

Fire Safety Guidance Note – Progressive Evacuation and use of Stay put Policies

1. Introduction.

1.1. This guidance is provided to assist Fire Safety Inspectors, businesses and members of the public and is intended to clearly set out the standards and values that will be applied.

1.3. This guidance **does not apply to institutional premises** such as elderly person's homes, residential care homes, nursing type accommodation etc. where guidance is available from Health Technical Memorandum and Guidance Notes and registration takes place under the Care Standards Act.

2. Institutional Premises.

2.1 With regards to fire evacuation, **there should be no stay put policy within institutional/residential care premises** unless the premises is designed and constructed for progressive horizontal evacuation in accordance with the Department of Health "Fire code" documents. Evacuation should commence as soon as possible after the alarm has sounded.

2.2 Evacuation will be carried out via progressive horizontal evacuation and progressive vertical evacuation where the home is multi-storey. Upper floors will be evacuated as part of the normal procedure.

3. Sheltered Accommodation

3.1. Sheltered Accommodation is taken to mean accommodation in grouped flatlets with warden supervision and is designed to meet the needs of the less active elderly people and may be categorised into one of the following main categories

- **Category A** - Self-contained dwellings to accommodate one or two elderly people of the more active kind. These normally will be of the bungalow type with no communal areas but best suited to couples who are able to maintain a greater degree of independence and manage housework and maybe a little gardening.
- **Category B** - Grouped flatlets to meet the needs of less active elderly people such as dwellings incorporating warden accommodation and communal rooms such as a lounge, TV room, workshop, etc. Wardens will not necessarily be on 24 hour cover.
- **Category C** - Similar to Category B but where the residents may be disabled or require nursing care. It is likely that Category B scheme will develop into Category C by virtue of the advancing age of residents.

4. Sheltered Accommodation Fire Warning System

- **Category A** - A fire warning system is not usually considered necessary. A single point smoke alarm as per the Approved Document B of the Building Regulations should be provided.
- **Categories B & C** - A type L electrical fire alarm and detection system, conforming to BS 5839: Part 1: 2002 should be provided and incorporate an annunciator panel adjacent to the main entrance with a repeat signal in the warden's accommodation. Normally a type L2 system would be appropriate.

5. Sheltered Accommodation Evacuation Procedures

5.1 On the operation of the fire alarm a full evacuation of the premises should immediately take place by all occupants capable of leaving the building by their own unaided efforts.

5.2. In large buildings a 2 stage phased evacuation is acceptable. The practice of management/staff checking out the cause of the alarm before instigating an evacuation is to be discouraged. Fire Safety Inspectors may well encounter resistance from the owners/staff responsible for the day to day running of the premises, in the final analysis responsibility for evacuation rests with them.

5.3 The recommendations made in this guidance are aimed at the most predominant type of accommodation, i.e., blocks of flats to which access is gained by common internal staircases and corridors. 'Flat' should be taken to mean a dwelling set out on one level only.

5.4 The management of sheltered accommodation may argue that there is a higher risk to Non-ambulant residents. The management may propose that Non-ambulant residents may remain in their rooms (stay put) until assistance arrives. However this should form a principle part of the fire risk assessment for the premises as a whole so that valued judgements on the practicalities can be made by the relevant authority.

5.5 In sheltered accommodation, on the sounding of the fire alarm, a 'stay put' policy may be acceptable following a specific fire risk assessment carried out by a competent person on behalf of the responsible person, which may be either a housing association or a managing agency.

5.6. In those cases where evacuation of non- ambulant residents may pose the higher risk, the following criteria should form the basis of a written fire risk assessment for each individual non ambulant resident and each assessment should form part of the overall policy.

- The building meets an approved standard of construction, i.e., the Building Regulations, BS 5588: Part 1: 1990 or CP3.
- Any system of mechanical/natural ventilation should be designed and protected in accordance with BS 5588: Part 9 in terms of its operation under fire conditions.
- An approved fire alarm system is provided throughout, with a type L2 automatic fire detection and alarm system, designed, installed and maintained in accordance with BS 5839: Part 1.
- Acceptable fire safety management procedures are provided and affirmed in writing.
- There is a history of management conducting satisfactory 'Fire Safety Management' within the particular premises.
- There is in place suitable training arrangements for staff and residents and a record of such is kept.
- A list showing the location of non-ambulant residents subject to a 'stay put' policy should be available to fire crews on arrival.

5.7. Housing associations and management agencies must be advised against implementing a blanket policy on their building stock as all premises must be individually assessed for fire.

5.8. A 'stay put' policy is not a substitute for having sufficient staff available to manage an evacuation of the sheltered accommodation, nor is expected that it is used to avoid evacuating ambulant residents when the fire alarm operates.

5.9. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service will advise on the recommended criteria to be adopted however ***NO RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'STAY PUT' POLICIES IN SUCH PREMISES BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY.***