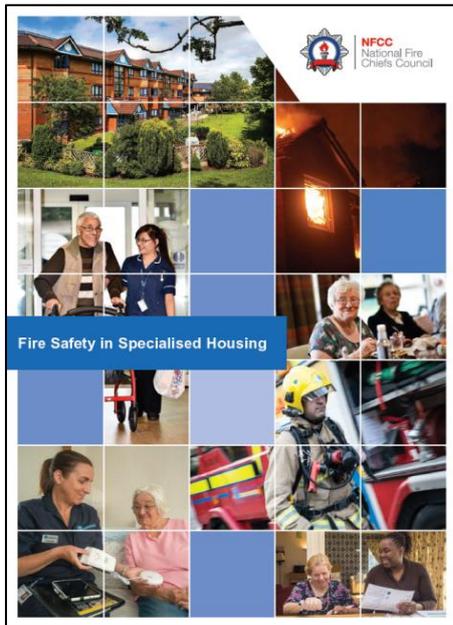




Summary Sheet – Fire Safety in Specialised Housing

A summary sheet for commissioners and providers of specialised housing and care services



Reducing the risk of fire for vulnerable residents in Sheltered Housing, Extra Care and Supported Living properties.

This summary sheet is to promote the guide and provide some background information which will help to navigate this comprehensive document.

A copy of the guide can either be downloaded for free or a hard copy purchased from:

www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Higher-Risk-Accommodation

Overview of the guidance and readership

- The aim of this new guide is to clarify, build upon and consolidate existing good practice. It introduces guidance on the various responsibilities for fire safety and advocates a 'person centred' approach to identifying fire risks to vulnerable residents in these types of premises. It includes case studies, templates, diagrams and worked examples to clarify the issues.
- The intended readership and those that must consider the recommendations of the guide includes:
 - Commissioners of care services in specialised housing.
 - Those who own, operate or manage specialised housing.
 - Those who provide care and/or support to residents in specialised housing.
 - Fire Risk Assessors and those who give advice on standards in this type of housing.

Why do we need this new guide?

- The changing social care landscape and ageing demographic means there are nearly a million residents currently living in various forms of sheltered, extra care and supported housing and we expect this to increase as years progress.
- By definition those living in this type of housing represent those most vulnerable to injury or death if a fire occurs, whether by a propensity to contribute to the likelihood of a fire, reduced capacity to respond or health/mobility constraints. These factors already lead to a disproportionately high number of deaths and injuries from fire for these residents.

- A lack of understanding of this increased vulnerability and a proper assessment of the fire risks, mean that additional fire protection measures are overlooked and avoidable deaths and injuries will continue to occur.

Key Features

1. Responsibilities for the management of fire safety in specialised housing

- Section I of the guide emphasises and outlines the legal requirement for the various responsibilities of commissioners, care providers and housing providers to be agreed and documented, and provides a simple matrix document for this purpose.

2. The Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)

- Section D and Appendix 4 of the guide outlines the PCFRA and a template for this process. The steps* in this assessment are:
 - Step 1:** Consider characteristics, behaviours and capabilities of the resident that may lead to fire.
 - Step 2:** Determine the potential causes of fire and the existing measures to prevent fire.
 - Step 3:** Identify any circumstances that could lead to the rapid development of fire.
 - Step 4:** Identify existing measures to protect the resident if fire occurs.
 - Step 5:** Consider capacity of resident to respond appropriately to fire alarm signals or signs of fire.
 - Step 6:** Consider ability of resident to make their way to safety.
 - Step 7:** Determine the level of risk to the resident from fire.
 - Step 8:** Prepare action plan.
 - Step 9:** Determine period for review of the assessment.

*Step by step process from: [NFCC Fire Safety in Specialised Housing](#), page 87.

- Section G of the guide then provides guidance on managing the fire risks and additional protection measures that can be provided for higher risk residents.
- Section I of the guide emphasises that collaboration and cooperation between commissioners, care providers and housing providers will be essential if higher risk residents are to be identified and additional care planning/control measures implemented to keep them safe.

3. Fire protection, guidance and other control measures

- Section H emphasises the importance of fire compartmentation and introduces new guidance on fire barriers in roof voids.
- Sections G and H provides guidance on the importance of smoke/heat alarms throughout flats in sheltered/extra care housing - with remote monitoring by alarm receiving centres.
- Appendix 5 provides guidance on the storage and charging of mobility scooters in these types of premises.

