FIRE SAFETY POLICY
AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The Trust is committed to promoting an environment that values diversity. All staff are responsible for ensuring that all patients and their carers are treated equally and fairly and not discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or any other unjustifiable reason in the application of this policy, and recognising the need to work in partnership with and seek guidance from other agencies and services to ensure that special needs are met.
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Section 2 - Introduction

2.1 Policy Statement and Aims

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust (WHHT) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of fire safety in order to minimise the risk to patients, visitors and employee’s arising from the threat of fire and associated hazards.

This Fire Safety Policy and Operational Strategy have the following aims: -

- To minimise the risk arising from the threat of fire to all relevant persons\(^1\) throughout the WHHT estate
- To minimise the impact from fire on life safety, delivery of service, property and the environment.
- To reflect the statutory requirements of fire safety legislation The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the guidance within the Health Technical Memorandum 05 Firecode suite of documents.

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust will: -

- Have a clearly defined Fire Safety Policy and Operational Strategy covering all buildings they occupy.
- Nominate a board level director accountable to the chief executive for fire safety
- Nominate a Fire Safety Manager to take the lead on all fire safety activities
- Have an effective fire safety management strategy which enables:-
  - The preparation, review and upkeep of the organisations fire safety policy
  - Adequate means for quickly detecting and raising the alarm in case of fire
o Means of ensuring emergency evacuation procedures for all areas, at all times the premises are occupied, without reliance on external services.

o All staff to receive fire safety training appropriate to the level of risk and duties they may be required to perform

o The development of partnership initiatives with other bodies and agencies involved in the provision of fire safety.

1- The Fire Safety Order describes the ‘relevant persons’ as “any person … who is or may be lawfully on the premises”

Section 3 - Management Responsibilities

3.1 Trust Board

- The Trust Board has overall accountability for the activates of the organisation, which includes fire safety.

- The Trust Board will ensure that they receive appropriate assurance that the requirements of current fire safety legislation are being met and that the objectives of DoH’s Firecode are also achieved.

- The Trust Board discharges the responsibility for fire safety through the Chief Executive.

3.2 Chief Executive

- The Chief Executive will, on behalf of the Board, be responsible for ensuring that current fire legislation is complied with and, where appropriate, DoH’s Firecode guidance is implemented in all premises owned, occupied or under the control of the Trust.

- The Chief Executive discharges the day to day operational responsibility for fire safety through the Director with fire safety responsibility.

3.3 Board Level Director (with fire safety responsibility)

- The Director of Strategy & Infrastructure is responsible for championing fire safety issues at Board level.

3.4 Role of the Fire Safety Manager

- It is not possible or desirable to fully define all the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Safety Manager. However, they should be responsible for: -
  
  o An awareness of all fire safety features and their functions
  
  o Fire safety risks particular to the organisation
  
  o Requirements for less-able staff, patients and visitors in relation to fire safety
o Ensuring appropriate levels of management are always available to ensure
decisions can be made regardless of time of day.

o Providing expert advice on fire legislation

o Providing expert technical advice and interpretation of the Firecode HTM
suite of documents

o Development and implementation of the Trust’s fire safety policy

o Development of the Trust’s fire safety strategy

o Development of an effective training program

o Develop a fire risk assessment program

o Cooperation between other employers where 2 or more share WHHT
premises

o The reporting of fire incidents in accordance with current practice

o Monitoring and mitigation of unwanted fire signals and incidents

o Liaison with enforcing authorities

o Monitoring of inspection and maintenance of fire safety systems

o Direct involvement in new build projects or redevelopment of existing
premises.

