**Fire Safety Guidance Note: No 1 - Fire Evacuation**

**1. Introduction**

This guidance note has been produced in order to help the University prepare for the phased return of staff and students during the Covid-19 pandemic only.

This document contains a briefing note that must be delivered to all members of staff and students as part of the phased re-opening of the University. The delivery of this briefing note must take place on the first day of both staff and students return to the University within any University building. This briefing note has been prepared so that Heads of Operations, Line Managers and Lecturers can deliver basic fire instructions to members of staff and students during a phased return to the University.

**2. Fire Evacuation for Students and Staff**

Social distancing cannot be maintained during a fire evacuation, so it is important that staff and students disperse on exiting the building, except for persons with reduced mobility (PRM) who can muster at dedicated fire assembly points. See Fire Safety Guidance Note 2 for further details.

Persons must not return to the building unless instructed to do so. Persons involved in the discovery of the fire or who activate the premise’s fire alarm system are advised to report to the responding Security Officers or Fire Wardens in order to transfer information that will help in dealing with the fire evacuation incident.

**3. Suitable Fire Evacuation Requirements**

In order to establish a suitable management structure for fire evacuation, the following fire evacuation roles are required for when students and staff return to any University building.

1. **Fire Wardens** (required if more than 100 persons are on the premises),
2. **Evacuation Chair Operators** (if persons with reduced mobility are part of the phased return),
3. **Fire Evacuation Lift Operators** (if persons with reduced mobility are part of the phased return),
4. **Security** (minimum staffing levels help form the fire alarm investigation team),
5. **Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator** (only required if occupants exceed 300),
6. **Line Managers/Tutors/Lecturers** (will perform the role of Fire Warden during fire evacuation only, if there are less than 100 occupants within the building).

If during the re-opening of the University, persons with roles listed above do not form part of the initial phased return, then training can be provided for additional individuals to fulfil the nominated roles, by the Safety, Health and Environment Department should the need arise.

If the above roles cannot be established or maintained for the duration of the working day then restrictions will need to be imposed on the numbers of persons occupying the building as well as access to upper floor levels. This does not mean that Fire Evacuation Chair or Fire Evacuation Lift Operators need to be present if for instance persons with reduced mobility (PRMs) are not part of the phased return.

 **3.1 Fire Wardens**

Fire Wardens form an important role when evacuating a building. The number of Fire Wardens required will depend on the number of staff and students that return as part of the phased re-opening of the University. If the number of returning staff and students are low, <100 persons per building, then it is feasible for Tutors/Lecturers, Line Managers to perform the basic Fire Warden’s role by ensuring that all students or staff under their control leave the building immediately following the activation of the fire alarm system.

Where the number of staff and students are >100, then a minimum of two Fire Wardens should be present on the premises to help deal with a fire evacuation should the need arise. Fire Wardens must be identifiable to staff and students by wearing Hi-Viz waistcoats or jackets during the fire evacuation. It is important to recognise that the numbers of staff and students forming part of the phased return will be relatively low. As the numbers increase then the numbers of Fire Wardens will need to increase. It is recommended that this guidance be reviewed if numbers exceed 400 occupants.

**Example:**

*The number of staff and students collated together may be less than <100 persons in certain buildings. In these types of circumstances, it would be reasonable for either the Senior Manager, Lecturer/Tutor to assume the role of a Fire Warden for the group of persons under their control. The role of the senior manager lecturer/tutor in this instance would be to simply ensure that persons under their control leave the area they are working or studying within and direct persons to the nearest fire exit route.*

**3.2 Security**

It is understood that Security maintain a minimum staffing level in order to operate and therefore will be able to provide a fire alarm investigation team at all times.

**3.3 Fire Evacuation Chair Operators/Fire Evacuation Lift Operators**

Fire Evacuation Chair Operators or Fire Evacuation Lift Operators will only be required if persons with reduced mobility form part of the phased return within any building and reside on any floor other, than the ground floor. Persons with reduced mobility (PRMs) will be able to self-evacuate from the ground floor without the need for assistance. Fire Evacuation Chair Operators must be identifiable to staff and students by wearing Hi-Viz waistcoats or jackets during the fire evacuation. It is therefore important to know if PRMs form part of the phased return so that provision for fire evacuation can be made should the need be required.

**3.4 Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator**

A Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator is not required as part of the initial phased return as numbers will be relatively low. However, should the number of staff and students exceed 300, within a single building, it is recommended that the role of a Fire Evacuation Co-ordinator is introduced.

**4. Fire Assembly Point Check**

Due to the size of certain fire assembly points, it will **NOT** be possible to maintain 2m social distancing rules as recommended by central government, for all members of staff and students. However, due to the low numbers of persons with reduced mobility, it is possible to maintain social distancing at fire assembly points and therefore PRMs are encouraged to use dedicated fire assembly points as persons can be quickly returned to the building when the all clear message is given.

A nominated member of staff is to check fire assembly points to see if they are being utilised by PRMs during a fire evacuation of the building.

**Briefing Note for all Staff and Students**

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| **On discovering a fire** |
| * **Operate the nearest fire alarm call-point immediately**
* **Do not attempt to fight the fire unless it blocks your means of escape**
* **Leave the building by the nearest available staircase or exit, do NOT follow one-way systems and close all doors behind you**
* **Walk, do not run and do not use the lifts**
* **Persons with reduced mobility will either use dedicated fire evacuation lifts if installed, or move to a dedicated refuge point and wait for assistance**
* **Report to either a Fire Warden or Security Officer and let them know the reasons for operating the fire alarm system**
* **Do not muster at the fire assembly point, as social distancing cannot be maintained. Therefore, simply disperse away from the building unless you are a person with reduced mobility who can report to a dedicated fire assembly point**
* **Ensure that hands are washed for at least 20 seconds before returning to work or study areas.**

**On hearing the fire alarm*** **Leave the building by the nearest available staircase or exit, Do NOT follow one-way systems**
* **Walk, do not run and do not use the lifts**
* **Persons with reduced mobility will either use dedicated fire evacuation lifts if installed, or move to a dedicated refuge point and wait for assistance**
* **Do NOT muster at fire assembly points, as social distancing cannot be maintained. Therefore, simply disperse away from the building unless you are a person with reduced mobility who can report to a dedicated fire assembly point**
* **Ensure that hands are washed for at least 20 seconds before returning to work.**
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