



**Fire Protection
Association**



Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance

Guidance to support a temporary
change to a simultaneous
evacuation strategy in purpose-built
blocks of flats

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guide issued: 01/05/18)



THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS
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NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



Foreword

The Grenfell Tower fire was a national tragedy that resulted in the greatest loss of life in a residential fire since the Second World War.

In the days and weeks following the fire it emerged that more buildings had similar cladding to Grenfell Tower. The level of risk to life as a result of a fire involving these external wall systems could not be ignored. In some cases, the only alternative housing options would place people into even worse living conditions, and potentially leave others without accommodation. To enable people to continue to live in relative safety in their own homes, interim solutions were needed to mitigate the risk.

Interim fire safety arrangements can be adopted for the temporary, short-term management and mitigation from the risk of a fire and the risk to life if a fire occurs. These arrangements can range from simple steps to remove potential ignition sources that might give rise to a fire, through to a change in the evacuation strategy for a building, moving from Stay Put to Simultaneous Evacuation supported by the installation of a common fire alarm and/or a Waking Watch. The aim of a waking watch is to ensure there is sufficient warning in the event of fire to support the evacuation strategy and has been utilised in buildings before the Grenfell Tower fire. It is intended for very short periods of time whilst the increased risk is being urgently addressed.

It became clear following the Grenfell Tower fire that no central guidance existed on how to consistently implement these arrangements. This needed to be rectified urgently given the emerging scale of the problem and the need to support Responsible Persons to implement measures effectively and consistently.

In response to this need, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) convened a group of industry professionals to produce a technical guide on arrangements to support a temporary change to the evacuation strategy. In the absence of a common fire alarm, the central premise of this guidance is how to ensure that all residents can be alerted by the waking watch and an evacuation commenced within 10-15 minutes, with due regard to the number of flats on each floor, the height of building, travel distances, time taken to raise the alarm and the needs and vulnerabilities of all residents. In producing the guide, the group sought to ensure the safety of residents, and prevent removing people from their homes, whilst fully accepting that the principle way to reduce risk was to urgently remediate the non-compliant external wall systems.

The guidance was released on 2 October 2017. The stakeholder group anticipated that building owners with dangerous external wall systems would take action to remove these as soon as possible and take ownership of the emerging risk within their buildings. The guidance set out that the installation of a common fire alarm was the preferable approach to waking watch where the hazard could not be removed in the short term. Based on this, it was anticipated that professional advisors would consider the urgent installation of common fire alarms within their fire risk assessments to reduce the initial urgent need for or size of a waking watch.

It is now over three years and many buildings requiring urgent remediation have not been fixed. This has meant that temporary measures, which were only ever expected to be in place for a short period of time, remain in place. In some cases, these measures continue to rely on a waking watch and progress has not been made to remediate or seek alternative solutions.

The stakeholder group are deeply conscious of the impacts arising from the delays in remediating buildings and consequent extended use of interim measures have on leaseholders. The same residents and leaseholders who are being protected from the risk of rapid fire spread, are instead experiencing other significant consequences. These include the ongoing high costs of waking watches and insurance products, an inability to sell or re-mortgage their properties, financial stress and unacceptable impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

As it became clear this was an enduring issue the group updated the guidance in 2018 to clarify that interim measures should only ever be considered suitable fire safety arrangements on a temporary basis.

In some cases, freeholders and developers have not stepped up to the expectations placed upon them to fund remediation or interim measures. NFCC, and others, have advocated for government funding for remediation, and on 11 March 2020 the Government announced £1 billion would be available for owners to apply for the removal of non-ACM combustible cladding, in addition to the £600 million for unsafe ACM. Whilst these steps have been taken, it seems that in some cases, barriers to remediation may remain for some time.

The group has now completed a review of this guidance, in part due to the significant and ongoing concerns expressed by residents. This time, a wider group of stakeholders have contributed, including representatives of leaseholders and unions representing firefighters. We hope that this edition of the guidance more fully reflects the experiences of those most impacted.

Key changes include:

- Advice to consult with residents and leaseholders to explore cost/benefit options, with emphasis placed on the need to fully and properly consider the installation of common fire alarms where measures are now, or are likely in the future to be in place for the longer term.
- Clear distinction between waking watch and evacuation management as separate roles.
- Definitions for the terms:
 - **Short-term** – the time required to formulate a longer-term remediation plan, as soon as practically possible and no longer than 12 months; and
 - **Temporary** – non-permanent measures implemented to mitigate an unacceptable risk in a building, as an interim measure, adopted for the safety of residents while works to rectify the identified fire safety failings are carried out.

These amendments underscore the stakeholder group and NFCC's firm and long held expectation that building owners should move to install common fire alarms as quickly as possible to reduce or remove the dependence on waking watches. This is the clear expectation for buildings where remediation cannot be undertaken in the 'short term'. This approach should, in almost all circumstances, reduce the financial burden on residents where they are funding the waking watches.

The way waking watches are implemented will always need to respond to the specific risks that a building poses. There are a range of reasons why buildings which seem otherwise similar may require different measures, examples include:

- The occupancy profile and vulnerability of residents
- Building management arrangements e.g. concierges, the presence of commercial units etc.
- The way that the building has been maintained or refurbished.

Amendments have been made wherever possible to aid consistency in interpretation and make the document easier to read and include additional appendices to clarify the role of waking watch, evacuation management and quality assurance.

As the new Building Safety Regime develops, NFCC continues to call for measures to make all homes safer places to live. NFCC has raised many concerns with Government and stressed that more needs to be done to fix the system, enable swift remediation and ensure buildings are built and refurbished safely.

This updated guidance means that all Responsible Persons for affected buildings should review their fire risk assessment to ensure the fire safety arrangements including the interim measures in place are appropriate, informed by this guidance and the advice of a competent person.

Finally, we would like to thank the sector stakeholders who gave their time and expertise in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire to produce the three editions of this guidance or contribute to the reviews:

- The Government's Independent Expert Advisory Panel
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Fire Industry Association
- Institution of Fire Engineers
- Fire Brigades Union
- Optivo
- Association of Residential Managing Agents
- London Councils
- Local Government Association
- Home Office
- London Fire Brigade

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The purpose of this non-statutory guidance is to support building owners/Responsible Persons, associated fire safety specialists and fire and rescue services (FRS) to assist with a consistent, standardised approach. This guidance does not constitute legal advice. All parties' legal duties remain those specified by law, in particular the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Housing Act 2004 and the Building Regulations 2010. If any parties consider that difficulties arise in relation to compliance with their particular duties in any relevant legislation, they should take legal advice.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) released on 20th January 2020, consolidated guidance, "[Building safety advice for building owners, including fire doors](#)" which has superseded the previous published Expert Panel (EP) Advice Notes 1 to 22.