3.5 The role of local managers

- Local managers, head of departments and supervisors have responsibility for:-
  
o Ensuring that local fire emergency action plans are developed and brought to
the attention of all staff

  
o Ensuring sufficient numbers of trained staff are available at
all times to implement the local fire evacuation plan (ie fire marshals / ski
pads)

  
o Ensure every member of staff attends / completes fire safety training
requirements

  
o Monitoring the day to day maintenance of fire safety provisions within their
area of responsibility

  
o Notifying the Fire Safety department of any proposals for 'change of use',
including temporary works that may impact on the risk assessment and fire
emergency action plan
3.7 The role of the Fire Marshal

The provision of Fire Marshals is a mandatory requirement placed on the Trust to comply with current fire legislation. Local managers shall appoint Fire Marshals for their areas, which should be sufficient in numbers to cover all leave, sickness and shift patterns.

- Fire marshals act as a focal point on fire safety issues and act as the ‘eyes and ears’ within their local area
- Raise issues regarding local fire safety with line managers or Fire Safety Department
- Organise and assist in the fire safety regime within their local area
- Assist with the coordination of the response to an incident within the immediate vicinity
- Be responsible for roll call during an incident
- Be trained to tackle fire with first aid fire fighting equipment where appropriate
- Support line managers on fire safety issues

The fire marshal does not have an enforcing role but reports fire safety issues to the Fire Safety Manager or line manager.

Section 4 - Fire Evacuation and Fire Safety Strategy

4.1 Fire Evacuation Operational Procedures

The basic concept is that occupants of a building should be able to turn their backs on a fire, wherever it occurs, and move away using circulation spaces and stairways to a place of safety or ultimate safety which is free from the effects of heat and smoke.

In larger WHHT premises, a two stage fire alarm system is operated. This allows for a continuous fire signal to be given in an area where the fire alarm has been activated and an ‘alert’ (intermittent fire signal) in those areas not immediately affected.

The strategy for fire evacuation for these buildings operates on the principle of ‘progressive horizontal evacuation’. This involves the movement of patients, public and staff from an area affected by fire through a fire resisting barrier (normally fire doors) to an adjoining area.
on the same level which is designed to protect the occupants from the immediate dangers of fire and smoke. This may be into an adjoining ward or designated refuge.

In smaller buildings, single stage fire alarm systems are installed, which on operation give a common fire alarm signal throughout the premises as a signal to evacuate immediately.

Independent patients, public and staff are expected to vacate the affected areas immediately using available exit routes and assemble at designated fire assembly points.

Every ward and department in the Trust has their own fire evacuation procedures, which are designed for the use and occupancy of each area and reflect these principles.

All ward areas with identified patient evacuation risk issues have been issued with ‘ski pads’ and/or ‘scoop stretchers’.

Access to and egress from any premises including fire exits, staircase enclosures and lift lobbies must remain free from obstruction at all times.

4.2 Hospital Fire Team - Objectives

The objectives of the Hospital Fire Team (HFT) is to ensure a positive coordinated response to all fire alarm activations, fire related issues, or other emergencies as requested. At the time of a fire alarm activation or other related incident, the HFT members listed on the ‘Action Card 01’ and who are available on site, will be contacted by switchboard via the ‘fire bleep’ system and are required to immediately proceed to the relevant building. Fire bleep holders are generally persons in a position of responsibility as part of their everyday duties and are an intricate part of the Hospital Fire Team.

4.3 Hospital Fire Teams - Operational Procedures - All sites

A ‘responsible person’ is charged with leading the HFT, liaising with the Fire Service and the co-ordination and direction of staff actions at a fire or alert and to take command until relieved by a senior Manager (should the situation escalate) or stood down by the Fire Service.

Refer to appendix 1 - ‘ACTION CARD – 01’ – pages 18 & 19

4.4 Hospital Fire Team – General Roles and Responsibilities

Refer to appendix 2 - ‘ACTION CARD – 02’ - Page 20

4.5 Hospital Fire Team assembly points

- Watford

For all fire alarm activations in PMoK, members of the HFT will proceed to the fire alarm panel in level 2, main entrance lobby. If this is inaccessible due to the fire situation, they should proceed to the fire alarm panel behind the A & E reception, level 1.
For all fire alarm activations in the Maternity building, members of the HFT will proceed to the fire alarm panel in the ground floor main entrance lobby. If this is inaccessible due to the fire situation, they should proceed to the fire alarm panel in the switchboard room on the ground floor.

