

FamilyCare

Healing pasts • Building futures



Fire Safety Policy

www.family-care.co.uk

Fire Safety Policy

Implemented/Reviewed: July 2025

Date of Next Review: July 2026



Policy

Family Care Group will take all reasonable steps to prevent or minimise the probability of fire. However, it cannot be assumed that fire will never break out. Arrangements are in place therefore to deal with this eventuality and these will be regularly checked to ensure that they are adequate.

Fire safety training and fire evacuation drills, inspections of the means of escape and maintenance of fire warning systems and firefighting equipment will take place at specified intervals.

Fire Safety Audits and Fire Safety Risk Assessments will be reviewed every three months, or if circumstances change.

All employees will be given suitable training in basic fire prevention measures.

Employees should report any concerns they have about fire hazards, etc. without delay to the Manager, or a responsible person, so that appropriate measures can be taken to eliminate the risk.

All employees are to be familiar with:

- the actions to be taken on discovery of fire and/or on hearing the alarm;
- the location of fire alarm call points within the home and the method of operation;
- the location of firefighting equipment and the method of operation;
- all escape routes;
- the purpose of fire resisting doors and their locations;
- evacuation procedures and the location of the assembly point.

Procedure

Fire Risk Assessment

One of the most important aspects of fire safety is a regular assessment of the fire risks within the home or workplace. The home will therefore undertake a fire risk assessment which will be under regular review.

Reducing the risk of fire – sensible precautions

Reducing sources of ignition

You can reduce the hazards caused by potential sources of ignition by:

- removing unnecessary sources of heat from the workplace or replacing them with safer alternatives, ensuring that heat-producing equipment is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and is properly maintained;
- replacing naked flame and radiant heaters with fixed convector heaters or a central heating system;



- ensuring that all electrical fuses and circuit breakers etc. are of the correct rating and suitable for the purpose;
- ensuring that sources of heat do not arise from faulty or overloaded electrical or mechanical equipment;
- keeping ducts and flues clean;
- operating a safe smoking policy in designated smoking areas and prohibiting smoking elsewhere;
- enforcing the prohibition of matches and lighters and other naked flames in high- fire-risk areas;
- ensuring that all equipment that could provide a source of ignition, even when not in use, is left in a safe condition;
- making sure that any smouldering material (including smokers' material) is properly extinguished before leaving the workplace; and
- taking precautions to avoid the risk of arson.

Minimising the potential fuel for a fire

There are various ways you can reduce the risks caused by materials and substances which burn. These include:

- removing flammable materials and substances, or reducing them to the minimum required for the operation of the business;
- replacing materials and substances with less flammable alternatives;
- ensuring flammable materials are handled, transported, stored and used properly;
- ensuring adequate separation distances between flammable materials;
- replacing or repairing furniture with damaged upholstery where the foam filling is exposed;
- ensuring that flammable waste materials and rubbish are not allowed to build up and are carefully stored until properly disposed of;
- taking action to avoid storage areas being vulnerable to arson or vandalism;
- ensuring good housekeeping.

If You Discover a Fire

- If you discover a fire, or you see or smell smoke, raise the alarm at once – do not hesitate;
- You must know the location of all the fire alarm call points. Strike the 'break glass' within the call point to activate the alarm. Read the notice posted on the wall next to the call point which sets out the procedure in case of fire;
- The home does not expect you to fight a fire. Even a small waste bin fire can give off toxic and potentially lethal fumes if it contains plastics, certain forms of packaging etc. Your objective now is to preserve life (including your own) and to help others as appropriate;

- When the source of a fire has been identified close the door to the room to isolate the fire, reduce the flow of air and prevent the fire from spreading. Fire doors are designed to offer a minimum of 30 minutes protection against the spread of fire. If you are not directly responsible for assisting with the movement and possible evacuation of residents, evacuate the building at once, closing doors behind you. If you are host to a visitor or contractor in the building you are responsible for their safety. Escort them from the building if it is safe to do so, along with ambulant residents if appropriate.



Remember your training:

- Report the location of the fire, to others in the building, if it is safe to do so;
- Evacuate at once using the nearest available fire exit. Use only the staircases designated as fire escape routes and indicated by 'Fire Exit' signs;
- Do not run;
- Do not collect personal belongings;
- Do not use the lift, if one has been installed;
- Go to the Assembly Point;
- Do not re-enter the building until you are advised by the Fire Brigade that it is safe to do so. No one else has this authority.

Warning if there is a Fire

The Fire Alarm will sound throughout the building if:

- someone activates a call point;
- a smoke detector or heat detector is activated.

The Fire Alarm will be heard as an intermittent electronic sound throughout the building and in all zones. It is of vital importance that all staff are familiar with this sound. There is a regular fire alarm test and staff training will include familiarisation with the alarm sound.

