

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

Disabled people, like everyone else, should always have safe means of escape available in the event of fire. Under the Equality Act, The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) has a duty to make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure safe emergency egress provision for disabled people.

The term Disabled people also includes such persons who may be non-ambulant or temporarily disabled through injury.

The focus on providing full access, thereby enabling disabled people to fully use a building, needs to be matched with arrangements for their safe egress in the event of fire or other emergency.

The safe egress and evacuation of disabled people requires careful consideration and attention.

UWS aims to ensure that suitable safe systems are devised and put in place to enable all building users (Staff, Students and Visitors) to evacuate safely in the event of fire or other emergency.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)**

The aim of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is to provide people who may have a physical, visual, hearing or cognitive impairment with the necessary information in order to manage their escape safely, and to further provide Schools and Departments with relevant information thereby ensuring that the correct level of assistance is available.

The PEEP explains the method of evacuation to be used by a disabled person in each area of a building.

It should not be assumed that because a person has a disability that they will need or ask for a PEEP. Many individuals may not be aware that a PEEP is required. Of those who do know about the PEEP, some will be confident that they can get out of the building unaided.

People with “hidden impairments” such as a heart condition or epilepsy may also require assistance in an emergency situation.

The rules of courtesy and respect apply to both disabled and non-disabled people alike.

Disabled people should not be treated as a “health and safety” problem to be resolved and individual needs and preferences will vary widely between individuals;

Disabled people should be meaningfully involved at all stages in the development and review of their PEEP;

When writing a PEEP to be implemented in the event of an evacuation, the disabled person ask what assistance they might need, don't simply assume as the individual best understands the nature and effects of his or her impairment.

People who may require a PEEP or a temporary PEEP include those with

- Cognitive impairments
  - Sight problems
  - Limited mobility
  - Impaired hearing
  - A broken leg
  - Asthma
  - Late-stage pregnancies.
- (This list is not exhaustive)

### **Referral**

Where it is considered that a person may require a PEEP, they will be referred to the University Fire Officer as detailed below.

**Staff members** who have a disability that makes it difficult for them to evacuate without assistance will be referred to the University Fire Officer by People and Organisational Development, (P&OD), Deans, Head of School / Department or Programme Leaders.

**Students**, who have a disability that makes it difficult for them to evacuate without assistance, and who have registered with Disability Services, will be referred to the University Fire Officer by Disability Support Advisors.

**Self-Referral:** Staff or students may also refer themselves directly to the University Fire Safety Officer

On receiving a referral, the University Fire Officer will arrange to meet with the student or staff member as soon as reasonably practicable, and where required, agree a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan that is specific to them and the campus that they attend.

### **Individuals who have not declared a disability.**

There is no legal requirement for a person to disclose information about a disability to the University. If a disability is apparent, but has not been formally disclosed, the line manager (for staff), School (for students) or event organiser should discuss with the individual their evacuation needs and follow the appropriate PEEP process as outlined

### **Individuals who have disclosed a disability but are not engaging with PEEP process.**

The University has a responsibility to provide a PEEP to individuals using University buildings, who have disclosed a relevant disability, to ensure they are aware of the evacuation procedures in event of a fire alarm. If an individual has disclosed a disability every effort should be made by their School/department, Disability Support Advisor, to encourage them to engage with the PEEP process. In instances where the individual refuses a PEEP, campus specific Assisted Evacuation Procedure leaflets are available in the General Documents section of the Resilience & Safety page on the UWS Staff Website.

## **Temporary PEEPs**

Staff members and Students who require a PEEP due to a temporary injury / disability, will be referred to the University Fire Officer by their Dean, Head of School / Department or Programme Leader.

On receiving a referral, the University Fire Officer will arrange to meet with the student or staff member as soon as reasonably practicable, and where required, agree a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan that is specific to them and the campus that they attend.

## **Guests & visitors to the University**

When Schools or Departments invite guests or visitors to the University, relevant information should be requested from all guests/visitors, in advance of the date of visit, regarding any disability or impairment which is likely to impact on their ability to evacuate safely.