For fire alarm activations in all other buildings, the HFT will proceed to the main entrance of that particular building.

- **Hemel Hempstead**

  For fire alarm activations in all buildings, the HFT will proceed to the main entrance of that particular building.

  When access to some buildings is not available due to the time of day, members of the HFT will proceed to the main fire alarm panel inside the old main building entrance lobby.

- **St. Albans**

  For fire alarm activations in all buildings, the HFT will proceed to the main entrance of that particular building.

  When access to some buildings is not available due to the time of day, members of the HFT will proceed to the main fire alarm panel outside the switchboard room, level 0, Moynihan Wing.

4.6 **Fire alarm activations - General procedures - ALL AREAS**

- On hearing the fire alarm, all personnel will respond according to their Fire Evacuation Plan which is included in the WHHT Fire Log Book designated for their ward / department.

- The fire alarm panel must only be ‘silenced’ after the cause of the alarm is established and rectified.

  *This will only be done on the authorisation of the Fire Service (if in attendance) or ‘responsible person’ within the Trust.*

- Estates staff, on the direction of the Fire Service (if in attendance) or ‘responsible person’ are the only personnel within the Trust with authority to reset the fire alarm panel.

- The premises must not be reoccupied until the Fire Service (if in attendance) or ‘responsible person has given clearance that it is safe to do so.

- A Fire Marshal will inform the person in charge at the fire assembly point(s) when it is clear to re-enter the premises.

- The ‘responsible person’ in charge of the incident must complete a WHHT Incident Report Form as soon as possible after the event. The form should then be forwarded to the Divisional risk lead representing the department or area affected for input into DATIX and carrying forward any appropriate action.
Section 5 - Fire Safety Strategy and Infrastructure

5.1 Fire Alarm Systems

The primary function of the fire alarm and detection systems is to give early warning to alert staff and thus initiate a planned response.

The Trust has comprehensive fire detection and alarm systems that meet all the requirements of the current ‘Firecode’ HTM and BS 5839 Parts 1.

All buildings across WHHT sites are provided with their own fire alarm system and all but the smallest of buildings have fire alarm indicator panels. These panels are generally situated in the entrance lobbies/corridors to the buildings.

Routine fire alarm testing is undertaken by the Estates Department on each site in accordance with the guidance set out within BS 5839 pt 1. Records of such tests are maintained by the Estates Department.

Pel Services Ltd are contracted to service our fire alarm systems and also provide ‘out of hours’ emergency support cover for WHHT Estates department.

In the event that there should be a total failure of the fire alarm system, Fire Safety department officers will visit the affected areas. Wards and departments will be issued with air horns to raise the alarm and staff will be instructed to be extra vigilant and reminded of their emergency procedures.

5.2 Emergency Lighting Systems

Emergency lighting systems are installed generally throughout all WHHT buildings in compliance with HTM 06-01 and BS 5266 pt 1.

Records of service and maintenance regimes are maintained by the Estates Department.
5.3 **Fire Fighting Facilities**

- Portable fire extinguishers are strategically placed throughout all WHHT premises for use by staff to control or extinguish small fires in the early stages. In locations of special risk where water-based fire fighting equipment is not suitable, fire extinguishers of a suitable type according to risk will be provided.

- Dry riser fire mains are strategically positioned in the taller/larger Trust buildings for Fire Service use only. Such buildings are the Verulam wing at HHGH and the Princess Michael of Kent building at WGH.

- Thameside Fire Protection maintains, repair and supply all of our portable fire fighting equipment and test the dry riser fire mains.

- Certain lifts within various buildings have 'fireman's' override switch facilities for Fire Service use.