1. Introduction and scope of document

- 1.1. **Changing from a stay put to a simultaneous evacuation strategy, due to the risk of rapid fire spread from combustible external wall systems and/or other serious building defects, has a serious impact on residents. This impact, which can be felt both emotionally and financially, should not be taken lightly. It should only happen when the Responsible Person, in conjunction with a competent person, determines through the fire risk assessment process that the issues with the building mean a stay put strategy cannot be sustained until the building has been remediated.**
- 1.2. This document was produced by a group of sector stakeholders, including representatives from the fire industry, building managers, and fire and rescue services (FRS). The group supports the principle of a stay put strategy, in buildings constructed and maintained correctly, whenever possible, as it reflects the Building Regulations requirement that each flat should be its own fire-resisting compartment, and has proved over many years to be safe for residents of purpose-built blocks of flats.
- 1.3. The purpose of this document is to ensure life safety. Considerations for the purpose of property protection are beyond its scope.
- 1.4. **This guidance provides fire safety advice in respect of purpose-built blocks of flats where a stay put strategy was part of the original design, but is no longer considered appropriate owing to significant risk issues such as combustible external wall systems being identified. Where such issues exist a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy is likely to be necessary until the failings have been rectified.**
- 1.5. It is important to note that this guidance is not intended to provide a long-term or permanent solution to the issue of significant risk, such as that arising from combustible external wall systems on high-rise residential buildings; the guidance is only intended for use until such external wall systems are removed, and the guidance does not constitute an alternative to removal of the combustible external wall systems.
- 1.6. The group supports the '[Fire safety in Purpose-Built Block of Flats](#)' guidance, developed by a wide range of stakeholders and hosted on the Local Government Association's website (LGA). The guidance will need to be reviewed to reflect upcoming legislative changes and known issues in the built environment, but at this time, remains appropriate for all purpose-built blocks of flats. However, the unique circumstances following the Grenfell Tower fire mean that Section 19 'Stay Put policy'; paragraphs 19.6 and 19.7, should be considered in context / conjunction of / with this additional and complementary guidance.
- 1.7. In a building that was originally designed for a stay put strategy, a change to simultaneous evacuation should only be temporary; the group do not consider that a permanent change of this nature is likely to be appropriate, particularly in high-rise residential buildings (i.e. over 18m in height), in which the number of persons who evacuate simultaneously may be considerable. There are many reasons for this, for example, situations can arise whereby the evacuation of residents results in some risk to them (though lesser risk than remaining within their flats in the circumstances to which this guidance applies). Also, simultaneous evacuation of large numbers of people is likely to be an impediment to access by the FRS even in a building with multiple stairways, so delaying firefighting and rescue activity. Simultaneous evacuation requires additional consideration of the needs of vulnerable residents who

may be disproportionately impacted by the change and may need additional support to evacuate. If there are deficiencies that would permit fire spread between floors - or between flats - the appropriate, ultimate solution is to urgently rectify the identified defects, rather than to permanently change the stay put strategy. However, it is acknowledged that there may be occasions where building defects cannot be fixed, and simultaneous evacuation may need to remain in place for the lifespan of the building.

- 1.8. This guidance, which applies to premises in England and Wales, is produced to support building owners/Responsible Persons, associated fire safety specialists and FRSs. This includes fire risk assessors of buildings that have been fitted with an external wall system that has failed large-scale tests, (whether those were privately carried out or were commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (now: the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government MHCLG) following the Grenfell Tower fire, and that were carried out at the Building Research Establishment (BRE). It also applies to other (predominately over 18m) buildings that have been found to have combustible external wall systems that would have a significant impact on the stay put strategy.
- 1.9. This guidance is principally intended for use in buildings over 18m in height in which the appropriate means for satisfying the requirements of the Building Regulations in relation to external fire spread have not been met (e.g. as a result of the use of insulation and/or cladding materials that are not of limited combustibility and that do not achieve appropriate performance when the wall construction and cladding are tested in accordance with BS 8414). It should be noted that the figure of 18m is somewhat arbitrary (having, historically, been based on equipment that the FRS have not used for many years). Minor variation in the 18m limit need not necessarily have any significant effect; there is little material difference in risk between the use of combustible cladding on an existing building with a topmost floor located at a level of 17.5m above ground level and a similar existing building in which the topmost floor is located at 18.5m above ground level. However, particularly in the latter case, any decision not to follow this guidance should be based only on the advice of a qualified, competent fire engineer and be fully justified.
- 1.10. Although not intended for use for buildings less than 18m in height, a competent person may be able to use the principles contained within this guidance in order to make an assessment of the risk of other buildings where there are issues with combustible external wall systems. However, it is unlikely that buildings of two or three storeys with combustible external walls would require a change of evacuation strategy to simultaneous evacuation unless there are a significant number of vulnerable residents, for example in a residential care home or supported living setting.
- 1.11. The guidance sets out the context and decision-making considerations in moving from a stay put to simultaneous evacuation strategy. It includes appendices that set out further guidance on the following areas that are likely to be appropriate:
 - the waking watch (Appendix 1)
 - common fire alarm systems (Appendix 2)
 - management considerations for a waking watch (Appendix 3)
 - a waking watch person specification (Appendix 4)
 - evacuation management specification (Appendix 5)

- advice on quality assurance of a waking watch (Appendix 6), and
 - an indicative timeline for actions (Appendix 7).
- 1.12. The fire safety strategy in purpose-built blocks of flats normally comprises an arrangement whereby only residents from flats directly affected by fire, heat or smoke need to evacuate. Residents in other unaffected flats should be protected by general fire precautions provided in the building, such as the structure of the building, the front doors of individual flats, smoke ventilation provisions, etc. Those other residents should therefore be safe to 'stay put' during a fire in their building unless otherwise directed by the FRS, and, in many cases, may not even be aware of a fire elsewhere in the building.
 - 1.13. The fire alarm arrangements in purpose-built blocks of flats typically include smoke (and sometimes heat) alarms within each flat to alert the residents of a fire in that flat only. There is generally no common fire alarm system, although there may be areas such as residents' lounges and recreation rooms where there are fire alarm arrangements to alert relevant persons in these areas.
 - 1.14. Where fire detectors are installed in the common parts, they are likely to be provided only to operate active fire safety facilities such as a smoke control system. The detectors are not provided to give a warning to all residents in the building.
 - 1.15. Where there is a significant failing in the general fire precautions and/or other issues such as combustible external wall systems, a competent fire safety specialist may consider that these failings could contribute to uncontrolled and, potentially, unrestricted fire spread in the building, and therefore the building can no longer support a stay put strategy. For the purposes of this guidance a competent person is one who meets the requirements of Article 18 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
 - 1.16. A temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy may provide a level of confidence that, while there are clear risks that must be urgently addressed, continued occupation of the building is possible with the adoption of a change to an evacuation strategy. It is important that a clear explanation of the management strategy of the building and the temporary change in the building's evacuation strategy is communicated to all residents.
 - 1.17. While this guidance has been developed specifically for high-rise residential premises that require a change to the evacuation strategy to be adopted until fire safety defects are rectified, some of this guidance may be applied to other building uses (e.g. a hotel or hospital). In such cases, some of this guidance may be of assistance if adapted to those needs.
 - 1.18. As the change is significant in relation to the matters addressed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the fire risk assessment for the premises, and its associated evacuation plan, must be reviewed and updated to reflect the issues identified, the role of the waking watch and evacuation management, and the duration of the temporary mitigation measures in place.
 - 1.19. As a benchmark, the objective should be that, when a confirmed fire within a flat necessitates simultaneous evacuation, the time from detection of the fire by the waking watch to alerting all residents and confirming evacuation has started, should not exceed a time of typically 10-15 minutes in the case of an external wall system that represents a significant fire hazard (e.g. a system incorporating polyethylene core ACM, as described by tests 1, 2 & 3 in the Government cladding screening

programme). In buildings where a common fire alarm has been installed, this time will be reduced to the time taken to activate the alarm signal.

- 1.20. In the case of those buildings that have a notable fire hazard (e.g. ACM with fire retardant polyethylene filler (category 2 in screening tests) with phenolic foam insulation as described in test 7 of Government cladding screening programme) then the 10-15 minutes time limit maybe increased slightly if suitably justified in the assessment by a competent person.

2. Definitions

Assembly point

- 2.1. A designated place where people have been told to wait after evacuating a building in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Note: An alternative assembly point that has protection against inclement weather may be required.

