

Evacuation of Disabled Persons

PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS (PEEPs)

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Thinking About PEEPs and Persons with A Disability

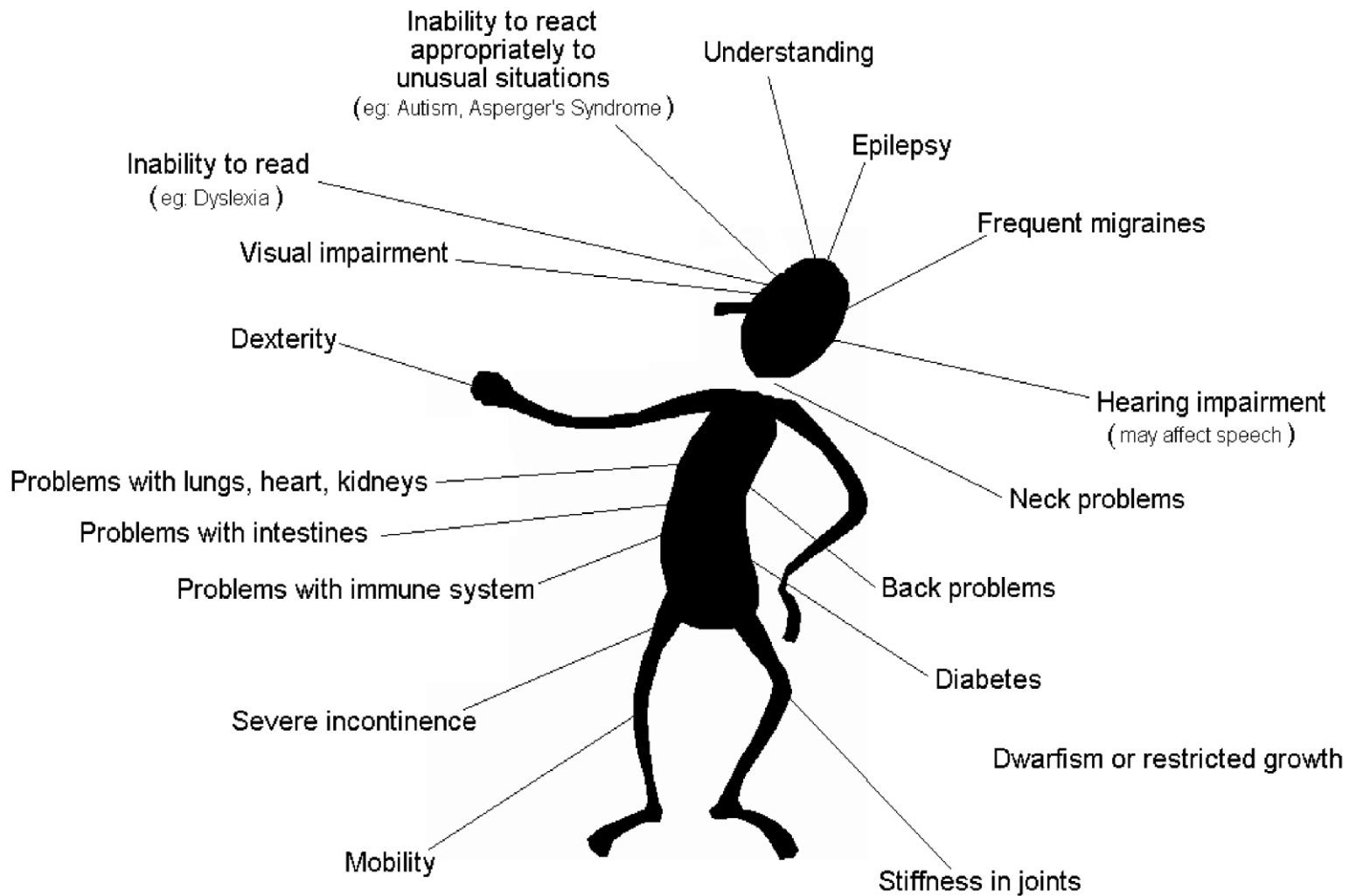
People with a disability are at a disadvantage generally, but particularly in an emergency.

