Fire Safety Management Protocol
Fire Response Plans

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Target audience:	Trust-wide

Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
Version 1	December 2023	• This is a new procedural document, please read in full	Howard Timms

Contents

1   INTRODUCTION

This protocol contributes to the fulfilment of developing fire safety protocols as stated in Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (second edition). This protocol addresses 'Fire Response Plans'.

2   PURPOSE

This protocol will be implemented throughout all premises, or parts of premises, which the Trust occupies or those for which the Trust is responsible for providing emergency response support in the event of a fire incident.

The safety of patients, visitors, staff, and other building users from fire relies upon the three tenets of prevention, preparation, and response. Whilst the Trust primary policy focus is upon preventing the incidence of fire, it is acknowledged that, despite our best efforts, a fire may still occur. It is therefore necessary to prepare for such occurrences such that we may respond effectively in order to meet our second fire policy objective of minimising the impact of fire upon safety, service delivery, property, and the environment. Therefore, this fire safety management protocol is concerned with preparing a robust and competent response to the incidence of fire.

3   DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst it is incumbent upon all staff to be prepared to respond effectively in the event of a fire, key personnel have particular duties and responsibilities in order to ensure that appropriate planning, preparation testing and rehearsal of the emergency response has taken place:

3.1   Fire Safety Manager

- Establishing an appropriate and robust fire response plan in respect of the Fire Response Team actions in the event of a fire incident.
- Developing, delivering, and auditing an appropriate programme of training for the Fire Response Team
- Liaising with the Fire Response Team Leaders and other nominated members of the Fire Response Team to ensure that the Trust-wide fire response plan is sufficiently robust and that the actions described are feasible.
- Communicating the Trust-wide fire response plan to all members of the Fire Response Team, the Fire and Rescue Service and other relevant stakeholders.
- Conducting fire response rehearsals, particularly with the Fire Response Team to test their knowledge and understanding of the Trust-wide fire response plan and identify any potential weaknesses.
- Provide technical support to Persons with Control in the form of:
- Assistance to establish and record an appropriate fire response plan for each area under their control.
- Liaising with other Persons with Control to ensure that each fire response plan is accurate and robust, particularly in terms of additional resources and feasibility of evacuation strategy.

3.2 Person with Control

- Responsible for establishing appropriate and robust Fire Response Plans in respect of the area(s) for which they have control.
- Responsible for ensuring that the Fire Response Plan is appropriately communicated to all relevant staff and that those staff understand and are conversant with the actions to be taken in the event of a fire incident.
- Responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff are rehearsed in the Fire Response Plan.
- Responsible for ensuring that the Fire Response Plans, relating to the area(s) for which they have control, are reviewed, and where necessary updated, periodically and in response to any changes which may invalidate the Fire Response Plan.
- Responsible for informing the Fire safety Manager of changes to any personnel identified as a Person with Control.
- Where more than one Person with Control exists for an area, those individuals must coordinate with each other to discharge the responsibilities set out above.

3.3 Responsible Person

- Ultimately responsible for establishing appropriate and robust Fire Response Plans.
- Ultimately responsible for ensuring Fire Response Plans are rehearsed.
- Responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of Fire Response Plans.

4 THE NEED FOR FIRE RESPONSE PLANS

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the Responsible Person, together with anyone who to any extent has control over any part of the premises, to establish and, where necessary, give effect to appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger.

It is only through the planning and preparation of robust Fire Response Plans together with the communication and rehearsal of those plans can the Trust demonstrate its compliance with the Regulatory Reform Fire (Safety Order) 2005 and most importantly its preparedness in the event of a fire.

Each area which the Trust occupies must be provided with a robust Fire Response Plan (Local Fire Response Plan), and all such areas, together with each area for which the Trust is responsible for providing emergency response support in the event of a fire incident. should be included in the Trust-wide Fire Response Plan.

5 PLANNING & PREPARATION

For a Fire Response Plan to be effective there must be sufficient planning and preparation both of its contents and the viability of its implementation. Sufficient consideration must be given to the extent of the detail included within the Fire Response Plan to ensure that it contains sufficient detail to adequately describe the processes and actions necessary to be effective and yet can be communicated concisely and readily understood.