- When the Fire Alarm sounds the senior member of staff on duty will immediately call the Fire Brigade.
- It must **NEVER** be assumed that the alarm is a false one. Remember, modern smoke detectors are so sensitive that they will pick up early evidence of ignition before smoke can be seen or smelt. Just because you cannot see or smell smoke does not mean that there is no possibility of fire.
- The alarm must never be muted until the exact cause of the alarm activation has been established beyond any doubt and there is certainty that the threat of fire no longer exists. An example of this would be mischievous 'glass breaking'.

If the alarm is muted staff must be positioned as necessary throughout the home and remain on the highest state of alert and readiness until the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

Muting the Alarm

Calling the Fire Brigade

If the Fire Alarm sounds the senior member of staff on duty will call the Fire Brigade at once by dialling 999. This will always be the first action – there must be no delay in calling the emergency services.

At this stage there is never such a thing as a false alarm. The maximum time to evacuate a Fire Zone in the event of a fire is 3 minutes.

Failure to act immediately can cost lives. The senior member of staff on duty will give the full address and post code of the home. It is most important to wait until the address is read back by the call-centre before replacing the handset. Always give the full address – you may be answered by a call-centre anywhere in the UK and ‘Name of Care home’ will be insufficient information. The Fire Brigade are technically in charge of the situation from the moment they receive the emergency call. They will be aware how many appliances to send and the other emergency services will automatically be informed.



If you hear the alarm

If the alarm sounds in the Fire Zone in which you are working this means that either a smoke or heat detector or a manual break glass point has been activated. Contractors and visitors will be escorted or asked to leave by the nearest available fire exit and told to go to and remain at the Assembly Point. Unless the fire has been discovered, in which case it should have been isolated and staff in that zone informed, staff will begin a ‘shut down’ operation if safe to do so.

This will include:

- Reassuring the YPs;
- Closing windows and all doors (including doors not designated as fire doors) in the Fire Zone, if safe to do so;
- Turning off and unplugging items of electrical equipment, if safe to do so.

At this stage a phased evacuation of the residents will take place. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be created and regularly reviewed for residents or staff with additional evacuation needs. If the fire has been isolated everyone has sufficient time to undertake this process and there is no need for panic or undue haste. Upon the arrival of the Fire Brigade the Senior Fire Officer attending will advise the senior member of staff on duty regarding further action.

Where people should assemble

The Assembly Point for all evacuees is in the car park and is marked by a green sign with the words ‘Assembly Point’ and a large ‘tick’ symbol in white. A register of staff, residents, and visitors will be taken at the assembly point by the Fire Marshall to ensure all persons have evacuated safely. All staff must be aware of the location of the Assembly Point and under no circumstances should leave it without the express permission of the Fire Brigade.

Identification of Key Escape Routes

The locations of the fire escape routes form an essential part of the fire safety training in the home and all staff must be familiar with them.

Fire Fighting Equipment

Fire extinguishers are located in all parts of the home. Although you must be familiar with their location and the basic requirements for their operation you must note that the home does not expect you to tackle a fire. In the case of a very small fire, such as a waste bin staff may use their discretion as to whether to attempt ‘first aid firefighting’.



You must ask yourself:

- Do I know what is burning? For example, do I know if electricity or cooking oil is involved?
- Do I know which fire extinguisher to use?
- Have I been trained to use it?
- Can I be absolutely sure that I am not putting my own safety, or someone else's, at risk?

If the answer to any one of these questions is 'NO', do not attempt to tackle the fire. Leave the area, closing the door behind you, and proceed as indicated in the sections above.

Liaising with the Fire Brigade

The senior member of staff on duty will liaise with the Fire Brigade upon their arrival. The senior Fire Brigade Officer attending will need to be briefed upon the current status of the incident. A copy of the plan of the home, showing fire escape routes and fire zones should be taken to the Assembly Point to assist the Fire Brigade.

The Officer will also need to have details of numbers / locations of those persons still in the home, and in particular in the Fire Zone in which the fire / alarm activation has occurred. Only the senior Fire Brigade Officer attending can advise upon re-entry to the home and upon re-setting the alarm. It should be noted that the Fire Brigade are not permitted to re-set alarms.

Staff Training

It is mandatory for all staff to receive regular presenter-led Fire Safety Training including training in the contents of the Emergency Plan. This training will take place 12-monthly for day staff and 6-monthly for night staff. In addition the 6-monthly Fire Evacuation Drills will be recorded as staff training. These notes have been prepared to plan the action that staff and other people in the home should take in the event of a fire. It must be kept readily available in the home (at least one in each Fire Zone) and its contents will form the basis of the regular Fire Training which all staff receive.

References to Legislation and Quality Standards

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

Regulation 13

Quality Standard

Leadership and Management

This policy complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which governs fire safety in non-domestic premises