Common Parts

- 2.2. Those areas of a building that are not for the exclusive use of individual residents (e.g. common corridors, stairways, plant rooms, other ancillary areas, etc.).

Common fire alarm system

- 2.3. A fire alarm system that will give a warning of fire throughout the building, including within all flats and within the common parts.

Competent person

- 2.4. According to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Article 18 (5), a person is to be regarded as competent for the purposes of this article (Safety Assistance) where he/she has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable him properly to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures. Guidance on the competency standard for fire risk assessors and guidance on choosing a competent risk assessor is available on NFCC's website: <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Finding-fire-risk-assessor>

Evacuation

- 2.5. A process whereby people leave premises in case of an incident e.g. fire and reach a place of safety.

Evacuation Management

- 2.6. On-site arrangements to facilitate a rapid, effective, and coordinated evacuation, and to liaise with the FRS to provide an essential link with them during operations. (see section 5 for further information about the management considerations).

External wall system

- 2.7. External construction of a building including external walls, cladding, insulation, filler materials, cavity barriers, etc.

General fire precautions

- 2.8. This term is used to describe precautions that are provided to reduce the risk of fire and spread of fire, in conjunction with other measures, to keep people safe from fire in a building (see Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005).

Interim measures

- 2.9. Urgent temporary measures which are to be put in place to address an unacceptable risk to occupants of a building.

Mitigation Measures

- 2.10. Measures to mitigate the identified risk until the significant issues are resolved.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

- 2.11. A documented plan for the evacuation of people who are unable to evacuate without assistance, and/or require some assistance to do so.

Residents

- 2.12. The term 'residents' is used when referring to the occupants, regardless of tenure of the flats. The term includes all those who live in the building, whether tenants or leaseholders (note: when referring to the need to alert relevant persons of the need to evacuate a building, the term residents is inclusive of any visitors or guests).

Responsible person

- 2.13. The person, group, company or other entity on whom duties are imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure the safety of occupants of a building from fire (see Article 3 of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005). Note: duties are also imposed on persons other than the Responsible Person (see Articles 5 (3) and 5 (4) of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005).

Short-Term

- 2.14. The amount of time needed for Responsible Persons to formulate a longer-term plan for other interim measures (such as the installation of a temporary common fire alarm system or remediating the risk of the external wall system). The length of the 'short-term' will be dependent upon factors such as the design of the building, the different types of tenures, particularly leaseholders and the needs of residents. The short-term should be as soon as practically possible and no longer than 12 months.

Simultaneous evacuation

- 2.15. Procedure in which all parts of a building are evacuated in the event of fire at one time.

Smoke ventilation system

- 2.16. A system to control and/or prevent the spread of smoke in protected routes in the event of fire. The primary objective of a smoke ventilation system is to protect the common parts. These areas may exist on the floor level where the fire has originated and in stairwells, enabling those occupants who feel threatened or who are at greatest risk to escape. Such systems will further assist firefighters to gain access.

Sounder

- 2.17. A device that will give an audible warning in the event of fire.

Stay put strategy

- 2.18. A strategy based on the design principle that only the residents of the flat of fire origin need to escape initially, while other residents may remain in their own flats unless their flat is affected by fire or smoke, they feel threatened, or they are instructed to leave by the FRS. A stay put strategy does not preclude residents, who are aware of a fire within the building but not affected directly by it, from deciding to evacuate.

Temporary

- 2.19. Non-permanent measures implemented to mitigate an unacceptable risk in a building, as an interim measure, adopted for the safety of residents while works to rectify the identified fire safety failings are carried out. Temporary measures could include the

use of a waking watch or the preferred option of the installation of a common fire alarm system along with suitable on-site evacuation management, where necessary. The installation of a temporary fire alarm and detection system is preferred over a continued use of a waking watch system.

Waking Watch

- 2.20. A system whereby suitably trained persons continually patrol all floors and the exterior perimeter of the building in order to detect a fire, raise the alarm, and carry out the role of evacuation management.

3. Competence

- 3.1. The complexity of the interactions between people, buildings and fire is such that no single set of criteria can be applied to all types of buildings in all circumstances. Therefore, an assessment - specific to the building in question - will need to be conducted that considers any potential fire spread in conjunction with the evacuation strategy and any required modifications to that strategy (i.e. a change from a stay put to a simultaneous evacuation strategy).
- 3.2. The advice used to inform this assessment must be provided by a competent person, as this is critical for ensuring that an appropriate level of safety is achieved. In some cases, the risk assessment may be straightforward, for which a competent fire risk assessor may be used (paragraph 2.4). In others cases, the assessment will be more complex and require advice from a qualified engineer with relevant experience in fire safety, including the fire testing of building products and systems, such as a Chartered Engineer registered with the UK Engineering Council by the Institution of Fire Engineers.
- 3.3. Even when advice from a qualified fire engineer is required, there remains a need to consider a holistic overview of the general fire precautions. Where to seek an appropriate level of competent advice will depend on the nature of the fire precautions being considered.
- 3.4. The fire risk assessment will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect the risk posed by a non-compliant external wall system. This will require close liaison between fire risk assessors and engineers with competency in the assessment of external wall design.
- 3.5. The Responsible Person and/or the competent person will need to ensure that those implementing the interim measures have the required level of competency to operate effectively.

4. Things to consider before changing the evacuation strategy

4.1. Before changing the evacuation strategy of a building, the Responsible Person, in conjunction with advice from a competent person, should review the fire risk assessment and consider the following factors:

- The external wall system (EWS). Consideration should be given to the type and extent of the cladding and insulation materials and potential for disproportionate fire spread. Account also needs to be taken of the proximity of the cladding to windows, vents, stairways, and other architectural features that could assist the spread of fire.
- The general fire precautions in the building. This document was written to provide guidance in response to the growing need for interim measures as a result of concerns over EWS. It does not replace the need to ensure/confirm that the general fire precautions are satisfactory, as part of the Responsible Person's statutory duty under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. There may be some minor issues, but anything above an advisory comment in the FRA should be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The height of the building. This is included to reflect both the difficulty of external firefighting especially above 18m, which is impractical in the initial stages of an incident and the time for evacuation. External firefighting at heights above 18m, would involve the use of high reach appliances, which are unlikely to be available in the initial stages of a fire and typically unable to support firefighting above 30m.
- The occupancy of the building including factors that influence the risk which may include, amongst others, the presence of persons with restricted mobility, young persons, and persons with cognitive disabilities.
- Provision of sprinklers or other automatic fire suppression systems. Consideration should be given to the impact this could have on the evacuation strategy.
- The number of flats. Consideration should be given to the number of people that could be evacuating and the possible conflict between evacuating people and firefighting operations.
- The number of means of escape stairways. Consideration should be given to the number of staircases and the number of people using them.
- The FRS attendance time. This is to be based on the assumption in Approved Document B that there will be fire service intervention in a timely manner. Stay put requires firefighting intervention. This should not be taken as the time of arrival of the first appliance, but on an assessment of the time taken to call the fire brigade (either by the waking watch, building concierge or alarm receiving centre) and the attendance time of the predetermined attendance. No reliance should be placed on the attendance of high reach appliances as typically these will take longer to mobilise than the initial attendance.
- Risk of external ignition of cladding (e.g. considering the height at which the

cladding starts, proximity of cars, refuse, etc. to the cladding).

- Risk of internal ignition of cladding (e.g. from fires inside the building via unprotected window reveals and the proximity of ignition sources such as domestic appliances).

The collective effect of the fire safety measures should be considered holistically, as opposed to each measure in isolation. In some circumstances, there may be sufficient mitigating features within the existing general fire precautions for a building which may mean a waking watch is not necessary.