The table below provides a summary of each chapter in the guide and who each section is most applicable to:

Sections	Key points page #	Summary	Essential reading for:
Part A: Fires in specialised housing and their impact	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains an analysis of fires in specialised housing that concludes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vulnerable residents are at higher risk ○ The greatest risk of death is for those in the room in which the fire started ○ The most significant influences on fire risk are the ‘people factors’, such as age, physical disability and cognitive difficulties. • The recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducting a ‘person centred fire risk assessment’ for residents to identify those at higher risk ○ Extra fire detection, watermist and sprinkler systems can reduce the risk of death/ harm where a higher risk is identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Housing Providers • Care providers • Fire Risk Assessors
Part B: Fire safety - how specialised housing differs from other residences	39-40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General principles of fire safety in specialised housing. • Compartmentation in supported housing is not normally adequate to support a ‘stay put’ strategy; therefore, it may be necessary to evacuate all residents during a fire. • Sheltered housing schemes generally do not have staff available to support the evacuation therefore those with mobility and other issues may find escape difficult. • A person centred risk assessment may indicate that additional fire safety measures may need to be put in place for these residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Housing Providers • Care providers • Fire Risk Assessors
Part C: The law governing fire safety in specialised housing	59-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legal framework in relation to fire safety in specialised housing. • Detailed information on building legislation applicable to specialised housing. • Application of the Housing Act 2004 and the role of the enforcing authorities in keeping residents lawfully safe. • The FSO imposes duties to carry out fire risk assessments and maintain fire safety measures on various responsible people. This can include care providers and contractors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Housing Providers • Care providers • Fire Risk Assessors
Part D: The person centred approach	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background to the person centred fire risk assessment to identify residents at a higher risk from fire. • The London Fire Brigade ‘Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment Checklist’ has been developed for front line staff to support this approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Care Providers • Housing Providers

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Risk Assessors • Carers • Housing Wardens/Managers
Part E: Fire risk assessment for specialised housing premises	89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and methodology of the building fire risk assessment. • Different types of fire risk assessment that may be suitable for the premises, as well as who is responsible for carrying this out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Providers • Fire Risk Assessors
Part F: Preventing fires in the building	107	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily aimed at landlords and those that manage fire safety in buildings of this kind. • Practical measures to prevent fires caused by the fire hazards commonly found in specialised housing. • Detail about potential hazards such as cooking, smoking, arson, electrical hazards, mobility scooters and housekeeping. Policies that should be implemented to mitigate the risk. • Behaviours and habits of residents, such as hoarding and smoking, and liaison with external agencies and relatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing providers • Housing Wardens/Managers
Part G: Managing fire risk – fire protection for the person	139-140	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person-centred approach to consider how a fire might start and various fire safety measures that can be applied to reduce the risk to vulnerable residents. • Mental capacity should be considered as fire safety measures have less impact if residents are not able to respond effectively. • The level of need might mean that the risk cannot be reduced sufficiently in their current dwelling, even with the control measures advocated in a person-centred approach. This may lead to the resident being considered for more suitable accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners • Housing Providers • Care Providers • Carers • Housing Wardens/Managers • Fire Risk Assessors
Part H: Managing fire risk – fire protection for the building	153-154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How various fire safety measures may be applied in a building to reduce risk. • Provides a 'Decision Flowchart for Assessing the Adequacy of Fire Safety Measures in Existing Premises'. • Details of fire detection, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, signage and the use of telecare systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Providers • Fire Risk Assessors

Part I: Managing fire risk – ongoing control	229	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly aimed at landlords and others with the responsibility for the ongoing control of fire safety. Recommendations are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The need for a defined fire safety policy, with one organisation taking the lead in overseeing its implementation ○ There should be a matrix of responsibility recorded where a number of different organisations have a role to play in management of fire safety. ○ The need for testing and maintenance of fire safety provisions. ○ All agencies that engage with residents are to consider the safety of residents from fire by identifying hazards and those that are at a higher risk from fire. ○ All staff should be given adequate fire safety instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing providers • Fire Risk Assessors
Appendices – useful templates, case studies, worked examples etc :			
Appendix 1: Summary of fire protection measures for sheltered, extra care and supported housing			
Appendix 2: Steps in a building fire risk assessment			
Appendix 3: Selecting a competent professional fire risk assessor			
Appendix 4: Steps in a person-centred fire risk assessment			
Appendix 5: Further guidance on mobility scooters			
Appendix 6: Guidance when commissioning Telecare services			
Appendix 7: Fire safety advice for residents			
Appendix 8: Examples of fire action notices			
Appendices 9-14: Case studies and worked examples			