Assessor	Appointed by the Corporate Responsible Person to undertake fire risk assessments on behalf of SMBC.  In terms of competency, meets the requirements of the Fire Sector Federation Approved Code of Practice (ACOP): A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency, and their Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor.

## Legislation

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Fire Safety Act 2021

Building Safety Bill 2021

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988

The Building Regulations [Approved Document B – Fire Safety](#)

## Guidance Documents

Fire Sector Federation ACOP - [A National Framework for Fire Risk Assessor Competency](#)

Fire Sector Federation - [A Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor](#)

[Building Bulletin 100: Design for Fire safety in Schools](#)

[Fire Risk Assessment in Educational Premises](#)

[Fire Risk Assessment in Shops and Offices](#)

[Fire Risk Assessment in Residential Care Homes](#)

[Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Means of Escape for Disabled People](#)

[HSE Fire Safety Webpages](#)



## **Appendix 1**

Example reception signs – extract from the guidance [Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Means of Escape for Disabled People](#)

### **Option 1 – Standard PEEPs in place**

#### **Option 1 – Standard PEEPs in place**

We operate a system of assisted escape for disabled visitors.  
Please tell our receptionist your requirements.

We will provide you with a suitable escape plan.



### **Option 2 – Disabled people’s evacuation strategy in place**

#### **Option 2 – Disabled people’s evacuation strategy in place**

We operate a system of assisted escape for disabled visitors.  
Please tell our receptionist your requirements.

We will explain our escape procedures to you.

