



**The Hospital of St Mary the Virgin (Rye Hill and Benwell)
Almshouses Charity**

Fire Safety Policy

Reviewed by Trustees: September 2025

Next Review: not later than September 2027

Trustees recognise that they have a range of duties with regard to fire safety and prevention. The competent person responsible for this Policy and its implementation is the Manager. The Charity's policy is to:

1. ensure the safety of residents, staff and anyone else legally on the Charity's premises by assessing the risks arising from fire within the premises and to ensure that the Charity's facilities are compliant with current fire safety regulations, including The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, liaising as required with the local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and the Charity's insurers;
2. ensure effective arrangements are in place to minimise the risk of fire, including:
 - (a) ensuring compliance with Building Regulations' requirements for fire safety;
 - (b) carrying out Fire Risk Assessments and acting on recommended improvements;
 - (c) implementing any recommendations from the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and other appropriate agencies;
 - (d) installing and maintaining fire detection and alarm systems;
 - (e) providing fire awareness training and ensuring availability of facilities to call emergency services;
 - (f) risk assessing high risk activities (e.g. hot work construction processes)
 - (g) regular inspections, including alarm activations, incidents involving fire, practice drills and insurance surveys.
3. appoint competent persons to provide, maintain and regularly test/inspect:
 - (a) fire detection and alarm systems;
 - (b) emergency lighting systems;
 - (c) fire fighting equipment; The Fire Risk Assessment for the premises will dictate the provision of fire extinguishers. However, the Charity's policy will be to install these in plant areas, workplaces and the communal areas of the housing blocks for use by the staff in their use and contractors. Extinguishers should only be used by those trained to use them and it is

unlikely that residents will have had such training. Therefore, following consultation with an independent fire safety advisor, the Charity will no longer be installing fire extinguishers on the escape routes within communal areas of the premises

Where extinguishers are provided, they will be supplied, maintained and inspected by competent contractors in line with British Standards.

- (d) means of escape, including keeping escape routes clear (and, where necessary, unlocked) and taking into account the needs of any disabled users of the facilities; and
 - (e) notices, signage and printed and electronic information relating to fire procedures;
4. ensure that all staff, residents and visitors (including contractors) are made fully aware of the Charity's fire procedures and comply with them, especially those individuals with specific responsibilities relating to fire procedures;
 5. have in place procedures and action to be taken in the case of a fire alarm and arrange regular practice fire drills for all the Charity's premises;
 6. until such time as formal advice or instructions are given to the contrary, the Charity's current policy is that, in the event of any alarm situation, the premises should be totally evacuated until such time as a person in authority (the Manager, Site Supervisor or member of the emergency services) advises that it is safe to re-enter the premises.
 7. identify training needs and provide appropriate training in fire procedures for staff and (where appropriate) residents, visitors and external users;
 8. identify any special risks (e.g. storage and/or use of hazardous materials, hot processes, etc.) and put in place appropriate procedures to minimise these risks (e.g. hot work permit procedure);
 9. liaise with third parties such as the Charity's insurers, health and safety consultant(s) and the FRS as necessary to ensure that best practice for fire prevention and procedures is in place;
 10. keep records relating to fire safety, including:
 - (a) fire risk assessments and reviews;
 - (b) this policy and all related policies and procedures;
 - (c) fire practice drills;
 - (d) hot work permits, etc.
 - (e) certificates for the installation of fire systems and equipment;
 - (f) inspection and testing of:
 - (i) fire detection and alarm systems;
 - (ii) emergency lighting systems;
 - (iii) fire fighting equipment; and

(g) training relating to fire safety;

11. provide and retain documents associated with this policy, as follows:

- (a) a copy of the fire evacuation procedures is displayed in each flat, each workplace and at the entrance to each of the Charity's premises
- (b) the current **Fire Risk Assessments** (as required under the Order set out in 1 above) are held with a printed copy of this Policy in the Manager's Office;
- (c) a printed record of all **alarm activations, incidents involving fire** and **fire practice drills** is retained in the Manager's Office; and
- (d) installation and test certificates, maintenance and testing records for all **fire detection and alarm systems, firefighting equipment and emergency lighting** are kept in the Manager's Office; and

12. monitor and review this policy at least every three years and earlier if there are changes to relevant regulations or legislation.