5.1 Responsibility for preparing Fire Response Plans

The planning and preparation of Fire Response Plans cannot be undertaken in isolation of those that may be called upon to provide such response to a fire incident. Indeed, the most effective Fire Response Plans are developed by those likely to be called upon to provide the fire incident response since they are best placed to understand the needs of those that may be required to be evacuated or otherwise protected in the event of a fire, and to appreciate both the resources necessary to implement the plans and the resources likely to be available.

5.1.1 Local Fire Response Plans

Local fire response plans should be prepared by the Person(s) with Control for the area concerned in conjunction with the Fire Safety Manager.

5.1.2 Trust-wide Fire Response Plans

Local fire response plans should be prepared by the Person(s) with Control for the area concerned in conjunction with the Fire Safety Manager.

5.2 Anatomy of a Fire Response Plan

Scope

The Fire Response Plan should contain the scope which adequately describes the area referred to in the Fire Response Plan (as would be the case for a local fire response plan) or the group of people to whom the Fire Response Plan relates (as would be the case for a Trust-wide fire response plan).

The scope of a local fire response plan should also include a description of the area and its likely occupants whereas the Trust-wide fire response plan should include a description of the make-up of the Fire Response Team.

Initiation

The Fire Response Plan should detail the circumstances of initiation and all of the modes by which the plan may be initiated.

Actions to be taken

The Fire Response Plan should detail the actions to be taken upon initiation in order of priority. For ease of reference, this information may be presented in the form of Action Cards.

Resources

The Fire Response Plan should include details of the resources available, together with any additional resources required, to enable the prioritised actions to be completed.

For a local fire response plan this should include the availability of:

- Trained staff in the area in question.
- Evacuation aids in the area in question.
- Portable medical equipment, including portable oxygen cylinders, in the area in question where necessary to support patient evacuation.
- Trained staff in nearby areas that may assist.

- Evacuation aids in nearby areas that may be quickly brought to the area in question.
- Portable medical equipment, including portable oxygen cylinders, in nearby areas that may be quickly brought to the area in question where necessary to support patient evacuation.

For a Trust-wide fire response plan this should include the availability of:

- Trained staff in the Fire Response Team, security staff and any other staff elsewhere that can be called upon to assist in the fire response.
- Any equipment necessary to provide an effective response to a fire incident including:
  - ➢ Fire alarm and other related system control keys.
  - ➢ Portable communication devices.
  - ➢ Identification tabards/arm-bands.
  - ➢ Access keys/key codes.
  - ➢ Drawings showing fire compartmentation and equipment (included in the Premises Information Boxes {see Fire Safety (Information for the Fire and Rescue Service) Protocol No. 21} at the main points of entry to the hospital buildings and within each local department in the form of a wall mounted plan of the area concerned).
- Trained staff beyond the immediate areas that may be called upon to assist.
- Evacuation aids beyond the immediate areas that may be brought to the area in question.
- Portable medical equipment, including portable oxygen cylinders, beyond the immediate areas that may be brought to the area in question where necessary to support patient evacuation.

Evacuation Routes and Places of Relative Safety

The local fire response plan should include details of the available evacuation routes and the nearby Places of Relative Safety in preference order.

The preference order of evacuation routes and the nearby Places of Relative Safety should consider:

- The likely availability of the evacuation route.
- The availability of staff outside the area being evacuated able to receive patients as part of the evacuation.
- The distance along the evacuation route to a Place of Relative Safety.
- The potential difficulties of evacuation along the evacuation route.
- The capacity of the nearby Places of Relative Safety to accommodate all of the occupants being evacuated.
- The availability of facilities to support the continued care of evacuated patients.
- The availability and nature of escape routes to facilitate further evacuation should it be necessary.

The Trust-wide fire response plan should defer to the local fire response plans for evacuation of the immediate areas, but should make reference to the Trust's Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response plans for evacuating areas of a facility in the event of major disruptions.