5.4 **Fire Hydrants**

Fire hydrants for use by Fire Service personnel are strategically positioned around all our sites. Yellow indicator plates positioned in the vicinity of the hydrant indicate fire hydrants and some covers are painted yellow to aid identification. Fire hydrants are serviced and maintained by the Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service.

5.5 **Fire Information Boxes**

‘Fire Information’ boxes are positioned adjacent to all main fire alarm panels in the larger buildings across all sites ie PMoK, Maternity and AAU at Watford; the QE, Main/Marnham wing, Jubilee and Verulam buildings at Hemel and Gloucester, Moynihan and Runcie at St.Albans.

Fire information boxes contain fire marshal armbands and waistcoats, site plans, building layouts and other information they may be of use to staff, fire or other emergency services.

Other buildings where the evacuation procedures are straightforward and the risk is not considered sufficiently high will be not provided with fire information boxes. However, all premises with fire alarm panels installed will have a plan layout of the building positioned adjacent to the panel.

The boxes are coloured red for easy identification and are fitted with digital locks. Entering the recognised Trust emergency number with the prefix C ie C2222, can gain access into the boxes.

5.6 **Training**

It is a statutory requirement without exception that all staff, regardless of the nature of their duties, receives basic instruction, training and information as regards the fire safety procedures that are in operation within the Trust.

The Fire Safety department will provide:

- Fire safety induction training (Mandatory)
• Annual fire lecture for all clinical staff, including volunteers (Mandatory)
• Fire Marshal training (Mandatory)
• Ski pad evacuation training for all clinical and other designated staff (identified by a training needs analysis)
• ‘In House’ department / ward based training when requested
• Practical fire extinguisher training
• Specialist fire training as demand dictates (identified by a training needs analysis)

All staff are expected to attend / complete all mandatory training programmes. Non clinical staff has the option to complete the fire ‘e-learning’ program via the electronic staff records (ESR) facility on the Trust intranet site. Full details of the fire training requirements can be found on the Trust training department website.

All members of the Hospital Fire Team (s) i.e. ‘fire bleep’ holders, Estates staff, porters, Site Coordinators, Bed Managers and Fire Marshals will attend the following: -

  o Practical fire extinguisher training – every 3 years

• Security, car parking management staff –
  o Practical fire extinguisher training – every 3 years.

5.7 New Building specification


This guidance will also be used in the design of: -

  o Extensions to existing healthcare buildings
  o Alterations to existing buildings
  o Change of use of an existing building into healthcare premises

The Fire Safety Department will be consulted by the Capitol Project Design Team on all internal alterations within WHHT buildings. Larger projects will go through the normal Building regulation approval system

5.8 Procurement of Equipment & Supplies

In order that the equipment and supplies that are used in the Trust are compliant with the necessary fire regulations and requirements of Firecode HTM 05-03 part C, it is essential that all goods be ordered through the Hertfordshire NHS Supply Management Confederation (HSMC).
6.1 **Switchboard Operators**

Operators are to be fully conversant with the way the fire alarm system / panels in the switchrooms work, so that the information provided can be used in conjunction with the procedural instructions listed within this document.

6.2 **Fire alarm activations - procedures**

Refer to appendix 3 - ‘ACTION CARD – 03’ - pages 21 & 22

6.3 **Emergency telephone number - 2222**

The emergency number for the Trust is 2222, dialled from an internal telephone.

When a fire has been discovered and the fire alarm system has not been activated, whenever possible, switchboard must be contacted using the emergency telephone number 2222.

When a call is received, the switchboard operator will:

- Accept the call and obtain from the caller the exact location of the fire and any other relevant details
- Call the Fire Service by dialling 999 passing on exact location and other details
- Operate the fire bleep system

6.4 **General Procedures**

- The ‘on call’ Trust Fire Safety Officer will be contacted by switchboard and informed of:
  - all confirmed fires
  - at the request of a member of the HFT or senior management
  - any emergencies that result in the evacuation of staff or patients.

