The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

ANNEX 1

Fire Safety Learning and Improvement Check List (Providers)
January 2012

Item	Learning and Improvement	Comments / Actioned & Signed Off
1.	**People at Risk**	
1.1	The care of people should be considered in a holistic sense which includes protection from the dangers of fire **Note:** Fire safety is an important and fundamental aspect of care.	
1.2	The most vulnerable people should be clearly identified (numbers and dependency levels) and assisted evacuation needs including equipment required should be fully assessed	
1.3	Careful consideration should be given to where the most vulnerable people should be accommodated within in the premises **Note:** The most vulnerable people should be accommodated in the smaller sub-compartments and on the ground floor if possible	
1.4	Arrangements should be in place to identify changes in dependency levels and to update the fire risk assessment and the emergency fire plan including the personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)	
1.5	The effects of co-morbidities (other medical problems) should be considered. **Note:** For elderly patients there is a progressive reduction in lung volume and a decrease in physiological function and reserve. Cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological diseases can also greatly increase the risk of fire to dependent people.	

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2.	**Fire Hazards - Remove or Reduce**	
2.1	**Ignition Sources**	
2.1.1	The electrical systems should be designed, installed, inspected and tested by competent persons in accordance with the IEE Regulations and current standards of good practice. **Note:** Completion certificates and periodic inspection and testing reports should be in place.	
2.1.2	Regular in-house visual inspections should be carried out to the electrical systems and to any items of equipment either fixed or portable that are connected into the system. **Note:** Systematic visual inspections are different from general monitoring. 24 hour call out services should be available	
2.1.3	Specific checks should be carried out in relation to mechanical protection to cables. **Note:** Insulation should be intact and knockout grommets should be in place where appropriate at all switchgear	
2.1.4	Potential sources of arcing (flow of electricity through air) due to poor electrical practice should be identified and removed	
2.1.5	Cables should be properly installed with adequate outer sheath protection to inner cable cores as they pass through knockouts in the distribution boards. **Note:** It is important to look for signs of abrading	
2.1.6	Any extensions, alterations or modifications to electrical installations should be designed, installed, inspected and tested by competent persons in accordance with the IEE Regulations and current standards of good practice. Completion certificates should be provided. **Note:** Additional circuits should not be 'squeezed in' along with existing cable installations	
2.1.7	Electrical installation equipment such as distribution boards, trips etc… should all be made by the same manufacturers to ensure good fit compatibility. **Note:** The covers to the fuse boxes should always be in place	

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2.2	**Fuel loading (*Combustible Materials*)**	
2.2.1	Careful consideration should be given to the storage of combustible materials in stores containing electrical distribution boards. **Note:** The type and extent of electrical distribution boards, location of stores in proximity to sleeping accommodation, means of escape etc… and nature and amount of combustible storage should be taken into account.	
2.2.2	Storage of aerosols should be carefully considered (quantity and suitable location). **Note:** Aerosols should not be stored in damp conditions that would encourage corrosion and leaking causing a flammable environment	
2.2.3	There should be proper separation and limited amounts of the different types of combustible materials. **Note:** Combustible, flammable and highly flammable fuel sources should be identified and categorised.	
2.2.4	Furniture and fabrics should meet the fire retardant ignition sources 0 & 5. **Note:** Inappropriate furniture can significantly increase the toxicity of the atmosphere in a fire	
2.2.5	Flammable and highly flammable liquids such as ethanol-based body wash should be appropriately stored. **Note:** The condition of flammable liquid and aerosol containers should be regularly checked to ensure that any leaks or rusting are quickly identified and addressed.	

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2.3	**Oxygen sources**	
2.3.1	Input ventilation should not be provided in stores unless specifically required.	
2.3.2	Fire dampers of the correct type (fire, fire & smoke and smoke control) with appropriate activation arrangements (intumescent, fusible link or linked to fire detection and alarm system) are installed where appropriate and effectively maintained (inspected and tested at least once each year). **Note:** Inspection and certification by an accredited third party should be considered.	
2.3.3	The impact of extract fans stopping as a result of damage during a fire should be considered. **Note:** The possibility of smoke spreading should be considered	
2.3.4	Adequate fire stopping should be installed around fire dampers. **Note:** A good standard of workmanship at these installations is important	
2.3.5	Inappropriate flexible ducting should not be used for ventilation systems	
3.	**Physical Fire Safety Precautions (*Protect from risk- measure against a recognised standard*)**	
3.1	**Communication (*Detection and alarm, notices and signs*)**	
3.1.1	Accurate, clearly legible easy to understand drawings for fire detection and alarm systems should be provided adjacent to the control panels (zonal and addressable systems) to enable the quick and accurate identification of the location for activated detector/s and manual call points. **Note:** It is important that there is no confusion about the location of an activated fire detector or manual call point. Zoning information on fire alarm panels and fire alarm drawings should be clear, unambiguous and it should not lead to confusion	