There are 4 main scenarios that a person with a disability can experience:

- Unaware of alarm or emergency
- Unaware of how to react
- Aware, but unable to react
- Aware, but hampered

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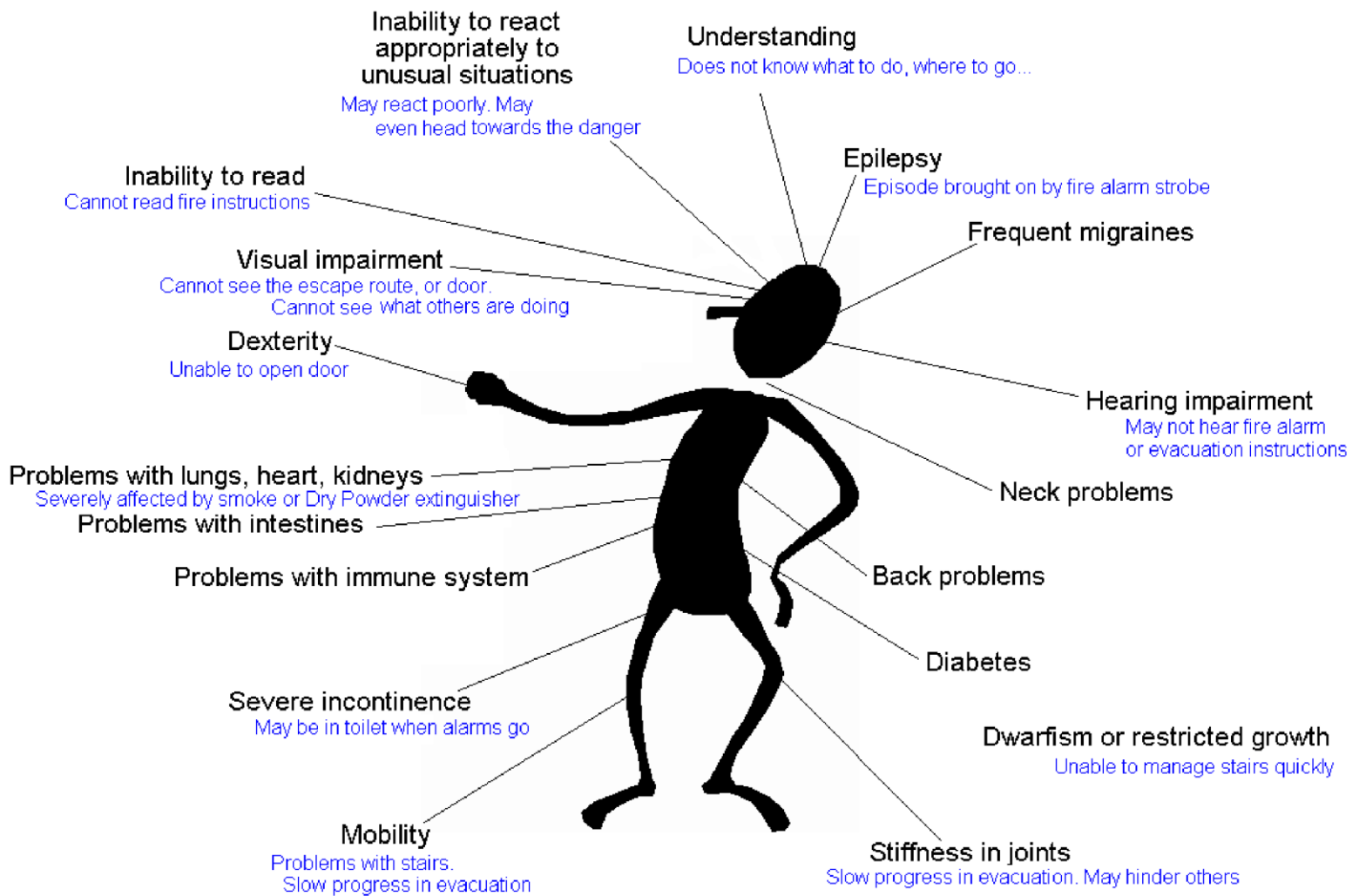
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Some types of disability

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How could a disability affect somebody in an emergency?