Where a competent person has carried out an assessment of the External Wall System (EWS), the findings of that assessment should be considered in the Fire Risk Assessment for the premises alongside the general fire precautions and full range of interim measures to determine what actions need to be taken where this assessment suggests the EWS poses a risk.

It should be clear from the competent person that the risk is so significant that a stay put strategy can no longer be maintained.

Once the decision to move away from a stay put strategy has been made, a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to determine the solution to be adopted. This may indicate that the initial expenditure of installing a common fire alarm system is more beneficial than a fully staffed waking watch as an interim measure.

5. Changing to a simultaneous evacuation strategy

Reasons for changing to an evacuation strategy

- 5.1. As detailed in the introduction above, the strategy in a residential building typically comprises a stay put strategy. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to temporarily change the evacuation strategy from stay put to simultaneous evacuation.
- 5.2. **It is strongly recommended that where a change to a simultaneous evacuation is deemed necessary and will be required beyond a short-term period of time, that a temporary common fire alarm system is installed. This is because a temporary common alarm when designed, installed, and maintained appropriately is a more reliable and cost-effective way to maintain a sufficient level of early detection. An appropriate common fire alarm and detection system will generally provide more certainty that a fire will be detected and provide warning to occupants of the building at the earliest opportunity rather than rely on using a waking watch. It is also emphasised that the combustible external wall systems system and or other building defects should be remediated without delay.**
- 5.3. A stay put strategy relies on the fire separation between each flat to ensure that the fire and smoke does not spread throughout the building unrestricted and uncontrolled. This fire separation is achieved through different means such as fire-resisting doors, fire-resisting walls, floors, and ceilings separating flats, and ensuring that the external walls of the building adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls.
- 5.4. Buildings that have, for example, been identified as having an external wall system that does not adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls (e.g. ACM identified as hazardous by MHCLG because of large scale fire tests carried out on their behalf) are one example of circumstances where a simultaneous evacuation strategy may be needed.
- 5.5. In these circumstances, the change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy must not be permanent. It should always be considered as an interim measure, adopted for the safety of residents, to avoid decanting the building, while urgent works to rectify the identified fire safety failings are carried out. The installation of a temporary fire alarm and detection system is preferred and will almost certainly be more effective than the continued use of a waking watch system in the longer term. However, a waking watch can be implemented with immediate effect so is likely to be required in the first instance until other arrangements can be put in place.
- 5.6. In addition, it must be acknowledged that the move to a simultaneous evacuation strategy may not address all the risks identified and be considered to mitigate all general fire precaution failings (e.g. deficiencies in means of escape). The responsible person must always discuss the change of evacuation strategy with a competent person, who can further advise on the proposal, including any limitations of such a change, and evaluate the overall fire safety provisions of a building.
- 5.7. The indicative timeline in Appendix 7 outlines the steps that a Responsible Person may need to take in several scenarios. Where a waking watch is required immediately, the Responsible Person should procure this contract as soon as possible and then work towards complying with paragraph 5.2.

- 5.8. Following the immediate procurement of the waking watch if necessary, the Responsible Person for the building should consult with residents and especially leaseholders about the options available to mitigate the building's deficiencies. Cost options should be provided to leaseholders, and leaseholders should be involved in the choice of interim measures that is made.
- 5.9. The ongoing sustainability of the waking watch option is dependent, in many cases, on leaseholders' ability to pay and the potential for recovery of costs from third parties. Consultation with leaseholders will help ensure that they are able to make either a proactive commitment to address the safety concerns in the short-term, regardless/ahead of the outcome of subsequent claims, or choose to accept a longer-term interim arrangement and the associated costs. This could include information about urgent installation of a temporary common fire alarm system to alleviate the cost of the waking watch (evacuation management will normally still be needed for buildings where a temporary common alarm system has been installed, in order to fulfil the duties outlined in Appendix 5).
- 5.10. Appendix 7 outlines a timeline of some of the actions that may need to be considered when changing to a simultaneous evacuation strategy. It is important to understand the timescales that are involved in the remediation of the building risk to find the most appropriate temporary solution in terms of risk and cost.

General requirements of a temporary simultaneous evacuation

- 5.11. A change to a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy relies on two key essential principles:
- Early detection of a fire and warning of occupants,
 - Management of the evacuation.
- 5.12. It is the duty of the responsible person to ensure that both are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the simultaneous evacuation plan.
- 5.13. A change in evacuation strategy will require careful consideration of how people are warned of a fire. This means that, at the earliest opportunity, a fire should be detected, and warning given throughout the building.
- 5.14. Flats that do not have their own smoke alarms should be fitted with them, regardless of the other fire safety provisions in the building. For best practice, installed smoke alarms should be mains wired with a tamper-proof battery back-up. These are independent of any communal fire alarm and detection system specified as an interim measure.
- 5.15. The early detection of a fire may comprise one of the following:
- A suitable common fire alarm system throughout the building with detectors and sounders where necessary is the most appropriate if the interim measures are to be in place for more than a short term (see Appendix 2 for further guidance on this topic),
 - A waking watch using trained persons to assist with detecting a fire, and raising the alarm, although this should only be used for a short-term interim measure (see Appendices 1 and 3 for further guidance on this topic).
- 5.16. On detection of a fire, arrangements for the management of the evacuation by trained

persons should be implemented. Appendix 4 outlines a person specification for the waking watch and Appendix 5 outlines a specification for persons involved in the evacuation management.

- 5.17. The management of the evacuation is a key part of change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy. On-site personnel will be required to facilitate a rapid, effective, and coordinated evacuation, contact the FRS to provide an essential link with them during operations. (see section 6 and Appendix 3 for further information about the management considerations). Management of evacuations may still be required where a common fire alarm system has been installed to coordinate the actions outlined in Section 6. The level of management in this situation will be dependent upon a review of the fire risk assessment by the responsible person in conjunction with advice from a competent person.
- 5.18. Consideration should be given to the capacity of the staircase and whether it is safely able to accommodate the expected population in the building although this will not normally be an issue.

Information for FRS

- 5.19. Where a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy is adopted, the responsible person **must** notify the FRS, as the FRS may need to update its operational information about the premises.
- 5.20. It is expected that FRS operational crews will visit the premises to update their tactical plans.

Information to residents

- 5.21. It is essential that residents are informed as soon as practicable about the reasons for the change of the evacuation strategy, the purpose of it, and what actions will be taken in the event of a fire. It is unlikely that relying on a simple mail drop or information on communal notice boards will be sufficient. Resident meetings supported with written advice are more appropriate. These should be supplemented by competent persons (for example, representatives of the responsible person) proactively engaging with residents to ensure that they understand the situation and any subsequent changes/works that might be happening. In engagement with residents, priority should be given to vulnerable people.
- 5.22. It is important that, as part of this process, occupants understand the evacuation strategy as well as the evacuation procedures and what action they should take upon leaving the building.
- 5.23. Where a waking watch is to be put in place, residents should be made aware of the arrangements, the identities of those involved in the waking watch and who to contact in connection with any issues that arise.