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3.1	**Communication Continued (*Detection and alarm, notices and signs*)**	
3.1.2	The terminology used to describe buildings should be consistent with the fire plans eg; ground floor, upper floor, first floor etc…	
3.1.3	Addressable fire alarm systems should be used where possible	
3.1.4	The drawings for fire detection and alarm system should be kept up to date to take account of any changes to the system and/ or the building. **Note:** Staff should be given clear instructions and training in relation to any changes to the system.	
3.1.5	There should be no confusion between the postal address of the premises and the most appropriate entrance to the premises for fire fighting purposes.	
3.1.6	Fire Alarm zones should not overlap fire compartment boundaries	
3.1.7	Appropriate fire notices should be fitted to all fire doors and final exit doors	
3.1.8	There should be a proper procedure for dealing with unwanted alarms to ensure that learning is taken on board and to avoid complacency. **Note:** A detailed log of unwanted alarms and follow up action should be kept on the premises	
3.1.9	A complete up to date log for all activity in relation to the fire alarm system should be kept on the premises	

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3.2	**Means of Escape (*Protected escape routes, easy egress, adequately illuminated at all material times and signed*)**	
3.2.1	All fire doors should be fitted with automatic self closing devices.. **Note:** The benefits of free swing devices linked to the fire detection and alarm system should be considered for bedroom doors and other doors which may need to be held open for operational or other reasons.. There should be a sufficient number of staff on duty and properly trained to ensure that all fire doors are closed in the event of the fire alarm activating	
3.2.2	Sub division of corridors should be appropriate to the number of people and the minimum number of staff on duty. **Note:** Particular attention should be given to night time staffing levels	
3.2.3	Appropriate ironmongery should be fitted to the fire doors (locks, latches, hinges, glazed panels etc…). **Note:** Any changes should be agreed with the Fire Risk Assessor.	
3.2.4	Hold open devices should fail safe in the event of anything interfering with the circuit. **Note:** Reference should be made to BS 7273-4:2007	
3.2.5	All doors including the doors to cupboards (except toilets and washing facilities) opening onto corridors should be ½ hour fire resistant and self closing or kept locked shut	
3.2.6	Staff should be alert to any bedroom doors being held open other than by an acceptable hold-open device	

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3.2	**Means of Escape Continued (*Protected escape routes, easy egress, adequately illuminated at all material times and signed*)**	
3.2.7	All fire doors particularly bedroom doors should be adequately maintained and they should be fitted with smoke seals	
3.2.11	The fire resistance of the ceilings in the corridors, washing facilities and ensuite facilities should be fully considered. **Note:** Fire dampers in these ceilings at ventilation openings should also be considered.	
3.2.12	It is important that corridor fire doors remain closed during a fire situation. **Note: S**elf closers should be designed to hold the doors closed in a fire	
3.3	**Containment (*Restrict the spread of fire and smoke through the premises*)**	
3.3.1	Service perforations to fire walls and ceilings should be fully fire stopped	
3.3.2	Lift shafts should be continued up to the underside of the roof and fully fire and smoke stopped.	
3.3.3	Roof voids and other building cavities should be divided into sub- compartments and effectively fire sealed.	
3.4	**Extinguishment (*E*arly intervention with *first aid fire fighting equipment can be critical*)**	
3.4.1	The benefits of retro-fitted sprinkler/ fire suppression systems even on a partial basis to address specific hazard features, eg; excessive travel distances should be considered as part of the risk assessment process	
3.4.2	There should be good access for F&RS. **Note:** Gates should be open	

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4.	**Operational Fire Safety Precautions (*Time is of the essence*)**	
4.1	**Fire Safety Management (*Policy, Organising, Planning and Implementing, measuring performance, reviewing performance and auditing the whole process*)**	
4.1.1	The fire safety policy should have clear aims and objectives The roles and responsibilities of management and staff should be clearly identified. Management should take leadership, appreciate their roles and responsibilities, demonstrate commitment in the policy statement, champion the process, set goals and foster a culture of good fire safety practice.	
4.1.2	The fire risk assessments should be suitable and sufficient. **Note:** The risk is not just the risk of a fire starting but the risk to people once started.	
4.1.3	The fire risk assessment should be a systematic and organised assessment of the fire safety arrangements using a template (basic framework document which provides clear guidance) focused for the type of premises. **Note:** The fire risk assessment process should allow for partial compliance situations and a narrative with the input from the care professionals on evacuation methods and times in the worst case scenario of a night time fire.	