- Switchboard operators will test the ‘fire bleep’ system daily (am) across all sites.

- Switchboard operators will also test the ‘fire bleep’ system at predetermined times and ask for a ‘call back’ response from the bleep holder. This is to ensure that we have adequate fire bleep holders available at all times, on all sites. Switchboard operators are to fax completed record sheets to the Fire Safety Office at HHGH.

- When a fire alarm activation has occurred switchboard operators will fax as soon as possible the Fire Alarm Activation Report Forms (appendix 4 – page 23) to the Fire Safety Department at HHGH
Section 7 - Local Procedures, associated policies and protocols for Fire Safety

With the exception of the smallest of areas, the WHHT Fire Log Book will be issued to every department and ward.

All departments / wards in WHHT premises on the HHGH, SACH or WGH sites, will adopt the WHHT Fire Safety Policy and procedures within.

Exceptions are made for Shrodells at WGH, who operate their own policies in accordance with the HPT Fire Advisor.

7.1 Fire Risk Assessments

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that ‘suitable and sufficient assessment of risk’ to which persons are exposed must be made. Consequently the Trust Fire Safety Officers undertake a fire risk assessment of all areas on a regular basis. Copies of the fire risk assessments can be viewed on the ‘G’ drive.

7.2 Fire Log Book

The WHHT Fire Log Book has been developed to include some of the legal requirements imposed on the Trust.

A Fire Log Book will be issued to every dept / ward, which will include

- A fire risk assessment undertaken by a WHHT Fire Officer
- A nominated ‘responsible person’ and deputy for the area
- Information of the fire safety infrastructure of the area, detailing the type of fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire doors and fire fighting equipment.
- Fire evacuation plan for that area
- Medical gas emergency procedures (if applicable)
- Dealing with a chemical spill (if applicable)
- Fire hazards in paraffin based skin products (if applicable)
- Fire marshal training dates
- ‘In house’ / ward based training information
- Christmas fire safety information
- Staff fire training record sheets
- Computer aided drawing (CAD) of the area showing exit routes, position of fire fighting equipment etc (where available)
- Arson Prevention in Trust Premises policy
- Use of electrical extension leads
- Correct use of toasters

The WHHT Fire logbook should be kept together with the Health & Safety manual.

A sample copy of the Fire Log Book can be view on the Fire Safety Intranet website.

### 7.3 Associated Policies for Fire / Health & Safety

Many Trust policies impact upon the overall health and safety of patients, visitors and employee's across the organisation.

Particular policies that refer to additional fire / health & safety are:

- Arson Prevention in Trust Premises
- No Smoking Policy
- Major Incident Plan
- Health & Safety Policy

This can be viewed through the WHHT Intranet website.

### Section 8 - General fire safety advice

#### 8.1 Toasters

The use of toasters on wards and in staff rooms is often considered an ‘essential’ piece of equipment which is frequently used for the benefit of patients and staff alike.

However, the result of bread jamming in the slats, the equipment not been regularly cleaned, the toaster left unattended whilst in use or the toaster being placed in a room which has the incorrect type of fire detection, causes numerous fire alarm activations across the Trust.

Currently there are no plans to prohibit the use of toasters. However the Trust acknowledges that it has a ‘duty of care’ to its patients, which may be compromised by the fire alarm activating by uncontrolled or unmanaged use of toasters.

Therefore, in wards / departments where toasters have activated the fire alarm system, they will:

- Receive a visit from a Trust Fire Safety officer to determine the cause
- Warned that any further activations for which they could have prevented will result in the removal of the toaster
To retrieve the toaster, local managers will provide an ‘action plan’ to prevent the problem reoccurring.

8.2 Extension Leads

It is widely accepted that the incorrect use of extension leads can be dangerous to the user, possibly overloading an already aging and inadequate system and have great potential to provide a source of ignition for fire.