Reporting

The Fire Response Plan should include details of the communication and reporting structure and the need to maintain incident logs to assist in post incident investigation and identifying area of response weakness.

Continuation of Care

The local fire response plan should include details of equipment and other items which may, following the evacuation of all occupants and if safe to do so, be removed from the area affected in order to support the continuation of patient care. For example, it may be beneficial to remove paper-based notes or specialist pharmaceuticals.

5.3   Dissemination and communication of the Fire Response Plan

In order to be effective any Fire Response Plan must be appropriately communicated to all relevant staff and other stakeholders in such a manner as to ensure their understanding of the action to be taken and supporting arrangements and facilities which form the basis of a competent response to a fire incident.

All local fire response plans must be communicated verbally to all staff that may work in an area, and be freely available in written form as part of the Fire Safety Information Manual {See Fire Safety (Fire Safety Information Manuals) Protocol No. 19} for reference by any of the following:

- A member of staff.
- A patient or their representative.
- A member of the Trust Fire Safety Team.
- The Authorising Engineer (Fire).
- Any person undertaking a fire risk assessment.
- An officer from the Fire and Rescue Service.

5.4   Rehearsal of the Fire Response Plan

In order to be effective any Fire Response Plan must be rehearsed in the circumstances that are as close as practicable to those anticipated during a fire incident. The outcome of each rehearsal, whatever form it takes, should be recorded and any areas of weakness identified should be notified to the Ward/Clinic/Department Manager and the Fire Safety Manager such that it may be addressed in future fire safety training.

5.4.1   Fire drills

In non-patient access areas or in circumstances where a short disruption to working activity of the order of 10 minutes is not likely to endanger patient safety, it may be appropriate to rehearse the Fire Response Plan by means of an unannounced fire drill. In such circumstances the Fire Response Plan should be initiated in accordance with any of the likely modes identified without prior notification, and the staff should be allowed to follow the processes set out in the Fire Response Plan.

In circumstances where short disruption to working activity could potentially endanger patient safety an unannounced fire drill should not take place. However, the Fire Response Team should be drilled in the Trust-wide fire response plan including for those areas providing patient care. In such circumstances it is appropriate for the Fire Response Team to be provided with prepared fire drill information by the person that would be the Fire Incident Manager in the local area in order to simulate an incident in that area.

Where possible combined fire drills involving the Fire Response Team and the Fire and Rescue Service should be undertaken periodically.

5.4.2   Walkthroughs

In circumstances where it is not possible to undertake a fire drill the Fire Response Plans should be tested by means of a walk-through of the fire response processes. The walk-through should involve as many staff from the area concerned as possible and should include a physical walk-through the ward or department ensuring that staff physically travel along the escape routes, to locations of relevant equipment, and to the associated Places of Relative Safety.

The person conducting the walk-through should be fully conversant with the Fire Response Plan for that area and should set a realistic fire scenario which would initiate the Fire Response Plan. During the exercise the person conducting the walk-through should repeatedly challenge staff taking part to assess their knowledge and understanding of the Fire Response Plan.

5.4.3   Desktop Exercises

In some circumstances it may not be possible, or may be too disruptive, to undertake a thorough walk-through of the Fire Response Plan. Where this is the case the Fire Response Plan should be tested by means of desktop exercises whereby staff are rehearsed in the Fire Response Plan by reference to a building plan of the relevant area. All staff taking part of a desktop exercise should be provided with sufficient information to allow them to orient themselves to the plan and the person conducting the desktop exercise should ensure that all staff members are able to relate the building plan to the relevant department.

In order to assist staff members taking part to relate the building plan to the Fire Response Plan it may be beneficial to use some form of token to represent patient and bed movements throughout the relevant area and to the associated *Places of Relative Safety*.

6   MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE DOCUMENT

The ongoing preparedness and fire response will be monitored and reported via the fire safety management system through reports and records of fire incidents and rehearsals of fire response plans reported via the Fire Safety Group.

In addition, sample monitoring of fire response plans will be included in the periodic third-party audit.