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Unaware of alarm or emergency

- **Blind** – unable to see the route or obstacles in the way. May be particularly affected by alarms, especially in terms of stress, heart rate, etc
- **Deaf** – Unable to hear alarms, or unable to hear instructions & guidance
- **Deaf-blind** – both above
- **Unconscious** – Totally reliant on the actions of others

Unaware of how to react

- **Mental Health problem** – May go in any direction, even towards the danger. May react in an extremely unusual way.
- **Learning Disability** – May have no understanding of the danger, or where to go.

Aware, but unable to react

- **Mobility problems** – May be very slow. May be unable to use stairs
- **Bed-bound** – May be connected to medical equipment, O2, etc.
- **Bariatric** – May need to defend-in-place
- **Breathing difficulties** – Slow pace, frequent stops. May be easily overcome by smoke or extinguishant

Aware, but hampered

- **Mono-dextrous** – May not be able to manipulate exit mechanisms
- **Visual impairment** – e.g.: retinitis-pigmentosa (tunnel-vision), macular degeneration. – May have difficulty seeing obstacles or stairs. Will be slowed down when trying to operate the exit mechanism
- **Epileptic** – May go into seizure at the sight of a strobe

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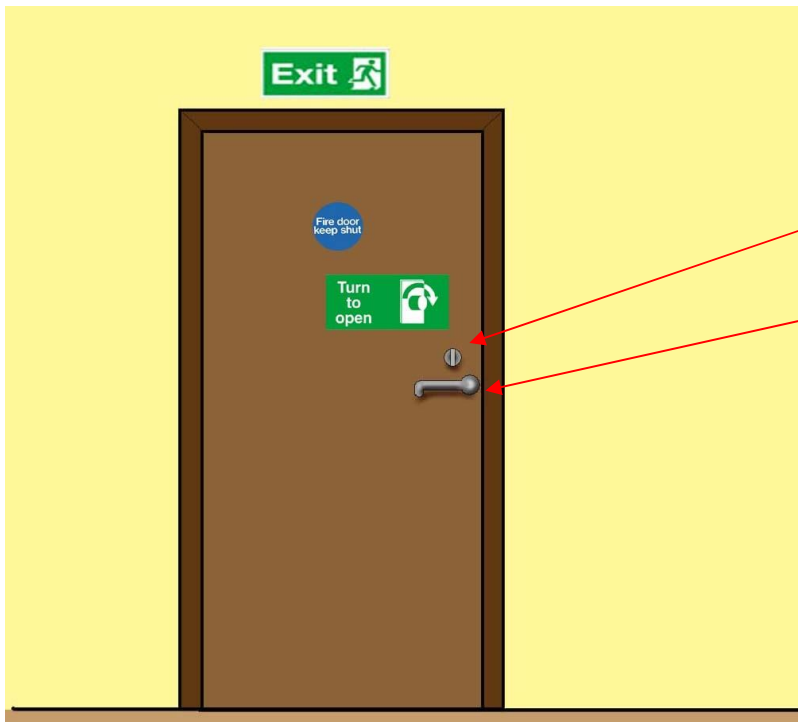
Tunnel Vision

