

<b>Fire Policy Practice Guidance Note</b>		
<b>The Role of Responsible Person – V04</b>		
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<b>Author/Designation</b>	Matthew Lessells, Head of Estates - NTW Solutions Ltd	
<b>Responsible Officer / Designation</b>	Executive Finance Director and Deputy Chief Executive	

<p><b>KEY POINTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The responsible person, in any place of work, has a duty of care for the safety of all persons in that workplace with regard to fire</b></li> <li>• <b>Under current fire safety legislation, every NHS workplace, ward, department and community premises must have a responsible person</b></li> <li>• <b>In multi-occupied premises, each department must have a responsible person</b></li> <li>• <b>The main regulations covering responsible persons are the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Health &amp; Safety at Work Act 1974</b></li> </ul>
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Fire Practice Guidance Notes form part of the CNTW Group's approach to managing health and safety and it is expected that staff will follow the guidance contained within them unless there is a compelling reason to deviate from it. Such reasons should be documented whenever the circumstance occurs and notified to the Head of Estates so that modifications to future editions can be made if necessary.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Practice Guidance Note (PGN) is to set out specific guidelines to enable the Trust to be assured that the duties of the responsible person with regards to fire safety are clearly defined. The responsible person is recognised within Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust), as a person delegated certain duties and powers to ensure compliance with the requirements of Trust procedures and the relevant legal legislation; this includes fire safety.
- 1.2 Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, every workplace within the Trust must have a responsible person; this is normally the person in charge of a particular area. This person may also be a nominated deputy or someone temporarily in charge and the person the fire service and Trust Fire Safety Advisors will need to speak to with issues regarding fire safety. Normally a ward manager, team leader, department head etc. will assume this role.
- 1.3 In a building accommodating more than one department or workplace, each such area must have a responsible person. It is the duty of each of those persons to liaise with each other in order to be conversant with the fire action/evacuation procedure for the building and to co-ordinate the fire action plan in the event of the fire alarm actuating.
- 1.4 If no one person is in overall charge of the premises, documentation such as the fire safety logbook should be kept in a place accessible to all departments, the Fire Safety Advisor and any persons carrying out routine testing.

## **2 Scope**

- 2.1 This PGN together with any associated procedures and guidance notes, shall be observed by all employees of the Trust and is applicable to responsible persons and their nominated deputies.

## **3 Statement**

- 3.1 The Trust are committed to effective management and control of fire safety in order to reduce the risks to patients, staff, visitors and members of the public.
- 3.2 The Fire Safety Advisors will actively assist all persons to ensure they are competent in their role as responsible persons with regard to fire safety measures.

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## 4 Main Role and Duties

- 4.1 The responsible person's main role will be ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of all relevant persons in the event of fire (relevant persons being anyone who has a legal right to be on the premises, e.g. – staff, patients, visitors, special needs persons, contracted workers etc).
- 4.2 The responsible person is also required to **carry out a fire risk assessment** of their workplace and identify any potential risks to staff and other persons likely to be on the premises. Details of fire risk assessments are described in a separate Fire PGN **FP-PGN-03**. If a fire risk assessment has already been carried out, it will need to be reviewed periodically (normally annually) to ensure it is still relevant to the work area
- 4.3 The responsible person will also be required to have a plan to deal with fire alarm activations and to deal with emergencies requiring evacuation although this may be delegated to a competent person to undertake. Other day-to-day duties include:
- Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) are in place for those who require them
  - Ensure the fire logbook is kept up to date and is accessible
  - Ensuring means of escape are accessible
  - Ensuring fire doors remain operational and are not wedged open
  - Waste is not allowed to accumulate
  - Any flammable materials such as aerosols are locked away when not in use.
  - Smoking and vaping is restricted in line with Trust policy
  - Record dates and times of staff training.
  - Carry out fire drills in your area of responsibility – this should be done at least annually and details of persons taking part in fire drills should be forwarded to the Training Department so staff training records can be updated. Fire Safety Advisors will offer guidance if requested.
- 4.4 The persons in charge must acquaint themselves with the emergency fire action plan with regards to safety of persons in the event of a fire or fire alarm actuation. The concept of fire evacuation is simple in its objective, the problems lie with mobility of patients, willingness of patients and the layout of the buildings.

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## **5 Fire Service Attendance**

- 5.1 The fire service will normally attend any Trust premises in the event of fire, automatic fire alarm actuation or on receiving a 999 call. During office hours they must be met by the responsible person (or a nominated deputy) for that area or department. During quiet hours alternative arrangements should be made if the area is not staffed 24 hours.
- 5.2 It is vitally important that someone is available to liaise with the fire service as they will require certain information regarding the incident, for example, the number of persons unaccounted for and the exact location of the incident. For premises staffed 24 hours, the responsible person on duty will liaise with the fire service. If the premises are multi-occupied, the responsible persons for the various departments must liaise with each other and devise a system of communication with the fire service if they attend.
- 5.3 If the premises are multi-occupied, a system for contact must be established and it is the responsibility of the persons in charge of the various departments or businesses to devise such a system. On main hospital sites and, in particular, patient areas, the switchboard must be contacted immediately if the fire alarm sounds and there is no obvious signs of fire (false alarm or deliberate activation of the fire alarm system for example). The incident will be investigated initially before any fire service attendance is requested.
- 5.4 If a fire warden or wardens are used it has to be remembered that the responsible person still has ultimate responsibility and a duty of care for the safety of all persons in their work area. The role of the fire warden will be to assist and advise the person in charge.

## **6 Summary**

- 6.1 If you are a responsible person you may appoint another competent person to carry out such duties as undertaking or reviewing a fire risk assessment or carrying out an evacuation drill if they have previous experience or you feel they are capable of carrying out such tasks, however you will still ultimately be responsible.
- 6.2 In many premises, achieving a good level of fire safety is a matter of common sense providing the responsible person makes enough time available to go through the necessary steps.