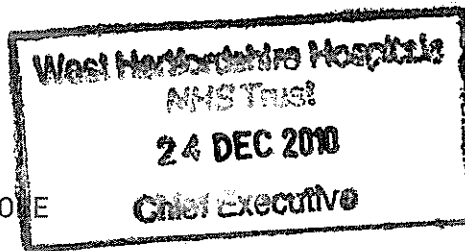


Internet: www.hertsdirect.org

Chief Fire Officer: R Wilsher OBE



Jan Filochowski - Chief Executive
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Trust Offices
Watford General Hospital
Vicarage Road
WATFORD
WD18 0HB

Fire Protection (South District)
Hemel Hempstead Fire Station
Queensway
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
HP2 5HA
Telephone : 01442 867111
Fax : 01442 867109
Direct Line : 01442 867118
Contact : Ann Lelliott
My Ref : AEL/NMB/01/9516
Your Ref :
Date : 14 December 2010

Dear Sir

THE REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

**VERULAM WING, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD HOSPITAL, HILLFIELD ROAD,
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP2 4AD**

Further to our recent audit and inspection at the above premises, we confirm below the minor deficiencies found during our inspection and detail our comments and observations.

Following the inspection carried out at Watford General Hospital in 2009, we were pleased to see that many of the procedures introduced as a consequence of the Action Plan issued at that time have been carried over to the Hemel Hempstead Hospital site. The standard of compliance found during this inspection showed a great improvement and we would expect that this standard continues at Hemel Hempstead and at your other Hospital sites across Hertfordshire.

1. Fire Risk Assessment (Article 9)

1.1 The fire risk assessment presented to us was deemed to be suitable and sufficient for the premises, recorded as necessary and there are adequate procedures in place to ensure that the assessment is reviewed on an annual basis. This should continue in order to show compliance with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2. Emergency Routes and Exits (Article 14)

2.1 We were informed that a compartmentation survey has been carried out on all of the hospital buildings and the subsequent report identifies many areas where the fire resistance has been compromised by electrical and other services.

We understand that the works will be carried out once a contractor has been appointed. We would recommend that the works should be prioritised.

2.2 We were informed that a survey would now be carried out to identify the location and type of fire dampers provided as there is no planned maintenance and testing of these currently undertaken.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



2.3 We understand that following the audit and inspection at Watford General Hospital, a planned maintenance and testing regime was introduced to address the problems encountered with the fire doors. This has proved to be successful and will be introduced at Hemel Hempstead Hospital.

2.4 During the inspection, it was noted that there were waste bins stored in a corridor and in the lift lobby at second floor level.

We are of the opinion that these waste bins do not pose a problem in respect of the means of escape from the premises. However, we would recommend that a painted hatched area is provided where the bins are stored to ensure that egress routes are clear and unobstructed at all times.

3. Maintenance (Article 17)

3.1 On inspection of the maintenance records for the fire safety measures, we were pleased to find that all fire safety equipment and measures provided are subject to a suitable and sufficient maintenance and testing regime.

We were informed, however, that the Trust had been experiencing difficulties with the electrical company responsible for the testing and maintenance of the emergency lighting system. To overcome these problems an in-house system has been introduced to ensure that a suitable and sufficient regime was in place.

4. Training (Article 21)

4.1 During our inspection, members of staff were questioned on the fire safety measures provided. All staff questioned were able to answer the questions adequately. This shows an improvement on staff training since the audit and inspection at Watford General Hospital.

We were informed of the on-going difficulties in providing fire safety training in a working hospital and that the take up for refresher training was around 50%.

We understand that in order to address this on-going problem, an 'e training' programme will be introduced in January 2011 for all staff.

4.2 We were informed that agency and bank staff are used at the hospital and that every member of staff undergoes an induction where fire safety training is provided regardless of whether they are permanent or temporary. We recommend that this continues to ensure that all members of staff are aware of their duties in the event of an emergency.

We will carry out a follow up inspection at a date to be arranged to confirm that the recommendations detailed in the letter have been considered and implemented.

AEL/NMB/01/9516 (3)
14 December 2010

Should you wish to discuss any of the matters detailed in this letter, please contact the Officer named below on the telephone number provided.

Yours faithfully



Ann Lelliott
Fire Protection Inspecting Officer

cc Roy Oliver, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust Offices, Hemel Hempstead
General Hospital, Hillfield Road, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP2 4AD

Eric Fehily - Director of Strategy & Infrastructure, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS
Trust, Trust Offices, Watford General Hospital, Vicarage Road, WATFORD, WD18 0HB

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