Macular Degeneration



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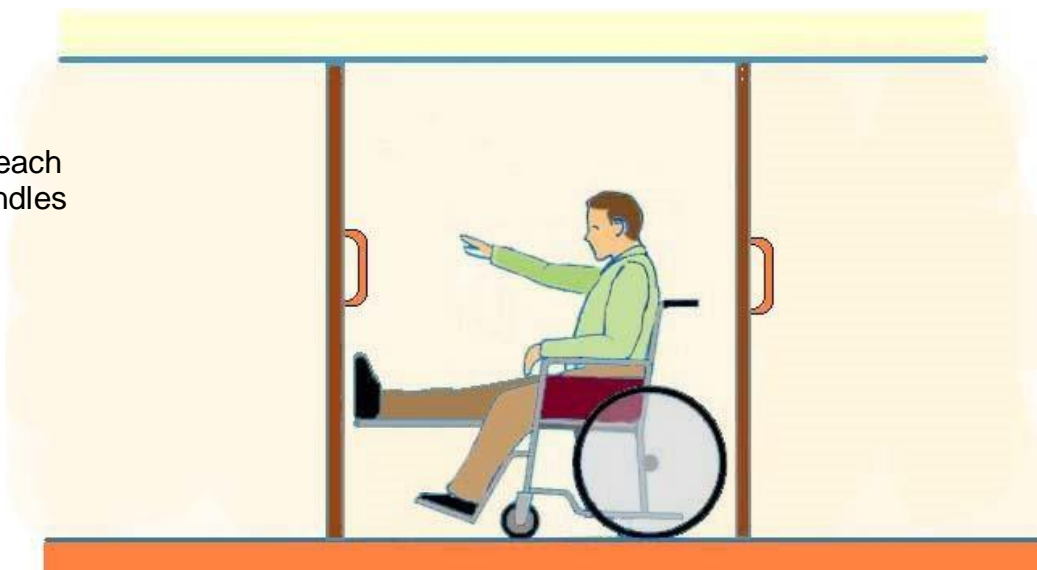


Exit mechanism requiring two hands, and a degree of dexterity

Turn lock

Push down handle

Inability to reach the door handles



PEEPs should be created as part of the fire strategy and should consider the needs of the disabled persons using the building, the building design and construction, the fire strategy, and the local fire procedures.

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Disability, Evacuation and the Law

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a legal duty on those with 'responsibility' over the management and operation of premises to provide adequate means for emergency escape in the event of fire for all building occupants. The same rights in law apply to those members of staff or visitors in a building who for whatever reason suffer from some degree of impairment that puts them at a disadvantage in the event of an emergency. The Order requires fire risk assessments to be undertaken as the means by which a 'responsible person' can identify and manage fire risks. The provision of facilities for the safe emergency evacuation of those with impairments should be considered an important part of the fire risk management process.

What is a Mobility Impairment?

The degree to which an individual is affected by a mobility impairment, and the extent that this constitutes a life risk that may be unique to that individual's circumstance. A mobility impairment definition can be applied to any individual who is unable or finds it difficult to move over the potential evacuation distance without the assistance of others, or at such a pace that would impede others escaping at a normal speed. In effect, the definition can be extended beyond the wheelchair user to elderly persons, those with breathing difficulties, those with temporary conditions such as pregnancy, or those injuries affecting their mobility. It could also affect those with a visual impairment, who move slowly because they cannot easily see the means of escape. In short, any individual who is unable to evacuate with the main body of able-bodied occupants.

Other Disabilities

Other disabilities may also affect a person's ability to evacuate as quickly as required. These include, but are not limited to:

Hearing impairment, where somebody is unable to hear the fire alarm sounders, or is unable to hear guidance instructions given by members of staff, either with or without the added interference of alarm sounders;

Learning disability, where somebody cannot understand what is being told to them, does not understand the gravity of the situation, or moves in unpredictable directions;

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Poor Mental Health, where a person may intentionally or otherwise act in an unpredictable manner and possibly impede the progress of others.

What are the Fire Risk Moderating Options?

Access and facilities for those with disabilities is required by all service providers and employers. In meeting the freedom of access laws, the potential exists to contravene fire safety law, and this is where fire risk assessment plays its part. Strategies and procedures associated with managing the safe evacuation of mobility impaired persons involve physical fire safety provisions and fire safety management provisions. Physical provisions need to be suitable for all classifications of mobility impairment. They usually consist of a combination of evacuation lift provision and protected stairways with carry chairs, both provided with refuges to protect occupants from the effects of fire whilst they wait for assistance. Refuges need to be clearly recognisable and if we are to ask a mobility impaired person to wait whilst others evacuate, we must ensure that a means for these persons to communicate with the building management is available. Ideally, this should not be by means of a 2-way radio, as the person awaiting assistance may encounter additional stress levels, worrying about how to use the radio. There is the added problem of battery-charging, and security of the equipment. A better solution is a simple to use intercom system, between the refuge area, and the final exit area. This should be at a height suitable for wheelchair users as well as others.

Fire Safety Management of Mobility Impaired Persons

It is clear that occupants with mobility impairments may need assistance to safely evacuate. It is the responsibility of premises managers to ensure that the uniqueness of an individual's mobility impairment is properly coordinated with the physical provisions for their escape. The system normally applied is known as the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). It is a system that constitutes a contract between the individual and the organisation that sets expectations from the individuals' point of view concerning what support he or she can expect and, from the organisations perspective, applies reasonable conditions on occupation.

Where possible, the PEEP should be developed in conjunction with the individual (or parent and child, if the plan is for a child) to agree what action will be taken. For example, a person with a visual impairment

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may need to be escorted from the premises in case of a fire and a staff member should be nominated for this activity.

Once a PEEP has been established, arrangements should be put in place to ensure that these are practiced, and it is recommended that these are carried out separately to the standard test evacuation. The needs of the individual should be considered and therefore it may be inappropriate for the individual to be involved in the test evacuation. In these cases, a volunteer to take their place should be identified.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

Aim

The aim of a PEEP is to provide people who cannot get themselves out of a building unaided with the necessary information and assistance to be able to manage their escape to a place of safety and to ensure that the correct level of assistance is always available.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of [**Manager/ Responsible Person / nominated representative**]? to talk to disabled staff, service users, and visitors to assess whether they require any assistance in the event of an emergency. If someone believes they might require assistance, the PEEP Questionnaire should be completed. This should be completed by the Responsible Person or their nominated representative and, if possible, in liaison with the individual who has the disability / mobility impairment.

Writing the PEEP

From the information gathered in the questionnaire, a PEEP should be developed.

Given the unique characteristics of buildings and the need for a PEEP to take account of an individual's capabilities, disabled persons who regularly use different buildings may have to have a separate PEEP for each building.

If assistance with escape is required, the extent of such assistance should be identified in the PEEP, i.e. the number of assistants and the methods to be used. It is necessary to ensure that there is cover for absences, and the assistants may require training.

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Evacuation in an Emergency

Assisting wheelchair user's downstairs

Where disabled persons are located above the ground floor there are a number of considerations. In all the following cases Evacuation Lifts (where fitted) or Refuges should be identified and clearly marked

Temporary Refuges

A refuge is a designated temporary safe place where disabled people can wait for assistance. It is an area that is both separated from a fire-by-fire resisting construction and provides a safe route to final exit, e.g. the head of a protected stairway - where there is sufficient space. The provision of a refuge will permit a staged evacuation to be implemented. A refuge area must be clearly signed and should be of sufficient size to accommodate both people using it as a refuge and any people passing through on their way out of the building.

Lifts

Most lifts cannot be used in an emergency. Any lift used for the evacuation of disabled people should be an "evacuation lift." The individual lift servicing contractor, or a Specialist Fire Safety Advisor, will be able to tell you if, and in what circumstances, a lift may be used in the event of a fire.

Safe Routes

A PEEP should contain details of the necessary escape route(s). Clear unobstructed gangways and floor layouts should be considered at the planning stage.

It is especially important to ensure that security devices on doors, etc, are all able to be operated by the evacuating persons.

It is also necessary to ensure that there are (as many as possible) alternative routes and that the routes are not excessively long.

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Deaf and Hearing-Impaired persons

Generally, most deaf people alongside hearing work-colleagues, relatives or carers will not require special equipment, providing they have been made aware of what to do in the event of a fire. They will be able to see and understand the behaviour of those around them.

However, deaf or hearing-impaired persons working alone may need an alternative method of being alerted to an emergency. For example, many alarm systems have visual indicators in the form of a flashing light or vibrating pager systems can be used.

