**Fire Safety Guidance: Note No 2**

**Fire Evacuation for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM)**

**1. Introduction**

This guidance note has been produced in order to help the University prepare for the phased return of staff and students that have reduced mobility. Guidance Note No 2 has been specifically drafted for the phased opening of the University only, and must not be used for normal operations.

The focus on access into premises to enable persons with reduced mobility (PRM) to fully use a building needs to be matched with arrangements for their safe egress in the event of fire. The safe egress and evacuation of PRM requires careful consideration and attention. Provision for safe egress and evacuation arrangements for PRM from premises is required for compliance with fire safety law and the Equality Act 2010.

Arrangements for the evacuation of PRM should be compatible with the general evacuation strategy and the emergency fire action plan for the premises. The responsibility for implementing the plan and evacuating persons safely in the event of an emergency will rest with duty-holders. An evacuation plan for PRM must not rely upon the intervention of the Fire and Rescue Service to make it work.

**2. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)**

Changes have been made to how occupants will move around within many of the University buildings with the introduction of one-way systems in corridors so that social distancing recommendations can be maintained. In some cases, two-way systems will be in operation and occupants will need to maintain their distance. These areas are indicated by signage. Therefore, changes will impact persons with reduced mobility ability to move around the building. It is therefore essential that the University knows in advance if PRM form part of the phased return to any University building. If PRM do form part of the phased return to the University, then that individual’s PEEP must be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes made to the building’s means of escape.

The initial steps in the review process will involve the individual person and the Director of School or Service (or nominee). Other appropriate officers of the University, particularly Fire Evacuation Coordinator(s) may also be consulted.

During the review, particular attention needs be drawn to the following:

* Changing needs of the individual person (for example as a result of changing abilities due to a deteriorating health condition)
* The use of some service areas associated with the work or study undertaken by the individual person and their wish to utilise these facilities may now not be possible, due to social distancing measures
* Newly-installed social distancing measures (in particular one-way systems) and how this impacts their means of escape during a fire evacuation
* What fire evacuation lifts and normal lifts are available, if any
* Are there trained fire evacuation chair or fire evacuation lift operators present within the building?

**A copy of the reviewed PEEP must be sent to the Safety, Health and Environment Department at** [**SHE@ljmu.ac.uk**](mailto:SHE@ljmu.ac.uk)

Social distancing cannot be maintained during a fire evacuation, so it is important that staff and students disperse on exiting the building. However, persons with reduced mobility will be able to muster at dedicated fire assembly points as social distancing can be maintained due to low numbers.

Students and staff must not return to the building unless instructed to do so by the University. Persons involved in the discovery of the fire, or have activated the building’s fire alarm system are advised to report to the responding Security Officers, Fire Wardens or Fire Evacuation Controller in order to transfer information that will help in dealing with the fire evacuation incident.

**3. Use of Lifts**

The review of a person’s PEEP will inform duty holders what fire evacuation measures will be required in order safely evacuate a building. PRM working on upper floors will require the use of lifts to enable access to upper floor levels. If the lift used is a fire evacuation lift, then that lift can be used as part of a building evacuation plan for PRM. Fire Evacuation Lift Operators will be required to operate fire evacuation lifts on behalf of PRM during a fire evacuation only.

Non-fire evacuation lifts will need to remain operational too, so that PRM can access their place of work if located on upper floors. These lifts however, cannot be used during a fire evacuation and Persons with Reduced Mobility will utilise Fire Evacuation Chairs instead, located within dedicated Refuge Areas. This means that, should PRM form part of the phased re-opening of the University and fire evacuation lifts are not available, then Evacuation Chair Operators must be present within the building whilst PRM are present.

**4. Suitable Fire Evacuation Requirements for PRM**

In order to establish a suitable management structure for fire evacuation for persons with reduced mobility, the following fire evacuation roles are required:

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** (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 less than 100 occupants are within the building).

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

The minimum fire evacuation roles must be in place, in order for students and staff to return to work or study. If the above roles cannot be established or maintained for the duration of the working day then severe restrictions will need to be imposed on the numbers occupying the building and access to upper floor levels.

**4.1 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 form 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 is reviewed if numbers exceed 400 occupants.

**4.2 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.

**4.3 Fire Evacuation Chair Operators/Fire Evacuation Lift Operators**

Fire Evacuation Chair Operators or Fire Evacuation Lift Operators are often duel trained and 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 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 PRM form part of the phased return so that provision for fire evacuation can be made, should the need be required.

**4.4 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.

**5. Fire Assembly Point Check**

Due to the size of certain fire assembly points, it will **NOT** be possible to maintain 2m social distancing 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 it is encouraged that PRM 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 PRM during a fire evacuation of the building.

6. **Personal Protective Equipment**

Evacuation Chair Operators will be required to wear gloves and face masks if they need to transfer PRM from a wheelchair into an evacuation chair. PPE will be provided for all evacuation chair operators.