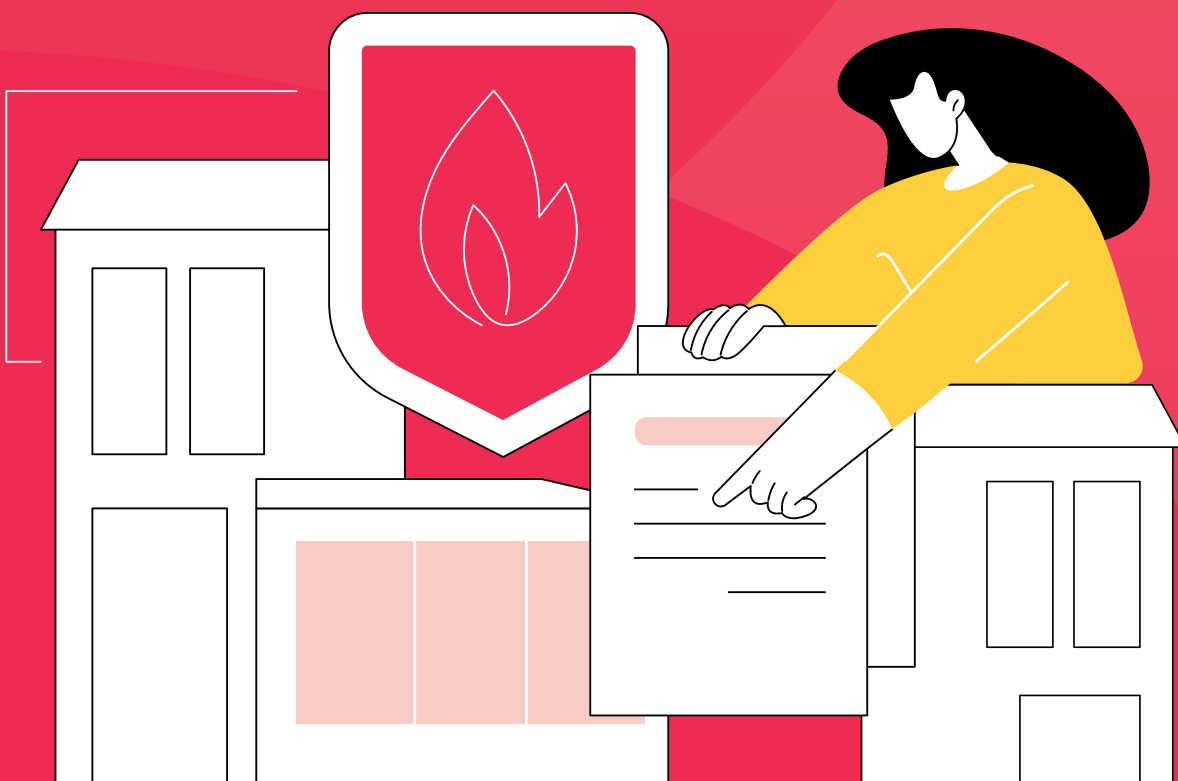




Fire Safety

in Residential Care Settings



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In Case of Fire

1. Investigate quickly if safe
2. Call 999 immediately
3. Activate your evacuation strategy
4. Close fire doors as you go
5. Prepare for fire service handover





Why Fire Safety Matters

Fire risks in residential care settings can escalate rapidly due to:

- Vulnerable residents
- Shared living spaces
- Complex building layouts

UK care home fire data (2022/23):

- 500+ care home fires
- 2 fatalities
- 125 injuries

Fire safety is essential to protect:

- Life
- Reputation
- Regulatory compliance



1 Your Legal Responsibilities

Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Responsible Person must ensure:

Suitable fire risk assessments:

- Regularly reviewed
- Tailored to vulnerable residents

Clear communication of risk:

- Staff understand hazards
- Staff are trained to respond appropriately

Fire precautions in place:

- Alarms, exits, extinguishers, and storage systems
- All maintained and tested

Emergency preparedness:

- Evacuation plans documented and practiced
- Plans adapted to residents and building layout

Staff training:

- Induction training
- Regular refreshers
- Scenario-based training

Useful resources

- Guide to Safe Staffing - [View the guide](#)
- Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor - [View the guide](#)

Accredited risk assessor registers:

- IFSM – Fire Risk Assessors
- BAFE Fire Risk Assessment Register
- IFE Professional Directory

2 Regulatory Compliance & CQC Inspections

CQC inspects fire safety under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, specifically:

- Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment - [click here to read more](#)
- Regulation 15: Premises and equipment - [click here to read more](#)

CQC will look for:

- Compliant fire risk assessments
- Working fire detection and alarm systems
- Clear, practiced evacuation strategies
- Up-to-date PCRA's (PEEPs)
- Safe storage of oxygen and flammable materials
- Maintenance logs (alarms, doors, emergency lighting)
- Evidence of engagement with Fire & Rescue Services



3 Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCRA)

Previously PEEPs, a PCRA is an individualised assessment of a resident's fire risk and ability to:

- Detect fire
- Respond appropriately
- Evacuate safely

This complements the building fire risk assessment and is a key expectation under:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- CQC Regulation 12

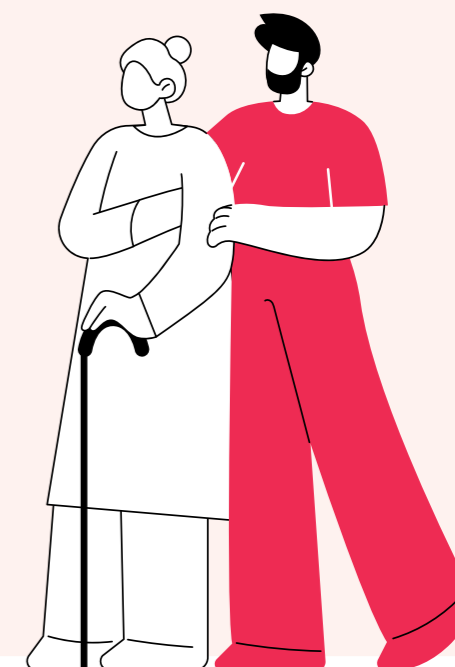
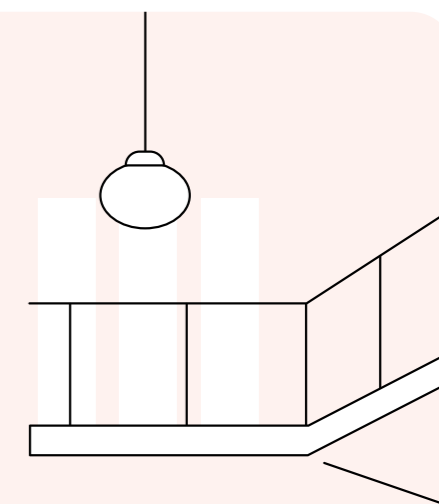
Who needs a PCRA?

Residents who:

- Have mobility impairments or are bed-bound
- Have dementia, confusion, or learning disabilities
- Have hearing or visual impairments
- Use oxygen or electrical medical equipment
- Display risky behaviours (e.g. smoking in bed)
- Cannot evacuate independently

What a PCRA covers:

- Resident characteristics and behaviour
- Fire hazards in their environment
- Risk of fire spread
- Fire detection and alarm response
- Ability to escape
- Current control measures
- Overall fire risk rating (Low / Moderate / High)
- Personal action plan
- Review schedule



3 Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCRA) continued

When to complete or review:

- On admission
- After health or mobility changes
- After fire incidents or near misses
- During routine care plan reviews
- Following room moves or building works

Leadership responsibilities

Managers must ensure:

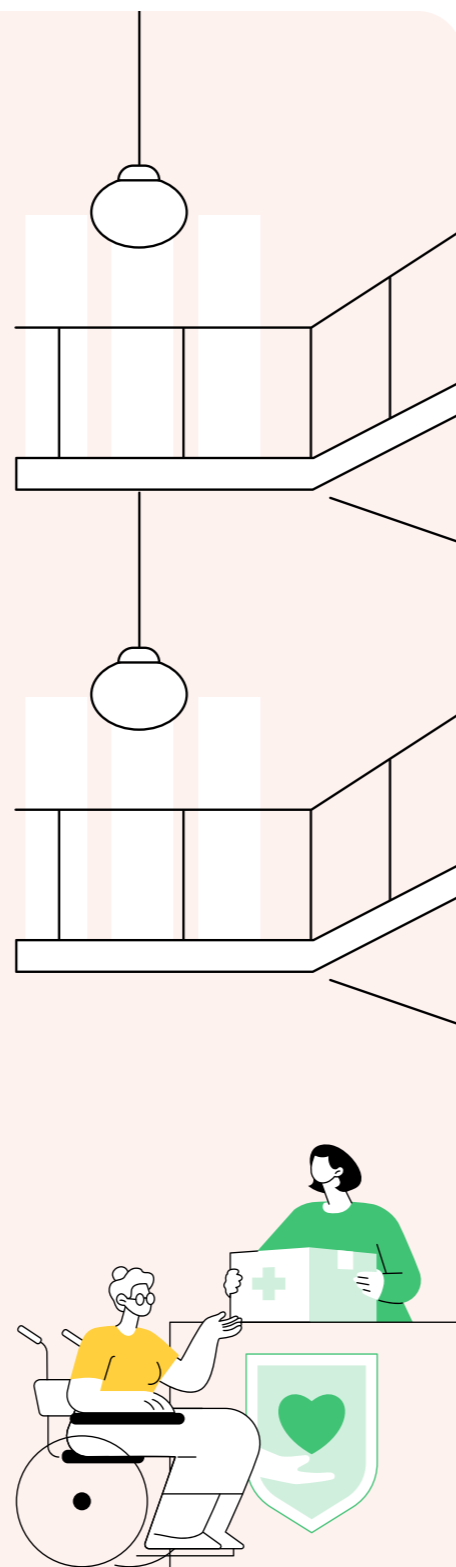
- PCRA's are in place for high-risk residents
- Staff understand individual risks
- PCRA's align with evacuation strategies
- Night and agency staff are informed
- Assessments are practical and reviewed
- Fire Service is informed where relevant

Common pitfalls to avoid:

- Generic, non-personalised templates
- Failure to update after changes
- Conflict with evacuation strategy
- Unclear staff responsibilities

Best practice

- Use structured PCRA templates
- Train all staff on PCRA importance
- Involve residents and families where appropriate
- Align with fire compartments
- Keep printed copies accessible
- Include PCRA's in drills and audits



4 Essential Information for Fire & Rescue Service

The senior person on duty should provide:

Fire details:

- ✓ Exact location
- ✓ How it was discovered
- ✓ Whether it's contained or spreading

Additional risks:

- ✓ Oxygen storage
- ✓ Flammable materials
- ✓ Unchecked areas
- ✓ Utility issues

Occupancy information:

- ✓ Total number of people onsite
- ✓ Residents, staff, visitors
- ✓ Anyone missing or already evacuated

Residents needing assistance:

- ✓ Room numbers of high-risk residents
- ✓ Mobility, cognitive, oxygen needs
- ✓ PCRA information

Building information:

- ✓ Floor plans and fire zones
- ✓ Escape routes and exits
- ✓ Assembly points
- ✓ Lift and utility shut-off locations

Fire systems:

- ✓ Alarm status
- ✓ Detection zones
- ✓ Sprinklers and fire doors

Best practice

Maintain a grab-and-go pack containing:

- ✓ Resident list
- ✓ PCRA summaries
- ✓ Floor plans
- ✓ Emergency contacts



5 Evacuation Strategies

Evacuation plans must reflect:

Fire details:

- Building design
- Staffing levels
- Resident needs
- Fire compartmentation

5.1 Simultaneous evacuation

All occupants evacuate immediately.

Suitable for:

- Small or single-storey buildings
- Mobile residents

Risks:

- Staffing limitations
- Bottlenecks

5.2 Progressive horizontal evacuation (PHE)

Residents move into adjacent fire compartments.

Benefits:

- More time
- Controlled movement
- Reduced distress

Best Practice

- Drill horizontal evacuations
- Clearly label zones

Evacuation Strategies continued

5.3 Delayed evacuation / Stay put

Residents remain temporarily in place.