7   DEFINITIONS

Authorising Engineer (Fire)

A Chartered Engineer, with extensive experience in healthcare fire safety who has been appointed by the Trust board to provide assurance that the Trust is meeting its obligations in respect of its arrangements for fire safety.

Fire Incident Manager

The most senior person in charge of an area and present at the time that an incident occurs, and responsible for taking control of the incident, directing the local incident response and imitating the local fire response plan.

Fire Response Plan

A detailed plan of action to be followed in response to a fire incident.

Fire Response Team

The team of staff designated to respond to a fire incident.

Fire Response Team Leader

The person nominated to lead the Fire Response Team. In the context of the Trust, this is the Clinical Site Manager.

Fire Safety Information Manual

A local compendium of relevant fire safety information providing a point of reference for staff and other relevant stakeholders and acting as a repository for fire safety related records.

Person with Control

Any person who to any extent has control over the premises, or part(s) of the premises at any time. In the context of the Trust, this could include a Divisional Director, a General Manager, a Department Manager, a Matron, a Ward Sister, or a Charge Nurse. Each area may have more than one Person with Control, and the extent of their responsibilities is determined by the extent of the control they exercise over the area.

Place of Relative Safety

A place of temporary safety within the building which is separated from an area of fire by fire resisting construction and fire doors, and from which further escape is possible.

Premises Information Box

A suitably secure box which the Fire and Rescue Service can access and which contains relevant, up to date, information about the premises.

Responsible Person

The person (natural or legal) ultimately responsible for fire safety as defined in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In the context of the Trust, this will be the Trust Board.

8   EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, population, and workforce, ensuring that none are disadvantaged over others. Our objectives and responsibilities relating to equality and diversity are outlined within our equality schemes. When considering the needs and assessing the impact of a procedural document any discriminatory factors must be identified.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27) and the Fair Treatment for All Policy (CORP/EMP 4).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible, remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religious belief. No detriment was identified.   (See Appendix 1)

9   ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

Fire Safety Policy – CORP/HSFS 14
Fire Safety Protocols.
Fire Safety, fire safety training & fire incident related procedures and records.
Fire Related Maintenance Records.

10   DATA PROTECTION

Any personal data processing associated with this policy will be carried out under 'Current data protection legislation' as in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2021.

For further information on data processing carried out by the trust, please refer to our Privacy Notices and other information which you can find on the trust website:
https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/about-us/our-publications/information-governance/

11   REFERENCES

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. SI 2005 No 1541.

Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (Second Edition). The Stationery Office, 2013.

NHS England Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR), Planning for the Shelter and Evacuation of people in healthcare settings.

APPENDIX 1 – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Service/Function/Policy/Project/Strategy	Division	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment
Fire Response Plans Protocol 8	Estates and Facilities	Howard Timms	New	14 June 2023

1) Who is responsible for this policy? - Name of Care Group/Directorate: Estates and Facilities

2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy? Who is it intended to benefit? What are the intended outcomes? - All Trust Staff. This protocol contributes to the fulfilment of developing fire safety protocols as stated in Health Technical Memorandum 05-01: Managing healthcare fire safety (second edition). This protocol addresses 'Fire Response Plans'.

3) Are there any associated objectives? Legislation, targets national expectation, standards. - Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the DOH Firecode HTM 05 Series

4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? Trust staff awareness

5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? - No

- **If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact** [e.g., Monitoring, consultation] - N/A

6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? [any actions to be taken] - N/A

7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy? - No

Protected Characteristics	Affected?	Impact
a) Age	No	
b) Disability	No	
c) Gender	No	
d) Gender Reassignment	No	
e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No	
f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No	
g) Race	No	
h) Religion/Belief	No	
i) Sexual Orientation	No	

8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function /policy / project / strategy – tick (✓) outcome box

Outcome 1 ✓	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4

*If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a **Detailed Equality Analysis form in Appendix 4***

Date for next review: June 2026

Checked by: Sean Tyler - Head of Compliance/Neil Colton - Fire Safety Advisor   **Date:** 14 June 2023