Removal of Temporary Measures

- 5.24. Any common fire alarm system, or waking watch, and evacuation management should only be removed when the required remedial works have been completed, a competent fire safety specialist has been consulted and the FRS has been notified that the simultaneous evacuation strategy has ceased and the building has returned to the stay put strategy. A common fire alarm system is only a temporary measure and not an alternative to remedial works designed to reduce the risk from a non-compliant wall system. Where it is proposed to keep the common fire alarm system, responsible persons and residents should be aware of the ongoing maintenance requirements,

such as routine testing and maintenance. This will require accessing individual flats, to maintain these temporary systems to the required standard in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

- 5.25. Regarding the common fire alarm system, it might be possible to maintain some utility for this system, rather than removing it entirely. For example, consideration could be given to whether it could be converted into an evacuation alert system for use by the FRS (as described in BS 8629*) or as a means of giving a remote warning of a fire in a flat. Where this is the desired long-term outcome, this future conversion should be discussed with a competent fire alarm engineer prior to the initial installation of the common fire alarm system as it will be necessary to 'over-engineer' aspects of the installation. Further guidance on this is outside the scope of this document and specialist advice should be sought.

*** BS 8629 Emergency Evacuation Alert Systems**

- 5.26. In 2019 BSI published '*BS 8629 2019 - Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of evacuation alert systems for use by fire and rescue services in buildings containing flats*'. This standard offers a specification for systems for use by FRSs to assist in the evacuation of residential buildings. Whilst the systems clearly offer benefit in the evacuation of buildings and their application is supported by FRSs, in the context of the current guidance, these systems on their own would be unsuitable as they are intended solely to assist FRSs in their operational decision making and cannot be used to initiate an evacuation prior to the arrival of the FRS. The waking watch and Common Fire Alarm systems mentioned herein are intended to detect fire as well as warn occupants, something which BS8629 systems are unable to facilitate. The two systems should be treated as being for different purposes and kept totally separate.

6. Management considerations to support the adoption of a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy

- 6.1. Information about the change to a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy and waking watch should be recorded as part of a review of the fire risk assessment for the building, including:
- Clear role of the waking watch (an example person specification is given in Appendix 4)
 - Competence and training of the waking watch personnel, and
 - Arrangements for drills and quality assuring the provision of the waking watch (further advice on quality assurance is given in Appendix 6).
- 6.2. Where a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy is adopted, there is a need for two separate elements, namely:
- A means for detecting fire and giving warning to residents. This may comprise a waking watch or a common fire alarm system, and
 - An evacuation management arrangement.
- 6.3. It is recommended that every building with a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy should be provided with 24/7 on-site trained personnel. The number of persons required will be dependent upon whether there is a waking watch, or alternatively, a common fire alarm system, in conjunction with evacuation personnel. The level of personnel required should be outlined by a review of the premises fire risk assessment by the Responsible Person, in conjunction with advice from a competent person, to ensure that the functions of Appendix 4 and 5 are fulfilled, where necessary.
- 6.4. In the case of a waking watch, the role of the waking watch personnel incorporates five distinct elements, namely:
- Early identification of a fire within the building.
 - Warning to residents. This could be done by knocking on doors or using other measures to alert residents e.g. klaxons if it can be assured residents can hear them in their flats (note: it should be established that the means of raising the alarm is loud enough to rouse residents from their sleep).
 - Other general duties as outlined in Appendix 4 (A4.5).
 - Management of the evacuation (including, calling the FRS and where necessary, assisting with PEEPs), and
 - Liaison with the FRS on arrival.
- 6.5. Where a waking watch is provided, it should incorporate an evacuation manager whose role will be to:

- Ensure that the FRS are called as soon as possible and provide key information.
- Liaise with the attending FRS to provide information, as necessary.

- 6.6. In buildings with a common fire alarm system, the first two of the four elements, outlined in 6.3, are not required, as the function is fulfilled by the common fire alarm system, so enabling the number of on-site personnel to be significantly reduced. However, there may still be a need for a 24-hour presence of one or more trained persons to undertake the role of evacuation and liaise with the FRS. The level of this provision should be decided as the result of a review of the fire risk assessment by the Responsible Person in conjunction with advice from a competent person.
- 6.7. The number of personnel required in individual buildings will vary. Advice should be sought from a competent person to advise accordingly.
- 6.8. Further details for management considerations for a waking watch (including training, communications, and management of vulnerable residents) are given in Appendix 3.
- 6.9. It is essential that the arrangements for the temporary move to a simultaneous evacuation strategy should be tested in the form of regular exercises to ensure that all members of the waking watch and evacuation management team understand their roles and that the system remains appropriate for the specific building. Further advice for quality assurance is given in Appendix 6.

7. Responsible person duties

- 7.1. The Responsible Person duties are laid out in Part 2 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 7.2. The Responsible Person must ensure that the change to a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy relies on the assessment by a competent person and addresses the risks identified (the definition for a competent person is given in paragraph 2.4). These changes should be reflected in a review of the premises' fire risk assessment.
- 7.3. The Responsible Person must ensure that the mitigation measures put in place always remain appropriate.
- 7.4. The Responsible Person must ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to address the specific risk identified in the building.
- 7.5. The Responsible person must ensure they have communicated the change to temporary simultaneous evacuation and what this means to the residents and all relevant persons that may be affected by this temporary change. As noted in paragraph 5.19, the Responsible Person **must** inform the local FRS of a change to a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy, as the FRS may need to update its operational information about the premises.
- 7.6. The evacuation strategy must be re-evaluated periodically as the remedial works are being carried out to ensure that it remains current and addresses the general fire precaution failings.
- 7.7. For further general fire safety advice, please contact your local FRS fire safety team.
- 7.8. It is vital that any processes and procedures put in place allow compliance with other applicable legislation such as Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. For example, Welfare/Toilet facilities must be considered for the well-being of the staff, such as washing, toilet, rest and changing facilities, and somewhere clean to eat and drink during breaks.
- 7.9. Attention is also drawn to the requirements of the Fire Safety (Employees' Capabilities) (England) Regulations 2010, with regard to the Responsible Person's employees being capable of carrying out their duties.

It may be that, even if all the above guidance were to be implemented, the risk is not reduced enough to enable all the persons to remain in the property, and certain uppermost floors might need to be temporarily evacuated. There should be liaison with the FRS in respect of this matter.

Appendix 1. Detecting a fire and raising the alarm incorporating a waking watch

A1.1. The system (either primarily an automatic system or by using trained personal) to instigate the simultaneous evacuation must be able to account for the following functions:

- The early identification of a fire.
- Giving warning to residents.
- Management of the evacuation (including, calling the FRS and where necessary, PEEPs), and
- Take appropriate action as required by the management strategy, including meeting the FRS on arrival.

A1.2. As a benchmark, in the case of an external wall system that represents a significant fire hazard (e.g. a system incorporating polyethylene core ACM, as described by tests 1, 2 & 3 in the Government cladding screening programme), the objective should be that, when a confirmed fire within a flat necessitates simultaneous evacuation, the time from detection of the fire to alerting all residents, by the waking watch personnel, and confirming evacuation has started, should not exceed a time of typically 10-15 minutes. In buildings where a common fire alarm has been installed this time will be reduced to the time taken to activate the alarm signal.

A1.3. In the case of those buildings that have a notable fire hazard (e.g. ACM with fire retardant polyethylene filler (category 2 in screening tests) with phenolic foam insulation as described in test 7 of Government cladding screening programme) then the 10-15 minutes time limit may be increased slightly if suitably justified in the assessment by a competent person.

A1.4. There are three possible approaches to detect a fire and give early warning to residents:

a) Installation of a common fire alarm system of the type described in Appendix 2. In this case, the objective of the evacuation management does not comprise detection of fire, apart from external fire spread, or alerting residents. The role of the evacuation management is purely to summon the FRS, manage the evacuation process and carry out the other duties outlined in Appendix 5. For this purpose, a minimal number of personnel is likely to be required in any building; there would not be any need for a waking watch to patrol the building such that each floor was inspected within any given period. The number of personnel required should be decided in conjunction with a review of the premises risk assessment in conjunction with advice from a competent person, to ensure the duties outlined in Appendix 5 can be fulfilled.