Extension leads are subject to MDA Hazard Notice MDA SN2002 (26) & DH (2007)06. In compliance the Estates Department have issued a Mains Extension Leads Supplying Medical & Non Medical Equipment Electrical Safety Policy, (published here: http://wghintra01/uploads/out/2012_151_Mains_Extension_Leads_Supplying_Medical_Non_Medical_Equipment_Electrical_Safety_v5.pdf) which governs the use of such equipment. Before the use of an electrical extension lead is considered, the above referenced document should be consulted. For further information contact the Estates Services Department.

8.3 Christmas trees, lights and decorations –

Christmas lights and decorations can pose a significant risk of fire, often due to their construction and their general lack of maintenance.

Instructions are issued prior to the festive season reminding managers and staff that they should have their Christmas lights tested by the Estates department before they are erected in the ward or department. Guidelines are also issued on the type of decorations and trees that are, or are not, to be used. The Christmas fire safety guidelines can be viewed on Fire Safety intranet site.

Members of staff who wish to hold Christmas parties or other events involving large numbers of staff and / or guests in WHHT premises must contact the Fire Safety department prior to the event, so that a fire risk assessment of the venue can be prepared.

Section 9 – Monitoring Performance

9.1 Monitoring performance

The Trust Health & Safety Committee is responsible for the review of all fire safety matters. Standard agenda items include specific areas of performance including:

- Number of completed fire risk assessments
- Number of fire related issues recorded onto DATIX
- Number of outstanding fire issues
- Fire incidents, unwanted fire signals, staff training etc.

An annual Fire Safety report is produced at the end of each calendar year. This report is presented firstly at the Strategy & Infrastructure team meeting for information, the Health &
Safety Committee for acceptance and ‘sign off’, and finally the Patient Safety & Risk Committee.

Following guidance from the DoH The Information Centre, the Annual Statement of Fire Safety has been suspended pending the outcome of the Fundamental Review of Data Returns. The requirement to report fire incidents via the Health and Social Care Information Centre’s EFM information system has also been suspended pending the outcome of the review.

The requirement to submit annual data on the total annual number of fires and false alarms through the ERIC (Estates Returns Information Collection) remains unchanged.

The Fire Safety Department operates a risk register which encompasses the above topics and can be viewed on the WHHT Intranet Fire Safety website.

This policy will be monitored through the Trusts compliance framework for the fire requirements of the Care Quality Commission standards – Outcome 10 Safety and Suitability of Premises.

As part of the ‘peer’ review, this policy has been issued to members of the Health & Safety Committee for comment before endorsement from the H & S Committee/
## Appendix 1

### ACTION CARD - 01

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### ROLE DESCRIPTION

All individuals listed below, when on duty and on site, will immediately convene at the relevant buildings fire alarm panel and form the Hospital Fire Team (HFT). The first person to arrive will assume the role of the ‘responsible person’ until relieved by a more senior member of staff from the list below, if necessary.

The ‘responsible person’ will be one of the following:

- Trust Fire Officer / a Sister or Matron / ‘On call’ Estates Officer / Site Coordinator / Bed manager / / Fire bleep holder / Fire Marshal / porter supervisor / porter

as appropriate to the site and day / time of the alarm.

The ‘responsible person’ will don the Fire Marshal waistcoat (available in the red Fire Information boxes) to identify responsibility to the Fire Service (if in attendance) and other members of staff.

On the instructions of the ‘responsible person’ of the HFT and using the Fire Marshals or fire bleep holders who have assembled at the fire alarm panel, delegated members will go to the scene of the alert as quickly as possible, assess the situation with the person in charge of the ward / department if available and report all relevant information to switchboard via 2222 and the ‘responsible person’ as soon as possible.

The ‘responsible person’ will try to establish from this and other available information:

- where the seat of the fire alarm activation is and possible cause
- what, if any assistance may be required in the affected area (i.e. ward evacuation)
- that all non-essential personnel are out of the building.
- if there is known dangerous conditions within the building
- control of re-entry of staff / public into the building and use of lifts and
- liaise with the Fire Service on their arrival.