Only appropriate if:

- Fire is contained
- Compartmentation is intact
- Staff are trained and available

Choosing the right strategy

Strategies must be:

- Risk-assessment led
- Regularly practiced
- Reviewed after changes

i Multiple strategies may be used across the same site.



6 Fire Doors & Compartmentation

Fire doors and compartments:

- Contain smoke and fire
- Protect escape routes
- Buy evacuation time

Fire door best practice

- Certified and correctly installed
- Never wedged open
- Weekly visual checks
- Staff trained to report faults

7 Hot Works & Contractors

Hot works include:

- Welding
- Cutting
- Soldering
- Bitumen roofing

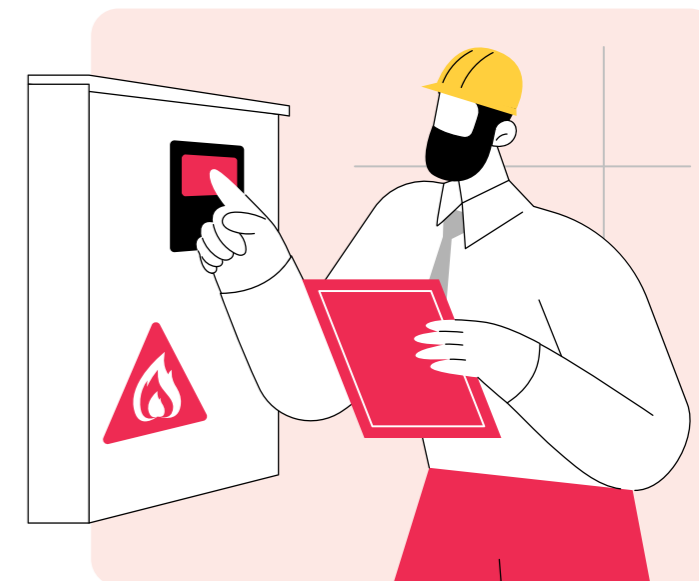
Safety controls

- Hot work permits
- Fire watches
- Contractor inductions
- Protection of fire compartments
- Clear escape routes



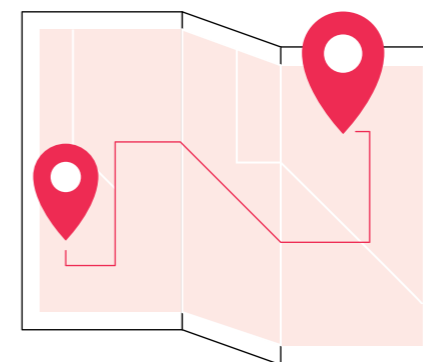
8 Electrical Safety

- Regular inspection of fixed installations
- PAT testing for all portable appliances
- Supervised charging of devices
- No untested visitor equipment
- Immediate reporting of faults



9 Mobility Scooters & Power Chairs

- Never block escape routes
- Store and charge only in fire-assessed areas
- Be aware of lithium battery fire risks



10 Oxygen Usage

Oxygen accelerates fire spread.

Key safety measures:

- No smoking or flames
- Keep 1.5m from heat sources
- Avoid oil-based products
- Secure and ventilate storage
- Staff and resident training
- Equipment checks

 Always inform Fire & Rescue Services if oxygen is used onsite.

11 Safe Use of Emollients

Many emollients contain flammable oils.


Risk control:

- Document use in care plans
- Regular laundering of clothing/bedding
- Fire-retardant bedding where possible
- Smoking controls and supervision
- Clear storage and labelling
- Staff training

12 Support & Resources

Available via the HCPA Member Zone.


- Fire risk assessment templates
- Evacuation plans
- Hot work permits
- PCRA checklists
- Fire door inspection guides

 **Need help?**

Contact the Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

 administration.cfs@hertfordshire.gov.uk

 01707 292 310

 **Keep all training, maintenance, and inspection records up to date for CQC and Fire Service inspections**

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In collaboration with:
The Community Protection Directorate (CPD) Business
Fire Safety Team

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Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