Where a group of affected buildings form an estate under common management, staff who manage the site on a 24-hour basis can perform this role if there is a method of informing them immediately of the fire alarm actuating, and that they can reach any building in a reasonable time. This is the preferable approach where an external wall system that represents a significant hazard on buildings

over 18m in height and should be adopted where the external wall system cannot be replaced or removed in the short-term. However, based on the competent person's advice, there may be some individual premises where only a common fire alarm system, in conjunction with evacuation management, is adequate

- b) Reliance on the waking watch to detect the presence of a fire** - by hearing a smoke/heat alarm sounding within a flat, and manually to initiate fire alarm sounders that would alert all residents of the need to evacuate. This will initially involve provision of sounders throughout the common parts, but, ultimately, is likely to need a sounder in every flat to ensure that the fire alarm signal is loud enough to rouse residents from sleep.

The manual initiation of sounders would comprise, at least, one manual control on the ground floor that triggers operation of all sounders but could comprise manual controls on additional floor levels. The method of operation of the manual controls should be such that they can only be operated by waking watch personnel or FRS.

In this case, the number of personnel on the waking watch should be such that they become aware of a fire (e.g. by hearing a smoke alarm operate and immediately investigating) and operate a manual control within 10-15 minutes of operation of a smoke alarm within a flat or discovering a fire.

- c) Reliance on the waking watch to detect the presence of a fire and to take manual action to alert residents of the need to evacuate** (e.g. knocking on each flat front door and/or using an air horn to alert residents). In this case, there will, again, be the need for the waking watch to be sufficiently staffed to ensure as soon as they become aware of a fire (e.g. by hearing a smoke alarm operate and immediately investigating), they can alert all residents in accordance with paragraphs A1.2 & A1.3 on the operation of a smoke alarm within a flat. This alternative is likely to be the least reliable, require the highest number of personnel, be the most resource intensive, and may not be suitable for the highest risk situations. This is also impracticable for a long-term solution and should only be a short-term measure until either option b) or preferably option a) is adopted

NOTE: Care should be taken (e.g. in the training of the waking watch persons) to ensure that they do not initiate a simultaneous evacuation in the event of a false alarm from a domestic smoke alarm, or a small fire that has been extinguished.

Appendix 2. Common Fire Alarm System: Automatic fire detection and alarm system supporting simultaneous evacuation

Purpose

- A2.1. The purpose of the provision of a common fire alarm to support the change of the evacuation strategy from stay put to simultaneous evacuation is to ensure early detection and warning of a fire throughout the building (including any accommodation e.g. individual flats).
- A2.2. As described above, the common fire alarm system cannot be implemented in isolation and must be provided as part of a package of fire safety measures. Where a common alarm system is installed there may still be a requirement for the evacuation management considerations in Section 6 to be implemented. The aim of the guidance below is to provide and highlight some of the key considerations about the selection and implementation of a common alarm system.
- A2.3. The installation of a common alarm is not a long-term solution or replacement for remediation (i.e. removal and replacement of combustibles external wall systems materials).

System design and considerations

Location and coverage of the detection system

- A2.4. Considering the specific purpose of this guidance, the common fire alarm system should generally be designed in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5839-1 for a Category L5 system, except that the sound pressure level of the fire alarm signal within flats need only be 85dB(A) at the open doorways of every bedroom in each flat. Any fire detection and fire alarm system should be designed, installed and commissioned by an appropriately qualified, third-party accredited competent person/s.
- A2.5. In every flat, the system should incorporate heat detectors within each room that has a window that overlooks an area of external wall, with an external wall system that results in a significant or notable fire hazard (except possibly toilets and bathrooms). Heat detectors should also be included in any other rooms, such as plant rooms and other ancillary facilities with windows or vents through which a fire could spread and ignite. Consideration might also need to be given to the provision of smoke detectors within common parts, but these detectors should not initiate the general evacuation of the building; they may give a warning only to the evacuation management team.
- A2.6. An immediate evacuation signal should be triggered by the operation of any single heat detector.

It should be noted that the evacuation signal should not rely on the coincident operation of two heat detectors (sometimes described as “double knock”), as such an arrangement would not result in early enough operation of the evacuation signal in the event of a serious fire that might affect combustibles external wall systems.

- A2.7. In line with the individual personal emergency evacuation plan process, specific measures such as a vibrating pager or beacon may be required if people with hearing

impairments have been identified.

- A2.8. It is critical that the common alarm system installed in the premises must not have any adverse effect on the other fire safety provisions in the building. For example, the installation of a wired system must not create a route for fire and smoke to spread in fire rated walls which were previously imperforate. If the system is an extension of the smoke detection system provided for a smoke control system care must be taken to ensure that the operation of the smoke control system is not compromised by the new communal system.

Appendix 3. Management considerations for a waking watch

Training

- A3.1. Training should be given to evacuation management and waking watch members to ensure they fully understand the purpose of their role and what individual tasks they are responsible for, both during normal activities and in the event of a fire. They should also be given general health and safety training, and specific fire training to support safe systems of work. This training should include:
- A3.2. Specific instruction should be provided on the communication processes amongst the waking watch team, and how to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk.
- A3.3. In the event of a fire, after calling the FRS, the priority for the waking watch is to initiate the evacuation of the building. Therefore, it is not advisable to expect team members to actively engage in first aid firefighting.
- A3.4. Training will need to be repeated if any of the waking watch members change and further training if any arrangement changes. All members of the waking watch should receive regular refresher training.
- A3.5. It is important that the waking watch can instantly and constantly communicate with each other. The method of communications must be available throughout the building. Radios are often the most appropriate way of achieving this and must be supported by an appropriate radio protocol.
- A3.6. This should include set words for checking in, raising the alarm etc. Radio traffic should be kept to a minimum to ensure that the system is available for appropriate communications. The adequacy and effectiveness of radio communication throughout the building should be tested and confirmed.
- A3.7. It is unlikely that mobile phones will provide an appropriate method of communications between members of the waking watch. These require more than just a single button actuation and will not be available for the instant and simultaneous relay of messages to multiple team members. Mobile phones also rely on being connected to a network and this may not always be possible.
- A3.8. Mobile phones may be the most appropriate method of calling the FRS if no land line is available.
- A3.9. If mobile phones are to be relied for any of the above purposes. it should be ensured that phones have sufficient charge and they should be tried and tested, and its functionality regularly checked.

Vulnerable residents

- A3.10. Responsible persons for buildings where a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation is necessary should look to implement arrangements for vulnerable persons.
- A3.11. Where possible all residents should be surveyed in respect of their ability to evacuate the building without assistance. In each case where a resident is identified as being unable to respond to the evacuation signal and/or unable to evacuate without

assistance, the Responsible Person should, subject to the co-operation of the residents, seek to agree a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) with each of these residents. The level of on-site personnel, training, equipment, and evacuation protocols must fully reflect a simultaneous commitment to all the personal emergency evacuation plans, as well as the general evacuation in the building. It may also be possible to utilise any existing telecare services for vulnerable persons to inform these actions and add an additional layer of information that could be used in the event of a fire.