The HFT ‘responsible person’ will provide assistance or additional equipment as required, delegate duties, set up a main control point if necessary for larger incidents (in conjunction with the WHHT Major Incident Plan) and liaise with the emergency services.
**ACTION CARD - 01 Continued**

On every occasion, the HFT ‘responsible person’ must confirm with switchboard via the 2222 emergency telephone number: -

- the nature of the incident when known, or
- when the incident is terminated.

All members of the HFT will wear ‘Fire Marshal’ armbands to denote responsibility and awareness to other staff.

**Operational Procedure - Normal Working Hours - 08.00 to 16.30hrs**

The HFT will consist the minimum of the following: -

- the ‘responsible person’
- Two members of Estates staff (at least one electrician)
- Two porters (one a supervisor)
- Fire marshal(s)
- Trust Fire Safety Officers
  - Security, car parking management staff
  - Fire bleep holders (who may also be one of the above)

*when on duty and on site.*

**Operational Procedure - Out of Normal Working Hours - 16.30 to 08.00hrs, weekends and across Public Holidays**

The HFT will consist the minimum of the following: -

- the ‘responsible person’
- One porter (a supervisor)
- Fire Marshal(s)
- Security, car parking management staff
- Fire bleep holders (who may also be one of the above)

*when on duty and on site.*
# Appendix 2

## ACTION CARD - 02

### JOB TITLE
- Bed Managers / Porters / Security & Car park management
  
### INCIDENT ROLE
- Hospital Fire Team – general roles and responsibilities

### ROLE DESCRIPTION

#### Bed Managers – Watford site

Out of normal hours, Bed Managers will respond to the message on their ‘fire bleep’ and liaise with the Fire Service on their arrival. On the instructions of the Fire Service, Bed Managers will only ‘silence’ the fire alarm system and liaise with the ‘on call’ Estates officer on their arrival.

#### Porters

- **Normal Working Hours – All Sites**
  
  On receiving a ‘fire bleep’ alert, the portering manager will proceed to the appropriate building fire alarm panel and report to the ‘responsible person’ for further instructions and provide whatever assistance as required i.e. control members of the public from entering the building or using the lifts.

- **Out of Normal Working Hours and across Public holidays – HHGH / SACH only**
  
  The porter may find that they are in a position where they have to assume the role of the ‘responsible person’ due to the unavailability of other staff.

  Upon being alerted, the duty porter(s) will carry out the following:

  - For fire alarm activations in all buildings, they will proceed to the main entrance of that particular building.
  - From the details shown on the fire alarm panel, proceed to the location of the fire alarm activation by the safest route and assess the situation.
  - Immediately inform switchboard using the emergency telephone number 2222, giving all relevant information to the operator.
  - Await the arrival of the Fire Service.
  - Complete incident form (if assuming ‘responsible person’ role).

- **Security, car parking management staff (All sites)** are responsible for:
  
  - To control and manage traffic so that access routes to the scene are kept free and available for all emergency vehicles.
  - Assist and direct the Fire Service and other emergency vehicles to the correct location of the incident.
  - Control members of the public from entering the building or other designated exclusion zones if requested by the Fire Service or a member of the HFT.
  - Give any assistance to the ‘responsible person’ if required.

Security and car parking management staff will be contactable by switchboard via WHHT issued fire bleeps.