The host can provide their guests with an Assisted Evacuation Procedure leaflet detailing the procedure to follow should the fire alarm actuate. These leaflets are campus specific and form an appendix to this procedure.

## **Procedure to be adopted by Disabled Person**

This procedure is incorporated into the campus specific Assisted Evacuation Procedure leaflets, which are available in the General Documents section of the Resilience & Safety page on the UWS Staff Website.

The Fire Safety Officer will explain the campus specific procedure to individual staff members and students, when the Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedure is agreed.

## **Procedure to be adopted by Response Teams**

This procedure is incorporated into the campus specific Assisted Evacuation Procedure leaflets which are available in the General Documents section of the Resilience & Safety page on the UWS Staff Website.

Staff involved in response team duties will be provided training in fire safety, management of equipment (evacuation chairs and fire lifts, as appropriate) and manual handling techniques involved human loads.

Suitable refresher training should be provided on an annual basis.

## **Response Teams**

Personal assistance to evacuate a building will be provided, if required, by:

Paisley	Facilities Management Operatives
Lanarkshire	Facilities Management Operatives
Ayr	Facilities Management Operatives
Dumfries	Facilities Management Operatives
London	Facilities Management Operatives
	Security Staff

## **Evacuation Chairs (Evac-Chairs)**

Evac-Chairs are provided in all buildings where access to upper floors is provided by means of passenger lifts. They are designed to help people with impaired mobility move up or down a staircase in an emergency.

The use of the Evacuation Chair may involve manual handling where the disabled person cannot transfer to the Evac chair without assistance.

Transfer from a wheelchair to an Evac chair shall only be carried out where it has been agreed with the individual and recorded within their PEEP

## **Evac Chair Location**

Evac Chairs are located within the dedicated refuge spaces, within the building's protected stair enclosures.

## **Disabled Refuge / Temporary Waiting Space.**

A disabled refuge / temporary waiting space is a relatively safe temporary waiting area, located within a building to aid the evacuation of all people as safely as possible

These areas are normally located within the building's protected stair enclosures, and are afforded protection from a potential fire by suitable fire-resisting construction.

## **Emergency Voice Communications**

All disabled refuge spaces are provided with Emergency Voice Communications systems that allow two-way "Hands Free" communication between the person requiring assistance, and the person (or persons) operating the 'control panel'. They are specifically designed for use in an emergency when the evacuation of a building is required – such as during a fire.

## **Hearing Impaired**

Hearing impaired and deaf people need to know that there is an evacuation in progress. Where only an audible fire alarm system is present, they may not be able to hear the alarm

## **Flashing Beacons**

Flashing beacons have been installed throughout UWS premises, including toilet areas. These will ensure that any persons with a hearing impairment are given a visual warning whenever a fire evacuation is in progress.

## **Scope Paging System**

A Scope Paging system is installed across UWS premises. On activation of the fire alarm within buildings, the system sends an alert signal to compatible radio-pagers. Staff and students with a hearing impairment can be issued with a pager where requested.

## General Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation procedures should be based on the following principles:-

Upon hearing the fire alarm, the disabled person shall proceed to the nearest refuge point / temporary waiting space and remain there as planned until required to evacuate.

Using the emergency communications provided, they should make their presence known to staff at the security desk and request assistance.

Arrangements will then be made for the response team to attend their location.

They should remain at their location and await the arrival of the response team.

At all times, information can be provided to the refuge point via the communications provided, to give reassurance to the persons awaiting assistance.

Upon arrival, the response team will assist as necessary. They will not automatically place a disabled person into an evac chair.

Assisted evacuation of disabled persons using an Evacuation Chair will be undertaken only when absolutely necessary and only by persons trained in the safe use of the Evac chair.

In the majority of cases, the fire alarm will have been activated accidentally, and there may be no immediate requirement for disabled persons to leave the relative safety of the refuge area.

**Supplementary leaflets specific to all UWS campuses are available in the General Documents section of [the Resilience & Safety page on the UWS Staff Website](#).**

Should you require any further information or advice on this procedure please contact

[ResilienceandSafety@uws.ac.uk](mailto:ResilienceandSafety@uws.ac.uk)

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