

# Dementia Active Carterton

## Fire Evacuation and Fire Safety Procedure

Combined version: this Carterton-specific procedure has been strengthened with the generic fire safety, prevention, training, dementia-support, and risk assessment content from the general fire emergency procedure. Site-specific Carterton arrangements have been retained, including the small ground-floor layout, two ramped exits, verbal alarm procedure, and assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building.

<b>Centre</b>	Dementia Active Carterton
<b>Floor level</b>	Ground floor
<b>Layout</b>	Small ground-floor centre
<b>Fire exits</b>	Two fire exits - one at each end of the building
<b>Accessibility</b>	Both fire exits have wheelchair ramps. Wheelchair users and slower walkers must be individually supported.
<b>Assembly point</b>	Opposite side of the road outside the building
<b>Fire alarm buttons/call points</b>	Not fitted due to the small size of the building. The alarm is raised verbally by staff.
<b>Members supported</b>	People living with dementia, including people who may need reassurance, direction, supervision, mobility support, wheelchair access, or support to manage anxiety, confusion, wandering, or refusal to leave
<b>Evacuation strategy</b>	Immediate evacuation to the assembly point where safe. If the road is unsafe to cross, move members to the safest available location away from the building and inform the Fire Warden.

This procedure should be checked against the current fire risk assessment for the premises and reviewed regularly.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to make sure that all members, staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors leave the building quickly and safely in the event of fire, smoke, suspected fire, or any other emergency requiring evacuation.

The procedure also provides a planned response so that everyone understands their responsibilities, the building can be evacuated safely, and people are moved to a place where they are not in danger.

As all members may be living with dementia, staff must assume that some people may not understand the situation, may become distressed, may move slowly, may become reluctant to leave, or may try to stay inside or return to the building. The key responsibility of everyone in the team is to ensure members do not panic, feel safe, and are helped to leave the building in a calm and controlled manner.

### 2. Fire Warden and Senior Staff Responsibilities

There are certificated fire wardens, including the CEO and Operations Coordinator. The Fire Warden, or the most senior staff member on duty, is responsible for managing the response to a fire or suspected fire. All staff and volunteers must follow their instructions.

- Take charge of the evacuation.
- Confirm which of the two exits is safest to use.
- Direct staff to support members to the nearest safe ramped exit.
- Ensure wheelchair users and people with limited mobility are supported in line with their PEEP and the current risk assessment.
- Make sure the centre, toilets, kitchen or refreshment area, office area, storage areas, and any quiet spaces are checked if safe to do so.
- Take the attendance register, visitor book, staff list, and emergency contact details if immediately available and safe to collect.
- Make sure 999 has been called.

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- Direct everyone to the assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building, or to the safest alternative location away from the building if the road is unsafe to cross.
- Complete or oversee the roll call.
- Tell the Fire and Rescue Service immediately if anyone is missing, unaccounted for, distressed, unable to leave, or believed to still be inside.

No one should attempt to tackle a fire unless they are trained, it is safe to do so, and evacuation is not delayed. Staff and volunteers must never put themselves or members at risk.

### 3. Raising the Alarm

The Carterton centre does not have fire alarm buttons or manual call points due to its small size. The alarm is therefore raised verbally by staff.

Any person discovering fire, smoke, a burning smell, or another serious fire risk must raise the alarm immediately by shouting clearly:

## **Fire - everyone out.**

The person discovering the fire must alert the Fire Warden or most senior staff member straight away. The Fire Warden, or a nominated member of staff, must call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service. All staff must know how the verbal alarm is raised and must respond immediately when they hear the instruction to evacuate.

### 4. Immediate Action on Discovering a Fire

1. Raise the alarm immediately by shouting: Fire - everyone out.
2. Alert the Fire Warden or most senior staff member.
3. Call 999, or make sure another named staff member does so.
4. Begin evacuation if safe.
5. Close doors behind you where possible to help slow the spread of smoke and fire.
6. Do not attempt to fight the fire unless trained, safe to do so, and evacuation is not delayed.

### 5. Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- Stop activities immediately.
- Stay calm, speak clearly, and appear confident.
- Guide members to the nearest safe exit.
- Use one of the two ramped exits, depending on which is safest.
- Support wheelchair users and people with limited mobility to a ramped exit in line with their PEEP and moving and handling guidance.
- Support members to the assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building, if safe to cross.
- Use the alternative safest available location away from the building if the road is unsafe to cross.
- Keep members together once outside.
- