

Charity Number: 1156427

Somerford ARC Community Centre

Fire Safety Policy

Created: February 2023



General Statement of Policy

Somerford ARC Community Centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, volunteers, hirers, visitors, and contractors. As part of this commitment, we will take all reasonably practicable steps to protect all relevant persons from the risk of fire and ensure full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

This is a continuous working document.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of this policy is to minimise the risk of fire and prevent, as far as reasonably practicable, any outbreak of fire at Somerford ARC Community Centre.
- 1.2. The centre will maintain suitable and sufficient fire-risk assessments, ensure that fire precautions are properly implemented and maintained, and promote fire safety awareness and training for everyone who works within the premises.

The full fire risk assessment, including all findings and identified risks, will be formally recorded, kept up to date, and made available to the enforcing authority upon request in accordance with Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended)

- 1.3. In the event that a fire cannot be prevented, our Fire Safety Protection and Evacuation Procedures ensure that fire is detected, contained, and extinguished as quickly as possible, while prioritising the safety of all trustees, employees, volunteers, hirers, service users and members of the public.
- 1.4. SNG Housing, as the Landlord, will ensure that adequate fire-detection, alarm, and firefighting equipment are provided, maintained, and regularly tested in accordance with current legislation and relevant British Standards (e.g., BS 5839 for fire alarm systems and BS 5306 for extinguishers).
- 1.5. All persons using or managing the premises will be made aware of fire safety arrangements through training, instruction, and the display of clear signage.

2. Legislation

- 2.1. Somerford ARC Community Centre takes fire safety extremely seriously and recognises its duty to protect all relevant persons from harm, as far as is reasonably practicable. The organisation will endeavour to control associated risks and comply with legislation relating to fire safety:
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022).
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
 - Equality Act 2010.
 - Building Safety Act 2022.

- 2.2. Employees and volunteers of Somerford ARC Community Centre also have duties under the health and safety at work etc Act 1974, The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and this policy.
- 2.3. A copy of responsibilities under this policy and associated documentation and procedures is issued:
 - To all new members of staff and volunteers during their induction
 - To all new hirers prior to their first initial booking
 - Other relevant persons where applicable

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Responsible person**, as defined in The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:
 - The employer, if the workplace is, to any extent, under their control.
 - The person who has control of the premises in connection with the carrying on of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not)
 - The owner where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on a trade, business, or other undertaking.
- 3.2. **Relevant persons**, any person who is or may be lawfully on the premises and any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who may be at risk from a fire. This includes employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors, hirers, and members of the public.
- 3.3. **Competent persons**, any persons appointed by the responsible person to assist in undertaking safety arrangements, including preventive and protective measures.

Competent persons must have appropriate training, experience, or knowledge as required under article 18 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. Trustees, have overall responsibility for fire safety within the premises, in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Their main duties include:
 - Overall legal responsibility and accountability for fire safety.
 - Taking general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of all relevant persons.
 - Appointing competent persons to carry out fire risk assessments.
 - Ensuring the principles of fire prevention are applied when implementing any preventive or protective measures to eliminate, reduce or control fire risks.
 - Planning, organising, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing fire safety arrangements proportionate to the size and activities of the centre.
 - Ensuring all employees and volunteers receive appropriate fire safety training.
 - Appointing trained fire wardens (at least one per 20 persons in medium risk areas, with additional wardens for higher-risk occupants).
 - Ensuring all refurbishment or building works comply with current legislation, British Standards and codes of practice.

4.2. SNG Housing the proprietor has overall responsibility for fire safety within the premises. Their main duty under the legislation:

- Provision of fire extinguishers (1 per 200m²) with a combined 26A rating, compliant with BS EN 3-7
- Regular inspections for damage, misuse, corrosion, leakage, missing pins, pressure gauge issues and service life.
- Installation of fire alarm systems in accordance with BS 5839-1
- Ensuring call points are accessible (≤45m travel distance) and installed at 1.4m for accessibility.
- Weekly alarm testing (rotating call points)
- Six monthly full alarm inspections
- Ensuring fire doors have 30 minute fire resistance (FD30)
- Monthly specialist fire door maintenance
- Emergency lighting functional tests monthly (BS EN 50172/ BS 5266-8) and annual full duration of battery life tests.

The building shall remain unoccupied for 24 hours following the full discharge test.

4.3. Fire warden, appointed as competent persons under articles 13, 15, and 18 of the Fire Safety Order. Duties include:

- Monitoring fire safety and following good practices
- Assisting with fire risk assessments
- Organising inspections and servicing of fire safety equipment
- Monitoring escape routes for obstructions, defects, signage and operational status
- Supporting emergency planning and implementing Personal Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)
- Conducting fire safety toolbox talks and fire drills
- Controlling safe evacuations and sweeping the building within 2-3 minutes, and have all persons evacuated and in a route of safety within 1 minute.
- Liaising with the fire rescue service in the event of a fire
- Maintaining accurate records of inspections, drills and equipment maintenance.
- Ensure all employees and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities within an evacuation.

4.4. Management

- Ensuring everyday compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005;
- Reviewing and updating the Fire Safety Policy regularly;
- Issuing policy documents and handbooks to employees, volunteers, and hirers;
- Ensuring annual fire drills are conducted by Lunch Club (September) and Breakfast Hub (March)
- Creating emergency procedures and escape plans based on fire-risk assessments;
- Reporting unresolved issues to Trustees;
- Issuing evacuation procedures to staff, volunteers, and hirers (**Appendix 1**).
- Creating toolbox talks for group coordinators to support refresher training for volunteers.

4.5. All Staff and Volunteers

- Understand their role within this Fire Safety Policy.
- Ensure fire safety roles designated are clearly identified.
- Ensure fire exits, corridors and escape routes are clear from obstruction.
- In the event of a fire ensure a rapid notification and controlled evacuation.
- Responsible for their own acts and the effects these may have on the safety of themselves and others.
- Report any discrepancies to the appointed fire safety officer.
- Individuals are legally required to co-operate and work safely.
- Ensure plug sockets are not overloaded and extension leads are used minimally.
- Combustible materials must **not** be stored against electrical equipment or heaters, even if they are switched off.

Visitors and hirers

- Responsible for their own acts and effects these may have on the safety of themselves and others.
- Ensure plug sockets are not overloaded and extension cables are used minimally.
- Combustible materials must **not** be stored against electrical equipment or heaters, even if they are switched off.
- To comply with the Fire Safety Policy of Somerford ARC Community Centre.
- To ensure no users of their groups park vehicles outside allotted spaces which can obstruct access to emergency services.
- Fire exit and escape signs must remain visible at all times and not be obstructed by banners or decorations.

5. Fire Equipment

- 5.1. Employees, volunteers, and regular hirers will be instructed in the locations and use of the fire extinguishing equipment.
- 5.2. All firefighting equipment will be given regular maintenance checks by a certified person.
- 5.3. Visual checks to be carried out once weekly by our appointed Fire Warden.
- 5.4. All hirers, staff, and volunteers receive an evacuation plan mapping out the locations of all firefighting equipment, routes and alarms are placed (**see appendix 2**).
- 5.5. All fire safety equipment maintenance records will be retained for a minimum of five years.

6. Means of Escape

- 6.1. Fire doors to be checked once weekly and findings recorded appropriately.
- 6.2. A daily check will be undertaken to ensure corridors/ escape routes are maintained, accessible and clear of obstruction.
- 6.3. Hazardous materials will be identified and stored safely.
- 6.4. Fire doors to remain closed when not in use and not propped open. They must **never** be locked.
- 6.5. All fire doors have a resistance time of 30 minutes (FD30).

- 6.6. The kitchen door is fitted with appropriate self-closing noise reactive device.
- 6.7. Escape routes should be a minimum of 750mm and 900mm for wheelchairs and **must** be clearly mapped out when preparing for any event.

7. Fire Signs

- 7.1. All signs above doors are placed at a height of 2 metres or 2.5 metres.
- 7.2. Signs for escape route directions are all primarily pictographic to ensure they can be clearly understood by all persons.
- 7.3. Emergency signs above final exits have the image of a person running as well as the word "exit". They **do not** feature arrows.
- 7.4. Signs are regularly inspected and cleaned to ensure they are clear and legible and functional at all times.
- 7.5. All firefighting equipment can be clearly identified with signs.
- 7.6. Any doors that could be confused with an emergency exit are marked clearly as "no exit" or with its use, for example "toilet".
- 7.7. Escape signs must **never** be blocked by banners or decorations at any time.
- 7.8. Fire action signs are displayed next to all manual alarm call points.

8. Emergency Lighting

- 8.1. Internal and external escape routes are lit by suitable emergency lighting and have illuminated signs, enabling people to find their way if the power disconnects.
- 8.2. All emergency lighting is adequately fitted in necessary locations:
 - Along escape routes, intersections and change of direction.
 - Near emergency escape signs and each exit
 - Near equipment that must be shut down in an emergency
 - Near all firefighting equipment and alarm points
- 8.3. All torch batteries are tested monthly and emergency lighting systems receive short functional tests monthly in accordance with BS EN 50172 and BS 5266-8 to ensure each light illuminates. Torch batteries in fire kits must also be tested.
- 8.4. Annually the emergency lighting batteries undergo a full discharge, to test the lighting for the full duration of its battery rating. The building **cannot** be occupied for 24 hours after the test.

9. Electrical Equipment

- 9.1. All electrical equipment to be tested to ensure they meet Health and Safety Standards.
- 9.2. Staff and hirers are not permitted to bring their own electrical equipment onto the premises unless it has had a certified PAT test.
- 9.3. Somerford ARC Community centre will conduct six monthly PAT testing on all electrical equipment. HSE classifies the risk level at Somerford ARC Community Centre as moderate risk. An environment where electrical appliances are used frequently, but not continuously throughout the day.

10. Personal Evacuation Plans

- 10.1. Our organisation ensures procedures are put in place for people with disabilities and vulnerabilities and this is considered in the fire risk assessment of Somerford ARC Community Centre in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.2. Where necessary designated competent persons will ensure those with a disability or vulnerability complete a personal evacuation assessment form to determine if a full personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) is necessary.

11. Training

- 11.1. All new staff and volunteers will receive an induction pack; induction will be recorded on their induction checklist.
- 11.2. Article 21 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the Trustees to provide their employees and volunteers with adequate fire safety training, which will be completed during work hours and paid for by the organisation.
- 11.3. All employees will undertake fire safety training as soon as is practicable after the commencement of employment, which will include:
 - The fire safety policy and any relevant procedures.
 - The significant findings of the fire risk assessment.
 - Who the fire wardens are and others with fire safety responsibilities.
 - The actions to take on discovering a fire or hearing the alarm.
 - The locations of the emergency routes, fire exits and assembly points.
 - Where the fire alarm activation points are and how to activate them.
 - The locations of fire safety equipment.
 - Emergency evacuation procedures.
 - Fire safety handbook.
- 11.4. Refresher training will be carried out twice yearly during fire evacuation drills and participants will be provided a fire safety handbook. Any significant changes to fire safety risks, procedures or systems will be provided immediately.
- 11.5. Fire wardens will undertake additional training relating to their responsibilities and duties.
- 11.6. All fire safety training will take place during normal working hours, and a written record of attendance will be stored accordingly.

12. Smoking

- 12.1. Smoking is strictly prohibited inside the building and in all external areas to the rear of the premises.
- 12.2. All persons on site, including, staff, volunteers, hirers, and visitors, may only smoke in the designated smoking areas.
- 12.3. All cigarettes ends and related waste must be fully extinguished and disposed of only in the fire-resistant bins provided in the designated smoking area.
- 12.4. Failure to comply with the smoking policy may result in disciplinary action or withdrawal of access to the premises.

12.5. Designated smoking areas:

- In the carpark located at the front of the building on the right-hand side.

13. Substances

- 13.1. The health and safety officer (or responsible manager) must identify all substances used or stored on site that require a Coshh assessment.
- 13.2. All employees and volunteers will be informed and trained on relevant Coshh assessments and control measures during induction and whenever new substances are introduced.
- 13.3. Any new substances introduced to the premises must be assessed to ensure they can be used, handled, and stored safely, and that suitable control measures are implemented.
- 13.4. Volunteers and staff must be properly informed, instructed, and supervised in the safe use, handling and storage of substances.
- 13.5. All Coshh assessments will be reviewed annually or when new substances are introduced, or if working practices change.

14. Fire Drills

- 14.1. Fire drills will be carried out twice yearly, the outcome of each exercise will be recorded in the fire drill log. The fire warden will review the findings, and appropriate action will be taken when necessary.
- 14.2. All staff, volunteers and building users present during a drill must participate. Each drill will assess evacuation times and communication effectiveness.

15. Assembly Points

- 15.1. The designated fire assembly point is located at the furthest point of the car park away from the building. This area is clearly marked, and no vehicles are to be parked in this space at any time.

16. Records

- 16.1. Comprehensive records will be maintained to demonstrate compliance with fire safety requirements and to support continuous improvement. These records will include:
 - Fire risk assessment
 - Fire detection equipment external servicing and repairs
 - Firefighting equipment- internal and external inspections and tests
 - Fire door internal and external inspections and tests
 - Any visits from the fire inspector
 - Fire evacuation procedures
 - Fire drills and practice evacuations
 - Fire safety training and instructions given.

16.2. The trustees with the office management team will ensure that all fire safety records are kept up to date and retained in accordance with organisational policy and legal requirements.

Appointed Health and Safety Officer: TBC

Appointed Fire Safety Officer: TBC

Appointed Fire Wardens: TBC

Roles	Appointed person	Certificate expiry
Health and safety officer	Lauren Biggs	30-10-2026
Fire safety officer		

Associated Policies
Health and Safety Policy
First Aid Needs Assessment
First Aid Policy
Written Fire safety Plans
Evacuation Procedure
Evacuation Plan

Created by	
Print Name	Lauren Biggs
Role	Office Manager
Date	21-02-2023

Review History	Reviewed by	Validated by
21-02-2023	Lauren Biggs	
25-10-2024	Lauren Biggs	
10-11-2025	Lauren Biggs	

Next review date	10-11-2026
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Appendix 1

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

On Hearing the Alarm

The hirer, their guests and all others present in the building **MUST** evacuate immediately and call 999.

- Exit via your **nearest** fire exit
- Those with a mobility impairment must be given **priority** to exit the building via the main entrance doors (Fire exit D).
- **Immediately:** make your way to the fire assembly point where possible (this is located to your right as you enter the car park and labelled), ensuring everyone is as far away from the building as safely possible.
- **Snug**, if your group is using/ hiring the snug the external door **must** be unlocked at all times throughout the duration of your session (this key is located on the keyring in the front key safe)
- The named hirer/ and any members of staff present are responsible for ensuring that all guests have evacuated safely, if it is safe to do so sweep the building (including toilets) ensuring everyone has left safely
- You must then conduct a roll call to ensure all members of your group are present
- Fire-fighting apparatus at the premises should only be used for its intended purposes and only by those trained to do so.

Do not re-enter the building without authorisation from the fire brigade or member Of Staff.

Additional information:

- For safety and fire prevention reasons, all activities undertaken, equipment used (including electrical) and the use of decorations and balloons must be discussed and agreed with the trustees in advanced of the hire period).
- No highly flammable substances or materials, or activities which could pose a fire risk should be brought onto or used in any part of the premises, indoors or out.
This includes fireworks and smoke machines

Smoking is not permitted inside or outside the back, passageways or in front of the building. Anyone wishing to smoke must use the designated space that is clearly marked in the car park

Appendix 2

IN CASE OF FIRE		
1.REPORT	 Fire Alarm	 Call the Fire Service
		999 Fire Service Number
2.EXTINGUISH- Only if it is safe to do so	 Fire Extinguisher	 Fire Blanket
		-OR-
3.EVACUATE	 Follow the Emergency Evacuation Routes to the Fire Exits	 -OR- Await Assistance
4.FIRE EVACUATION KIT- Only if it is safe to do so	 Collect the Fire Evacuation Kit	
5.ASSEMBLE	 Proceed to your Assembly Point	

