

## Code of Practice for Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

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## 1. Overview

The University is required by law to have procedures in place for evacuating building users in the event of a fire. This includes having specific arrangements for persons with disabilities (whether permanent or temporary). These policies and procedures should not rely upon the help of the fire service to make them work. An individual's particular evacuation needs are documented on a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP).

Those requiring a PEEP normally have a disability that falls within one of the following categories

- a) Vision
- b) Hearing
- c) Mobility
- d) Neurological

It should be noted that disabilities can range from mild (where a PEEP may not be needed) to severe. Individuals with impaired hearing, for example, may be able to hear a fire alarm or may be profoundly deaf.

People who have conditions that intermittently affect their ability to escape (for example, epilepsy) would not normally be provided with a PEEP. This is because the likelihood of that individual being affected at the precise time a fire occurs is extremely small.

The University has a number of ways to ensure individuals with disabilities can evacuate safely – key features include:

- Refuges
- Evacuation chairs
- Automatic door operators
- Visual alarm devices (beacons)
- Vibrating alarm devices (for eg, vibrating pillow alarms)
- Wheelchair ramps
- Trained staff

Though different legislation requires the creation of slightly different forms of PEEP, this policy harmonises the University's approach and consequently in some instances adopts a higher standard than is deemed necessary to comply with minimum legislative requirements.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the arrangements and procedures necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities can safely evacuate University buildings (on their own or with appropriate assistance).

## 3. Scope

The provisions within this document apply to:

- a) All buildings for which the University is the responsible person.<sup>1</sup>
- b) Residential buildings where the University is not the responsible person but is closely involved in the management of those buildings.<sup>2</sup>
- c) All staff and students.
- d) Visitors that frequently attend the University (typically, more than 3 times per annum)

The University has no responsibility for accommodation not referred to above and this policy does not consequently apply to any such accommodation.

## 4. Definitions

**Evacuation chair:** An evacuation chair is a specially designed device that enables a seated occupant to be safely brought downstairs, or, in some cases, upstairs.

**Evacuation statement:** An evacuation statement, which is an integral part of a PEEP, describes what an individual is required to do in the event of a fire in order to evacuate safely or reach a place of relative safety (i.e. a refuge).

**Person centred fire risk assessment (PCFRA):** A PCFRA, a document that forms part of a residential PEEP, is a systematic evaluation of the specific fire risks that a residential student may individually be exposed to.

**Personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP):** A PEEP describes the steps that need to be taken to ensure that an individual, who might not be able to respond to a fire alarm as others would, can safely evacuate, or be evacuated from a building.

**Refuge:** A refuge is an area in a building, generally a stair lobby or landing, that is protected from fire and smoke for a minimum of 30 minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> The University has a single approach to residential buildings which encompasses the requirements of the 'Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025'.

<sup>2</sup> The buildings being referred to here are the accommodation blocks on the Medway Campus and those that form 'Phase 2' at Avery Hill.

## **Relevant disability**

A disability that may affect an individual's ability to respond to a fire alarm promptly or unaided. Disabilities that do not affect an individual's ability to respond are not naturally relevant to this Code of Practice.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1. Governing Body**

The Governing Body is the 'responsible person' for the University of Greenwich and ultimately responsible for compliance with fire safety legislation.

### **5.2. Vice Chancellor**

The Vice Chancellor acts on behalf of the Governing Body to ensure that statutory fire safety obligations are met across the University through the provision of adequate arrangements, management and resources.

### **5.3. Pro Vice Chancellors, Faculty Operating Officers, Directors of Professional Services and Heads of Units:**

Pro Vice Chancellors, Faculty Operating Officers, Directors of Professional Services and Heads of Units should ensure that there are systems in place to identify, as necessary, staff, students and visitors under the control of their faculty, unit, etc. who have relevant disabilities, and to receive and distribute as necessary PEEP information on those same individuals.

Where an individual has been advised to complete a PEEP, evidence of this should be kept and the HSS notified.

### **5.4. Faculty teaching staff**

Where made aware of a student with a PEEP, faculty teaching staff should familiarise themselves, as far as is necessary, with the student's needs and assist or direct the student as necessary in the event of a fire alarm.

### **5.5. Health and Safety Section and University Fire Safety Officer**

The Health and Safety Section (HSS) and University Fire Safety Officer must ensure that:

An accurate list of persons requiring PEEPS is maintained based on information provided by others.

Suitable and sufficient PEEPs are devised where necessary.

PEEP information is shared as necessary with those who need to access it.

Policies and procedures in respect of the safe evacuation of persons with relevant disabilities are devised and reviewed as required.

Buildings are assessed and reviewed in respect of their suitability for persons with relevant disabilities.

### **5.6. The Director of Estates**

The Director of Estates must ensure that:

An adequate number of security staff are trained to deal with the evacuation of residential students with PEEPs.

University buildings are provided with the necessary design features and equipment to enable them to be safely used and exited by persons with disabilities.

Portable technical equipment that is required as part of a residential PEEP is kept, maintained and issued as required.

### **5.7. The Associate Director of Student Academic Services**

The Associate Director of Student Academic Services must ensure that:

Effective systems and procedures are in place to that facilitate the reliable identification of students that may require PEEPs.

Relevant students are directed as necessary in respect of the procedure to be followed in order for a PEEP to be created and the HSS should be informed.

Students with PEEPs are housed in suitable rooms.

The HSS/Fire Safety Officer area advised of the locations of students with PEEPs and updated when a student is moved to another room or leaves University accommodation.

Auditable records are kept in respect of a) the identification of students that may require PEEPs and b) any efforts made to encourage those students to engage with the PEEP process.

### **5.8. Managers**

Line managers of any individual who may require a PEEP must ensure that they are directed as necessary in respect of the procedure to be followed in order for a PEEP to be created.

Where an individual has been advised to complete a PEEP, evidence of this should be kept and the HSS notified.

### **5.9. All staff**

All staff are expected to be conscious of needs of persons with disabilities (whether they are a student, member of staff or visitor) and should highlight to the HSS/Fire Safety Officer, any instances where an individual that may require a PEEP does not have one.

Any member of staff that has a condition (permanent or temporary) that may affect their ability to respond properly in the event of a fire alarm must highlight this to their line manager.

### **5.10. Fire wardens**

Fire wardens need not generally become involved in the evacuation of individuals with PEEPs but should be alert to their potential presence and offer support to anyone who appears to not be able to evacuate promptly or without assistance. Here it should be noted that some visitors may not have a PEEP and will require guidance from University staff.

### **5.11. Students**

Students are expected to highlight to University staff any condition (permanent or temporary) that may affect their ability to respond properly in the event of a fire alarm.

### **5.12. Local accommodation managers**

Local accommodation managers are required to ensure that:

PEEP Information provided to them is shared as necessary with local accommodation staff, security and, where necessary, the fire service.

Students are provided with any equipment they may personally and students receiving such equipment are instructed on its use.

## **6. Procedure**

### **6.1. Identification of relevant persons**

#### **Students**

Students that require PEEPs will generally be identified when they join the University as part of their induction process. Where a relevant disability is not identified at the induction stage or a student develops one after starting their studies, faculty staff will be required to identify the student concerned.

#### **Employees**

The process for identifying employees that require a PEEP is similar to that which applies to students in that the primary method should be identification at induction. Where this does not happen line managers are expected to identify individuals.

#### **Visitors**

Visitors would not normally require a formal recorded PEEP. However, those responsible for the visitor or visitors should take steps to identify anyone who may need assistance and put in place any measures that may be necessary to ensure their safety in the event of a fire.

### **6.2. Administration**

#### **Notification**

Where an individual is identified as potentially requiring a PEEP, they should be asked to complete and submit a PEEP form within Evotix. A record of this request should be kept as evidence that the individual has been made aware of what they should do.

The HSS should be made aware of all instances where a person has been advised to complete a PEEP form and that evidence of this has been retained (or is provided along with the notification).

#### **PEEP creation**

Submitted Evotix forms will be reviewed and, assuming a PEEP is necessary and consented to, one will be created within the system. Relevant information within the plan will be shared with the individual and other persons who may require that information in order for the University to comply with relevant legislation and this code of practice.

Each PEEP will contain within it an evacuation statement that describes what an individual must do in the event of a fire alarm. For residential students, a person-centred

fire risk assessment (PCFRA) is also necessary. A PCFRA entails an assessment of an individual's personal circumstances (and associated risks) within a residential setting and is a precursor to the creation of a suitable evacuation statement and the overall PEEP.

## **Review**

PEEPS and PCFRAs will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner where that is deemed appropriate, for example, where an individual's condition or circumstances are likely to alter significantly over a period of months, a monthly or quarterly review might be considered.

PEEP records should be reviewed annually and any information that is no longer required should be archived or deleted in line with the data retention policy of the HSS/University.

### **6.3. Action in the event of a fire alarm**

In the event of a fire alarm, individuals with PEEPs will generally either make their way out of the building according to the guidance that they have been provided with or go (or be directed to) a refuge, and from their contact security. Security should subsequently record details of the individual and provide advice and reassurance as required.<sup>3</sup> Further to this, it should rarely be necessary to evacuate an individual from a refuge as it is a place of relative safety within a building.

If it does become necessary to evacuate an individual from a refuge (for example, where there is a significant fire within a building that may ultimately affect the safety of any individual within that building), the responsibility for evacuating the individual lies with security staff. Evacuation of individuals who cannot manage steps or stairs will normally be carried out using an evacuation chair or evacuation lift.

### **6.4. Fire service**

The fire service should not be relied upon to evacuate individuals from University buildings. However, should they attend an incident they should be immediately informed of any individual that has not left the building.

In respect of residential students that have PEEPs, subject to explicit consent from those residents, the University will share the basic information listed below with the fire service.

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<sup>3</sup> A refuge call aide-memoire can be found at Appendix 1.

- The resident's flat number
- The resident's floor number
- Basic information regarding the degree of assistance that the resident may require to evacuate the building
- Whether the resident has an emergency evacuation statement

The information above will be stored securely in the relevant premises information box.

## 7. Further Guidance

### 7.1. Related Legislation:

In addition to the general duties contained in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, other legislation that has a significant bearing on this policy include:

- The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Equality Act 2010

### 7.2. Related University documents:

University of Greenwich fire emergency provisions for persons with disabilities V1.0 June 2024.

### 7.3. Other related guidance:

- HM Government publication 'Means of Escape for Disabled People (2007)'

## 8. Document History

This document will be reviewed at least annually.

Details of previous reviews are as follows:

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Summary of Review</b>
26/03/2026	Enda Rooney	First revision (V.26.1)

## Appendix 1 - Refuge call aide-memoire

1. Respond to call promptly
2. Advise caller whether immediate evacuation is necessary or not
3. Evacuation should be initiated where there is a fire that is threatening or may threaten the refuge
4. If the evacuation is necessary, ensure sufficient resources are deployed immediately
5. As soon as possible, arrange for a security guard or fire warded to attend the refuge, to reassure individual and provide hearing protection if required
6. Refuges without fixed communication should be physically checked by security or fire wardens
7. Keep called updated with relevant information, such as when an alarm is declared over

Refuge call details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Refuge Location	Caller Details	Comments (e.g contact made, actions taken)