- A3.12. If it is evident that there will be a significant difficulty in being able to evacuate vulnerable persons, it may be possible to use a firefighters' lift, where such a lift is present in the building. If this is to be considered, the FRS should be consulted, and the waking watch persons trained its safe use
- A3.13. Vulnerable residents who cannot be assisted to safety may need to be relocated while this simultaneous evacuation strategy is in place. However, this would require the co-operation of the residents in question.
- A3.14. Information on residents who may need assistance to evacuate should be the responsibility of the team leader to ensure this is available to the fire service e.g. this could be kept in a premises information box that is readily available to a FRS.
- A3.15. The evacuation manager who meets the FRS on their arrival must be able to report information on each resident for which a personal emergency evacuation plan has been agreed but is not yet accounted for, namely:
- The flat number and floor of the resident.
 - The assistance required by the resident.

Note: Information on residents may be stored in a Premises Information Box (PIB).

Appendix 4. Waking Watch Person Specification

The need for waking watch

A4.1. The safety of buildings in which the decision has been made to move to a simultaneous evacuation strategy due to the potential for rapid fire spread on the exterior of the buildings is reliant upon the provision of an effective waking watch. A waking watch should consist of suitable trained and equipped individuals who will provide the function of detecting a fire, raising the alarm, assisting in coordinating the evacuation of the building in which the waking watch is set up and liaising with the FRS on arrival.

Definition of a waking watch

A4.2. Persons making up a waking watch could include either the staff of a third-party contractor, persons employed directly by the RP (e.g. concierge) or a group of residents (subject to full consent by residents) of the building. Whichever group is used, for the purpose of this guidance a member of a waking watch is one who has:

- Received appropriate training in accordance with the requirements with the duties for waking watch outlined below.
- Been employed, contracted or assigned a role to act in accordance with the requirements of the waking watch systems that have been implemented as part of the premises FRA, and
- Is appropriately equipped to carry out their duties.

A4.3. Provided that they meet the criteria outlined above, members of the waking watch can be paid or volunteers.

A4.4. Where trained volunteers or residents are used, their primary function must be their waking watch role and other activities must not compromise this: they must not, for example, prioritise their own families or property over others.

Role Specification of a Waking Watch

A4.5. The number of persons forming the waking watch along with their duties should be recorded as part of the Premises FRA. Duties of the waking watch will be partly dependent upon the building in which it is set up. The basic duties of the waking watch will include:

- a. Patrolling the common areas of the building (or part of the building depending upon size) in order to identify the occurrence of any fire in common areas and flats.
- b. Responding to the presence of fire by raising an alarm with other waking watch personnel – alerting evacuation management.
- c. Raising the alarm within a set area of the building.
- d. Assisting in carrying out duties connected to any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans that have been formulated.
- e. Reporting to evacuation management once the alarm has been raised throughout the area of the building in which the waking watch member was patrolling.

- f. To be confident in the use of technology and aids supplied to manage the evacuation, such as radios.

Other general duties should include:

- g. Patrol the perimeter of the building, as required, in order to identify and report risks of fire to the responsible person (e.g. skips, or a build-up of combustible material adjacent to the building, cars parked close to the combustible external wall systems or blocking the means of escape etc.)
- h. Check that corridors and stairwells to ensure combustible materials are not stored there and to monitor escape routes to see they are kept free of obstructions (e.g. build-up of refuse on escape routes, etc.)
- i. Checking the fire precautions within the building (e.g. fire doors not closing fully, emergency lighting units not working correctly etc.)
- j. Providing reassurance to residents of the building.

Person Specification

A4.6. Persons forming the waking watch should be fit and active enough to be able to carry out patrolling duties for the duration of their shift. They should also have the maturity to carry out their duties and act in accordance with instructions from Evacuation Management in the event of an incident. Other areas that should be considered regarding those carrying out a waking watch are that they should be:

- Physically and mentally capable of undertaking the waking watch role which may involve long hours and a high degree of repetition.
- Able to communicate emergency instructions in a manner that is understood by a wide range of persons with differing abilities and languages.
- Able to remain calm and be able to follow pre-set plans in high pressure situations.
- Be able to undertake training which will give them knowledge regarding the areas outlined below.

A4.7. Where a waking watch is formed, the requirements of The Fire Safety (Employees Capabilities) (England) Regulations 2010 should be taken into account¹.

A4.8. Members of the waking watch should be clearly identifiable in order to provide reassurance and confidence to residents. Persons forming a waking watch should be apprised in writing of their duties and responsibilities. They should receive sufficient training to ensure that they are able to carry out the duties expected by their role.

Recommendations for competency and training requirements for waking watch members

A4.9. There are currently no specific qualifications applicable to this role, but similar roles do exist which cover some of the areas that a may require, for example security and stewarding roles or fire marshal / fire warden roles. It is recognised that those forming

¹ In this context, waking watch employees also includes volunteers or residents, who can be considered as employees in Article 2 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

the waking watch may come from a range of occupations and former occupations

- A4.10. Waking watch members should receive sufficient training to ensure that they are able to carry out the duties expected by their role. The Responsible Person should keep a record of this training, including details of the individuals involved and content covered. Areas this training may cover include:
- a. Principles of fire.
 - b. How to spot indications of a fire.
 - c. How to spot building deficiencies or fire safety issues.
 - d. How to raise the alarm in the event of fire.
 - e. How to communicate with Evacuation Management and other waking watch personnel.
 - f. An understanding of how residents are likely to react in a fire or on instruction to evacuate.
 - g. An understanding of how to instruct residents that evacuation is necessary and ensure a safe evacuation.
 - h. An understanding of the specific building in which they are providing waking watch including layout and evacuation routes, and
 - i. How to notify the responsible person of any building deficiencies discovered whilst patrolling.

Appendix 5. Evacuation Management Role

- A5.1. The role of evacuation management in a building that has temporarily changed to a simultaneous evacuation strategy is to facilitate a rapid, effective and coordinated evacuation, and to liaise with the FRS to provide an essential link with them during operations.
- A5.2. Management of evacuations will normally still be required where a common fire alarm system has been installed, in order to coordinate the actions outlined below.. The premises' fire risk assessment should be reviewed by the Responsible Person, in conjunction with advice from a competent person to outline how these requirements may be met.
- A5.3. Additional general duties should include:
- Patrol the perimeter of the building, as required, in order to identify and report risks of fire to the responsible person (e.g. skips, or a build-up of combustible material adjacent to the building, cars parked close to the combustible external wall systems or blocking the means of escape etc.),
 - Check that corridors and stairwells to ensure combustible materials are not stored there and to monitor escape routes to see they are kept free of obstructions (e.g. build-up of refuse on escape routes, etc.),
 - Checking the fire precautions within the building (e.g. fire doors not closing fully, emergency lighting units not working correctly etc.),
 - Providing reassurance to residents of the building.

Role Specification for Evacuation Management

- A5.4. The main requirements for evacuation management are outlined in previous sections 4, 5 and 6 of this guidance document. The role of coordinating evacuation management should be highlighted in the review of the building's fire risk assessment. The role may be taken by either a member of the waking watch, or by existing on-site staff, where present (for example where a concierge is employed) or by trained residents. Where existing staff are used, their current duties should be reviewed to ensure that they have sufficient capacity in their work to take on these additional responsibilities.
- A5.5. The person specification for an evacuation manager who may coordinate the on-site evacuation management will incorporate the specification of the waking watch and will require the same training as those carrying out this duty.
- A5.6. Additional training will also be required to fulfil the additional duties of the role, which may include:
- Ensuring that the FRS are called as soon as possible. Evacuation management will need to provide key information about the building and its address/location, including:
 - The address of the premises.
 - The total number of floors of the building.
 - Where the fire has started i.e. flat number and floor or externally.

- That a simultaneous evacuation is under way.
- Where known, the number and location of any people who may not be able to self-evacuate.
- Any other information as relevant.
- Where possible it is recommended that the FRS are met on arrival to pass on relevant information.
- Ensuring that actions that form part of any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are carried out. Further information on this area can be found in the Fire Safety Risk Assessment Means of Escape for Disable Persons guide.
- Liaising with the attending FRS to provide information, as necessary.