**Under no circumstances** are staff to attempt to deal with a fire situation in smoke-filled areas or in other situations that present danger, but must inform switchboard immediately of the situation and wait for Fire Service arrival and provide whatever assistance is required.
## Appendix 3

### ACTION CARD - 03

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<td>Switchboard Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
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When the fire alarm is activated, the switchboard operator will, as indicated on the fire alarm indicator panel:

- Determine the location of the fire alarm signal on the appropriate panel
- Use the fire call ʻbleepʼ system to notify all fire bleep holders.
- Call the Fire Service by dialling 999\(^3\) giving exact location details
- If necessary, mute the panel alarm on the switchboard panel only

Announce the fire location by place name – repeat three times, **for example**

| 'Fire alarm activating in staff room, Cassio Ward, PMoK’ – repeat three times. |

Switchboard operators may then receive a call from a member of the HFT or member of staff informing them of the known cause and scale of the incident in that area i.e. confirmed fire, burnt toast, contractors working etc. Based on this information operators will make the decision to either:-

- Call the Fire Service on 999 to notify them of a confirmed fire
- Not to call the Fire Service based on the information received
- Inform senior managers as necessary,
- Issue a ʻstand downʼ message
- Complete the emergency incident diary
- Fax the ʻfire alarm activationʼ report to the Fire Safety Manager on 01442 287015

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\(^3\) - Due to the high number of fire alarm activations and in line with the guidance set out in NHS document ‘Firecode HTM 05-03 Part H- Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals in Healthcare Premises’ – switchboard operators will:

- **Delay the 999 call for 2 minutes** when fire alarm signals are received from the Shrodells at WGH at all times.
- **Delay the 999 call for 5 minutes** across all sites during the working day ie Monday - Friday 08.00 – 16.30hrs. In which time contact will be made either with or from these units to confirm the situation and the necessary response.

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**If any doubt, the switchboard operator will contact the Fire Service immediately.**
ACTION CARD – 03 Continued

At the end of the alert, the switchboard operators will be contacted by the HFT 'responsible person' and informed that the situation has now been dealt with. This will enable the switchboard operators to: -

- ‘Silence’ the fire alarm panel in the switchboard room by pressing the ‘mute’ button.
- Enter full details (i.e. location / cause if known) of the incident in the Emergency Log Book and
- Issue the following ‘stand down’ message to all fire bleep holders, for example:-

"Fire incident in staff room, Cassio Ward, PMoK has now been dealt with. The Hospital is now stood down" - repeat three times.

Based on this information operators will:-

- Inform senior managers as necessary,
- complete the emergency incident dairy
- fax the ‘fire alarm activation’ report to the Fire Safety Manager on 01442 287015 (Appendix 4)

If a fire situation is confirmed by the HFT ‘responsible person’, switchboard must be contacted immediately for additional assistance using the 2222 system or any other means available.

On receipt of a request for further assistance, the following message will be issued by switchboard to all fire bleep holders, for example:-

"Fire situation confirmed in staff room, Cassio Ward. Further assistance required. Go to fire alarm panel in PMoK level 2 and await instructions” - repeat three times

On the issue of this last message, the switchboard operator will contact the: -

- Senior / admin 'on-call' manager and as procedures prescribed in the current Major Incident Policy
- ‘On call' Trust Fire Safety Officer
- Fire Service via 999 giving further details as necessary
## Appendix 4

### West Hertfordshire Hospitals

**NHS Trust**

**Switchboard Fire Alarm Activation Report Form**

- **Date of alarm** .................................................................
- **Time of alarm** .................................................................
- **Site** ................................................................................
- **Building** ...........................................................................
- **Area / Ward / room no: at WGH** (taken from text read out on fire alarm panel)
- **Cause of alarm (if known)** ..................................................
- **Fire service called?**  
  - Yes ☐  
  - No ☐  
- **‘Stand down’ message given?**  
  - Yes ☐  
  - No ☐  
- **Name of ‘responsible person’ (Print) i.e. Bed manager / Site Coordinator/ Estates Officer** .................................................................
- **Name of switchboard operator (Print)**  

This form must be faxed to the Fire Safety Office at HHGH on 3312 2015 or 01442 287015 **after every incident**.

**This form is not required to be completed for fire alarm activations for the ShrodeLLs Psychiatric Unit**

Roy Oliver  
Fire Safety Manager  
Feb 2007 rev 3 July 19th 07

### For Fire Safety Office Use Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Report Stats</th>
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<td>Risk register spreadsheet</td>
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