Blind and partially sighted persons

Staff, service users, regular visitors, etc should be offered orientation training and, where applicable, this must include alternative ways out of the building. If a blind person uses a guide dog it is important that the dog is also given ample opportunity to learn these routes.

Training

To be effective, any Emergency Plan depends on the ability of staff to respond efficiently. Staff will therefore receive instructions, practical demonstrations and training appropriate to their responsibilities.

This may include some or all of the following elements:

- Fire drills for staff, services users, regular visitors, etc.
- Specific training/instruction for nominated members of staff e.g. Fire Wardens
- Specific training/instruction in the use of Fire Extinguishers etc.

For further information, and advice on creating a PEEP, [contact your local Fire Safety Advisor](#)

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PEEP Questionnaire for Disabled Person

This questionnaire is intended to be completed by disabled persons to assist the development of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Please provide as much information as you can to enable us to develop a suitable plan.

Once developed, the PEEP will be used to assist escape in the event of an emergency (including drills). If the practice drills identify concerns in the implementation of the evacuation, then please contact

*..... for assistance in finding suitable solutions.

1. Why you should fill in the form

We have a legal responsibility to protect you from fire risks and ensure your health and safety. The PEEP will be developed based on the information you provide.

2. What will happen when you have completed the form?

You will be provided with any additional information necessary about the emergency evacuation procedures in the building(s) you attend.

If you need assistance, the "Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan" will specify what type of assistance you need. There may be some parts of the most appropriate premises where safe evacuation cannot yet be provided without alterations to the building/structure. In these circumstances the way forward will be discussed with you.

*** Line Manager, person designated to assist you, and/or Trust Fire Safety Adviser**

Name: _____

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Location

1. Which part of the building do you normally work in / visit?

Please name: the building, the floor and the room.

2. Do you routinely use more than one location in this building?

YES NO

If you feel it is necessary, please provide further details below. (Please list the floors & rooms you use in each building)

Emergency Procedures

Are you aware of the emergency evacuation procedures which operate in the building(s) you attend? YES NO

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Do you require written emergency evacuation procedures? YES NO

Do you require written emergency procedures to be supported by British Sign Language interpretation? YES NO

Do you require the emergency evacuation procedures in Braille? YES NO

Do you require the emergency evacuation procedure to be on tape or CD? YES NO

Do you require the emergency evacuation procedures to be in large print? YES NO

Are the signs which mark emergency routes and exits clear enough? YES NO

Emergency Alarm

Can you hear the fire alarm(s) in your place(s) or work? YES NO Don't Know

Could you raise the alarm if you discovered a fire? YES NO Don't Know

Assistance

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Do you need assistance to get out of your place of work in an emergency? YES NO Don't Know

Is anyone designated to assist you to assist you in an emergency? YES NO Don't Know

If YES give name(s) and location(s) _____

Is the arrangement with your assistant(s) a formal arrangement? (A formal arrangement is one specified for them by a senior person or written into their job description or by some other procedure.) YES NO Don't Know

Are you always in easy contact with those designated to help you? YES NO Don't Know

In an emergency, could you contact the person(s) in charge of evacuating the building(s) in which you work and tell them where you were located? YES NO Don't Know

Getting Out

Can you move quickly in the event of an emergency? YES NO Don't Know

Do you find stairs difficult to use? YES NO Don't Know

Are you a wheelchair user? YES NO

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

The information you have given us will help us to meet any needs for information or assistance you may have.

Please return to: _____

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan

Name _____

Department _____

Building _____

Floor _____

Room _____

Awareness of Procedure

The disabled person is informed of a fire evacuation by:

existing alarm system

pager device

visual alarm system

other (please specify)

Designated Assistance:

(The following people have been designated assist me to evacuate the building in an emergency).

Name _____

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Contact details _____

Name _____

Contact details _____

Name _____

Contact details _____

Methods of Assistance:

(e.g.: Transfer procedures, methods of guidance, etc.)

Equipment Provided (including means of communication):

Evacuation Procedure:

(A step by step account beginning from the first alarm)

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Safe Route(s):

Date of agreement _____

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