

Fire Safety Policy

Action for
Children

Safe

Sound

Contents

Fire Safety Policy Statement	3
Fire Safety arrangements	4
Risk Assessment	4
Staff Training	4
Fire Wardens	4
Fire Evacuation	4
Detection and Warning Systems	4
Fire extinguishers and sprinklers	5
Emergency lighting	5
Portable Electrical Equipment	5
Fixed Electrical Equipment	5
Housekeeping	5
Flammable Materials	5
Smoking	5
Cooperation and Coordination	6
Instruction	6
Home Working	6
Responsibilities	7
Service Managers/Registered Managers/BSO's:	7
Estates and Property Service:	7
Health and Safety service:	7
Employees:	8
Applicable Legislation	9



Fire Safety Policy Statement

This policy applies to anyone who works for, or on behalf of, any Action for Children Group Company, including all our employees, officers, consultants, contractors, agency workers, casual workers, and volunteers.

Action for Children will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent or minimise the risk of fires in its premises through fire risk assessment, building design and maintenance, adequately maintained fire detection, and firefighting equipment.

All staff receive fire awareness training as a mandatory requirement and local managers must ensure departmental fire wardens are recruited and trained. Action for Children carries out fire risk assessments for the buildings it is responsible for.

In the event of a fire, the focus for Action for Children staff is to get everyone out of the building, shutting doors behind them and calling the fire service. The evacuation of the premises must take precedence over property and extinguishing the fire.

On discovery of a fire, the alarm will be raised immediately. This should be the first action taken upon discovery of any fire. All employees are required to raise the alarm if a fire is discovered. No permission or authority shall be sought before raising the alarm. Action for Children will support any employees that raise the alarm in good faith.



Fire Safety arrangements

Risk Assessment - A written Fire Risk Assessment is required for all Action for Children premises. Action for Children shall ensure that a suitable Fire Risk Assessment is completed or commissioned by the duty holder of the premises. Where Action for Children is the duty holder, Fire Risk Assessments shall be completed by a competent third party and any subsequent recommendations shall be implemented as soon as reasonably practicable. Where Action for Children is not the duty holder, the organisation shall liaise with the duty holder to ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment and any subsequently recommended actions are completed.

Staff Training - All new members of staff, volunteers and temporary employees shall be provided with induction training on how to raise the alarm and the specific fire evacuation procedures for their area. In addition, Fire Awareness training shall be provided to all staff.

Fire Wardens – Service Managers are responsible for designating and training Fire Wardens. The number of Fire Wardens required shall be determined by service provision, risk, and staffing levels to ensure sufficient coverage for all shifts taking into account sickness and absence.

Fire Evacuation - Suitable safety and evacuation procedures shall be agreed and in place across all Action for Children premises taking in to account individual service provision, building layout, and capacity.

At minimum, evacuation drills shall be conducted twice a year, with Service Managers making arrangements to ensure that every employee attend at least one drill per annum.

It may be reasonable to adjust the evacuation strategy and evacuation drills to ensure service users are not at risk of undue stress and harm unnecessarily. The health and safety team must be consulted before implementing a new or altered emergency evacuation strategy.

Detection and Warning Systems – premises shall be covered by a comprehensive fire alarm and detection system appropriate to the risk and service provision.

The suitability of any detection and warning system shall be determined by fire risk assessment with consideration made to any service user or staff member that may require visual or physical alert systems.

A zone plan shall be located adjacent to any fire alarm panels and repeater panels to assist anyone reading the panel in understanding the location referred to.

Any alarm system shall be tested on a weekly basis. Testing shall be conducted by activating a different red call point ensuring that the alarm is audible throughout the premises.

Alarm and detection systems shall be subject to six monthly inspection and maintenance by a competent engineer.

Testing and maintenance records shall be kept up to date and held locally and with copies also available on the property services management system.

Fire extinguishers - Shall be inspected on weekly basis by the onsite competent person(s) nominated under Article 15(1b) and any discrepancies reported through to the Action for Children FM Estates department. Additionally, all firefighting appliances shall be serviced annually by a competent service engineer and records maintained.

Portable fire extinguishers may be used at the early stages of a fire, or if a fire impedes escape. In the event of a fire, priority shall always be safe evacuation.

Sprinklers – Shall be inspected on an annual basis by a competent engineer. Records of inspection must be retained and kept up to date.

Emergency lighting - Shall be tested monthly plus an annual discharge test by a qualified contractor and records maintained and any defects repaired.

Portable Electrical Equipment - shall be tested no more than 12 months after purchase and at regular intervals by a Competent Person as organised by the Estates Department. Equipment that fails the test or has not been tested shall be removed from service.

Fixed Electrical Equipment – Shall be subject to an electrical installation condition report by a competent electrician. The frequency of the inspection shall be determined by the recommendation of the previous report and shall not exceed five years. Any system with outstanding “C1” actions may not be used until all work has been completed. Any additional actions must be completed as soon as reasonably practicable based on the recommendation of the issuing electrician.

Housekeeping - Emergency escape routes, fire exit doors, stairways and corridors shall be kept free of obstructions at all times. This includes any final exit gates from properties such as garden gates at residential services. If security is an issue further advice should be sought.