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4.1	**Fire Safety Management Continued (*Policy, Organising, Planning and Implementing, measuring performance, reviewing performance and auditing the whole process*)**	
4.1.4	Action should be taken to follow up the findings in the fire risk assessment reports. Action plans should be signed off when complete. **Note:** Conflicts and tensions between the desires of one resident to have their door open and the rights of others to have a safe environment should be resolved and closed out. This should include conflicts between the medical and nursing needs of residents and fire safety.	
4.1.5	Clear measurable performance standards which are closely monitored and audited should be established for all aspects of fire safety management **Note:** Themes and trends should be identified and actioned to as part of an embedded process of continuous improvement	
4.1.6	Fire safety duties and responsibilities should be included in employment contracts for management and staff	
4.1.7	There is a need to be alert to informal roles developing where fire safety responsibilities are vested in people without the appropriate competencies.	
4.1.8	Fire Risk Assessors should be competent. **Note:** The benefits of third party certification schemes should be highlighted.	
4.1.9	Routine logged weekly inspections should be carried out by management. **Note:** Training in relation to how these inspections should be carried out should be provided.	
4.1.10	Fire management arrangements including the risk assessment and emergency fire plan should be continuously informed by new standards and events in other similar situations	

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4.1	**Fire Safety Management Continued (Policy, Organising, Planning and Implementing, measuring performance, reviewing performance and auditing the whole process)**	
4.1. 11	All incidents, accidents, near misses and unwanted fire alarm calls should be fully investigated to ensure that the learning is carried forward into future practice. **Note:** Reports should be forwarded to the Regulators	
4.2	**Emergency Fire Plan** ***(Must be written down to enable assessment by regulators and act as an effective control)***	
4.2.1	The emergency fire plan should be written down, approved by a competent person and signed off by the Person-In-Control	
4.2.2	Prompt and effective action by staff is essential in dealing with a fire situation. **Note:** All staff must know what they have to do to do safeguard themselves and others. This will include risk reduction actions, maintenance of fire safety measures and action in the event of a fire.	
4.2.3	There should be only one person in charge of the home at any one time that is responsible for the implementation of the emergency fire plan. **Note:** This person should meet the F&RS on their arrival.	
4.2.4	The use of pre-printed standard procedural notices should be avoided. **Note:** Premises specific procedural notices should be developed	
4.2.5	There should be a clear procedure for what to do when the fire alarm sounds. Staff should also know how the procedures for silencing and resetting fire alarm panel.	
4.2.6	It is essential particularly at night but also during the day that the F&RS are summoned immediately the fire alarm activates. **Note:** This procedure should be documented in the emergency fire plan.	

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4.2	**Emergency Fire Plan Continued** ***(Must be written down to enable assessment by regulators and act as an effective control)***	
4.2.7	Instructions for calling Fire & Rescue Service including the specific information to be given to the F&RS should be clearly detailed on laminated sheets adjacent to the telephones. **Note:** Staff should provide any additional information regarding access to premises during the call to the F&RS	
4.2.8	Serious consideration should be given to the practicalities of how evacuation will be carried out. An accurate assessment should be made of the time required to evacuate the premises and the minimum number of staff required to achieve this safely. Staff confidence, staff fitness, the dependency of people, the type of floor coverings (carpets/vinyl), the method of evacuation to be deployed and other factors such as the equipment to be used (wheelchairs, evacuation chairs, evacuation pads etc…) should be taken into account in the assessment. Definitive benchmarks on the minimum number of staff required for evacuation purposes should then be set by the fire risk assessor. **Note:** This will be unique to each premise and determined by risk assessment.	
4.2.9	The need for additional staff at night and on call back up staff at short notice should be considered.	
4.2. 10	There should be clear instructions to staff who check an activation area if no fire is identified in the advised location	
4.2. 11	Information to be provided by the person in charge to the fire and rescue on their arrival must be complete or clearly identified as only partially complete. **Note:** This should include information on residents; doors closed or not closed, everyone accounted for or not etc….	