Note: Some of the above Evacuation Management duties can be complied with by an Alarm Receiving Centre to call the FRS and Premises Information Boxes (PIBs) with information for the FRS. CCTV could be considered to undertake duties outlined in A5.3.

In some circumstances, if all of the duties required by evacuation management can be carried out by other means, it may be acceptable for there to be no physical presence in the building. However, this should only be allowed in conjunction with a review of the fire risk assessment which provides details of how these functions are to be carried out.

Appendix 6. Quality Assurance

A6.1. Where a building has moved to a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy which will require, a waking watch or a common fire alarm, and additional evacuation management, it will also be necessary for the responsible person to implement a suitable quality assurance process. These processes will serve three main purposes:

- to ensure that measures in their building are fit for purpose and address the risks identified,
- to identify gaps which may have been overlooked in the initial assessment of the building, and
- to refine systems that have been implemented.

Fire Evacuation Drills

A6.2. From experience in non-domestic premises, it is well-known that frequent testing of systems aimed at alerting occupants of a fire can lead to the assumption that when the alarm is raised, it is for a routine test (or false alarm) which can lead to a delay in the evacuation of occupants. For this reason, fire evacuation drills that take place for the waking watch or common fire alarm should be solely for the purpose of testing the actions of evacuation management and waking watch members (residents, unless part of the waking watch do not need to be part of these drills). It is recommended that drills be carried out:

- As part of initial training for the waking watch and evacuation management,
- Whenever a new person joins the waking watch, and
- Routine/monthly drills will need to be carried out more frequently if there is a turnover of waking watch members.

The Responsible Person should be able to demonstrate that effective drills are taking place. The local FRS may want to see evidence of these drills taking place and, in some cases, witness them being carried out.

A6.3. Drills should aim to test the actions of management and waking watch members and should include simulation of discovering a fire, raising the alarm and communications between team members. Where Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are in place there may also need to be exercises to ensure that team members are aware of the actions they should carry out.

A6.4. Throughout the drill the responsible person and nominated observers should pay particular attention to:

- Waking watch members raising the alarm in their designated areas
- Whether waking watch members are easily able to cover their designated area
- Difficulties with the opening of final exit doors
- The roles of specified people, e.g. evacuation management

- Evacuation management simulate their actions and are able to coordinate waking watch members, relay information suitably and where present, and simulate sounding the common fire alarm, and
- The time taken for the actions of the waking watch to be carried out.

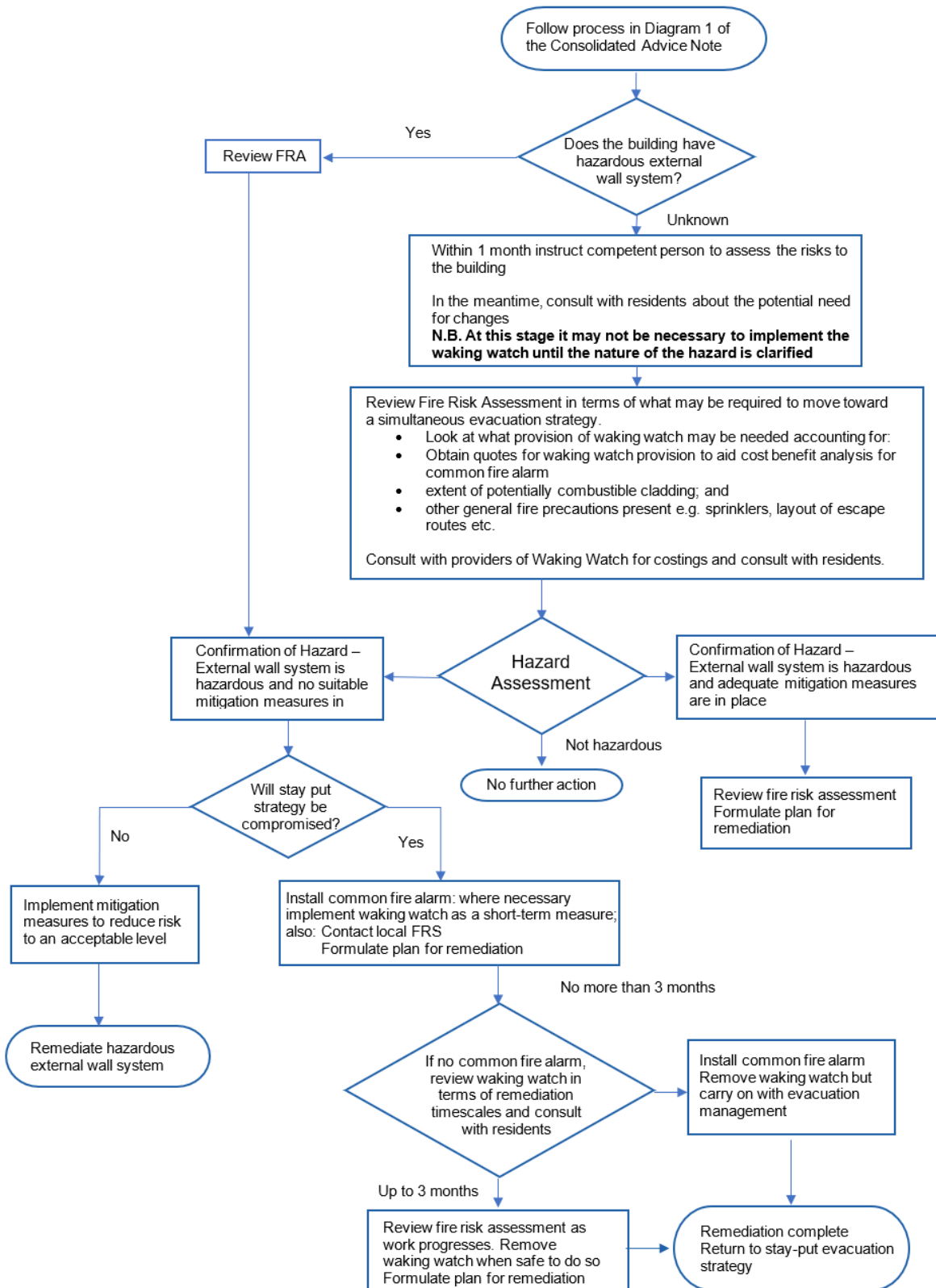
Note: the drill and quality assurance exercise should not be conducted in a manner that will be obvious to residents.

A6.5. On-the-spot debriefs are useful to discuss the fire drill, encouraging feedback from everybody. Later, reports from members of the waking watch and evacuation management and observations from people should be collated and reviewed. Any conclusions and remedial actions should be recorded and implemented.

Routine Monitoring

A6.6. Along with fire drills, the responsible person should arrange for routine recorded monitoring of the actions of evacuation management and the waking watch. The waking watch is reliant on the constant patrolling of the premises and continued vigilance of those carrying out these duties. Whilst the role involves long hours and a high degree of repetition, it is important that duties are carried out consistently. Monitoring will help to identify that scheduled actions are taking place and that sufficient cover is being provided. Where a waking watch is to be used for a protracted period (which is not encouraged), consideration should be given to implementing systems such as a patrol monitoring system in order to assure that consistent patrolling is taking place.

Appendix 7. Indicative timeline for actions



The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) released on 20th January 2020, consolidated guidance, "[Building safety advice for building owners, including fire doors](#)" which has superseded the previous published Expert Panel (EP) Advice Notes 1 to 22.