Flammable Materials - All flammable materials, rubbish, and waste shall be stored in appropriate secure storage and shall not be allowed to accumulate in such a way as to present a fire risk.

Smoking - Smoking is not permitted in public buildings, enclosed areas, or Action for Children vehicles. The smoking of E-Cigarettes is not permitted by staff or guests inside any buildings. Action for Children shall provide designated smoking areas and cigarette end disposal containers for employee use.

Cooperation and Coordination – Any services operating from premises with multiple occupancy must cooperate and coordinate with residents to ensure that fire evacuation procedures apply to the entire premises. Action for Children employees are required to cooperate with the instructions of the responsible person.

Contractors working on the premises are briefed in essential fire safety matters including location of escape routes, the sound of the alarm and test date/time, and the location of the assembly point. We ensure that contractors working on gas and electrical systems are suitably qualified.

Where contractors need to conduct ‘hot works’ we ensure that fire risks are adequately controlled.

Instruction - This policy forms part of the employee’s conditions of employment. Failure to comply may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Home Working – Workplace fire regulations do not apply to private accommodation. Homeworkers should apply where practicable the principles of fire safety within their homes i.e. keep work area tidy and clear, ensure that wires are not tangled or coiled, never “daisy chain” extension leads, etc.



Responsibilities

The responsibility for fire prevention management sits with the Action for Children's Board of Trustees and the Executive Leadership Team who will provide both the resources and leadership to effectively manage fire safety. All staff within Action for Children have a responsibility to ensure fire safety measures are maintained and adhered to. These responsibilities are as follows:

Service Managers/Registered Managers/BSO's:

- Maintain good housekeeping standards of their work areas.
- Seek support of the Health & Safety team preparing any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for persons with disabilities in their workplaces when determining fire safety.
- Ensure that fire evacuation drills are conducted as required.
- Ensure their teams identify all hazardous chemicals, gases, and other materials used within their department and provide appropriate signage and secure storage for those items.
- Nominate and support fire wardens in their departments/workplaces and ensure they receive training in this role.
- Ensure all team members complete the annual mandatory fire awareness training (via MyLearn).
- Ensure compliance with Fire Safety matters within their areas of responsibility, highlighting as soon as possible to the Estates Department any shortfalls in fire detection, fire containment or fire spread reduction matters.
- Ensure all Fire Safety Checks are carried out in a timely manner in accordance with requirements
- Complete fire risk assessment reviews on an annual basis.

Estates and Property Service:

- Ensure Fire Risk Assessments are carried out by competent personnel for relevant areas across Action for Children's Property Portfolio and manage the completion of any actions that are raised.
- Assist in the annual review of existing assessments especially in the event of any major structural or occupational change.
- Ensure the maintenance and testing of fire alarms, emergency lighting, firefighting equipment and all associated equipment is in line with current guidance/legislation. Ensure records are kept up-to-date and that they are made available, on request, to the enforcement authorities or other interested parties.
- Ensure the regular inspection of all fixed electrical installations by competent persons as well as testing of portable electrical equipment. The intervals of these inspections shall be designated by the use and size of the equipment. An inspection tag shall be affixed to the items identifying the test date and expiry. Any item which fails the test shall be put in a locked quarantine area and removed from site.

Fire Wardens:

- Complete the e-learning module for becoming a Fire Warden.
- Be familiar with the fire evacuation procedure for work areas and ensure that routes and doors are not obstructed. This includes knowing all the fire exit routes and assembly points.
- Have an awareness of any potential fire hazards within work areas, for example a chemical cabinet, kitchens, or stationery/paper storage areas.
- Identify those with disabilities in work areas and consider what assistance they may need in the event of an evacuation.
- Ensure there is a nominated deputy in times of absence.
- Actively participate in fire drills.
- Actively assist in the evacuation of people providing it is safe to do so.

Employees:

- Practice and promote fire prevention.
- Maintain good housekeeping in all areas of the workplace.
- Raise the alarm on discovery of a fire.
- Report any concerns regarding fire safety to their line manager so that any shortfalls can be investigated, and remedial action taken.
- Participate in and follow any training in the action to take in the event of fire.
- Follow instructions in relation to fire safety in the workplace.
- Be vigilant that electrical equipment used in the course of their job is tested and suitable for use.
- Ensure that any hazardous substance is used and stored safely according to guidelines laid out by the manager of department.
- Evacuate themselves to the fire assembly point in a timely manner and, if safe to do so, assist others to do the same.



Applicable Legislation

Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order (RRFSO 2005)

The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006

Fire Safety Act 2021

The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

Revisions


Revision	Date	Summary of Changes	Updated By
V1	04/2022	Document development	G McDonald
V2	06/2023	Annual review	J Doubleday
V2.1	09/2023	Updated responsibilities, updated terminology	J Doubleday



Action for Children

3 The Boulevard
Ascot Road
Watford
WD18 8AG

actionforchildren.org.uk

 [/actionforchildren](https://www.facebook.com/actionforchildren)

 [@actnforchildren](https://twitter.com/actnforchildren)

 [@actnforchildreuk](https://www.instagram.com/actnforchildreuk)