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4.2	**Emergency Fire Plan Continued** ***(Must to written down to enable assessment by regulators and act as an effective control)***	
4.2.12	There should be a definitive search pattern agreed between staff and the fire safety adviser/fire risk assessor. The evacuation responsibilities between care staff and F&RS should also be clearly understood. **Note:** All residents should be accounted for or treated as unaccounted for until the position is otherwise established. Care staff are fully responsible until F&RS arrive then F&RS Commander will take charge assisted by care staff as appropriate	
4.3	**Fire Safety Training** **(*Information, instruction and practical training*)**	
4.3.1	All staff should have an understanding of the importance of dealing with fires as quickly as possible. **Note:** If a fire develops beyond the point where first aid fire fighting is not possible the speed of development might well be such as to make evacuation extremely challenging if not impossible	
4.3.2	Training should be adequate and appropriate and take into account the uniqueness of each situation and the risk assessment outcomes	
4.3.3	Staff questionnaires should used to help confirm the effectiveness of training. **Note:** These should be checked and incorrect answers followed up.	

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4.3	**Fire Safety Training Continued (*Information, instruction and practical training*)**	
4.3.5	Training programmes should be specific to the premises and should specify the minimum frequency (no less than twice each year), the duration and the syllabus (content). **Note:** All programmes should include information on the following; - How fire behaves in enclosed spaces. The speed of development from the point of ignition to the point of flashover and the limited time available for effective action. - How to use fire fighting equipment - The specific roles and responsibilities of management and staff - The evacuation procedure with particular attention being given to the night time situation, - The emergency plan and each person's role in same. - An awareness of the types of toxic chemicals and gases produced by a fire including the dangers and speed of affect for these toxic gases in a fire. Training should be delivered by competent persons and the training outcomes should be validated and recorded	
4.3.6	Training should be provided at the start of employment as part of induction and thereafter on a regular basis at least twice each year. **Note:** It should not be assumed that experienced staff have the necessary expertise. All staff must attend the training and attendance should be monitored using a matrix	
4.4	**Practice Fire Drills (*Everyone should know almost instinctively what to do in a fire situation*)**	
4.4.1	Consideration should be given to introducing regular fire drills. **Note:** All day and night staff should attend. The frequency of fire drills should be agreed with the fire safety adviser for the home.	
4.4.2	The training and evacuation procedure should be validated by the fire drills. **Note:** Attendance should be monitored with the use of a staff fire drill matrix	

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4.4	**Practice Fire Drills Continued (E*veryone should know almost instinctively what to do in a fire situation*)**	
4.4.3	The fire drills should be supervised to ensure that practice is in line with policy, procedures and video presentations. **Note:** The learning from the fire drills should inform any amendments to policy, procedure and future practice	
4.5	**Maintenance of Fire Safety Equipment**	
	Comprehensive maintenances systems should be in place supported with documentation on the premises **Note:** An adequate system of maintenance includes records	
5.	**Miscellaneous**	
5.1	Everybody is responsible for fire safety and they should be alert to fire hazards	
5.2	Procurement of premises including the management of the construction process should be carried out by professionals. **Note:** The importance and benefits of seeking professional help and advice (design, construction/installation, commissioning, inspection &testing, supervision and third party certification for engineering services and fire and smoke integrity of compartments including fire dampers) should be highlighted. Detailed drawings, specifications and contracts for specialist sub contractors should be in place along with good supervision and regular minuted site meetings	
5.3	The benefits of accreditation schemes for the fire risk assessments, fire alarm installations, fire and smoke dampers installations and fire and smoke integrity of the building should be fully considered	

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5.	**Miscellaneous Continued**	
5.4	Certificates should be available for new and existing buildings. The Architect's letter on completion should confirm the basis of engagement and the steps taken to ascertain compliance with the fire safety standards with specific reference to the Building Regulations.	
5.5	Detailed information on the fire safety measures in a building should be provided to the duty holder on completion of the building process	
5.6	The staff member in charge at the time of an incident should have effective engagement with the F&RS commanding officer. **Note:** A predetermined list of information required by the commanding officer, to include for example; the nature of incident, completion of roll a call, position re evacuation, dependency levels of those involved, safe zones, specific hazards, bedroom doors open or closed should be considered	
5.7	The roles for registered persons and duty holders under different legislation particularly the managers and persons-in-control and persons in charge should be clearly defined. **Note:** Training and supervision to match these roles should be provided.	
5.8	Registered persons and duty holders should have clearly stated policies in relation to key fire safety issues such as fire doors **Note:** These should be communicated to all concerned	
5.9	The learning from new developments should be carried forward into all situations	
5.10	Registered persons, and duty holders should follow up all fire safety issues to a satisfactory conclusion	

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5.	**Miscellaneous Continued**	
5.11	Issues identified on provider self assessments should be picked up and followed through to a satisfactory conclusion	
5.12	It is important to specify the fire safety duties for each person, assess their competence to fulfil these duties, provide appropriate training, monitor their performance and take corrective action where required	
5.13	There should be a clear plan of action in place for roof void alarm activations	
5.14	The impact of organisational change on fire safety should be fully considered	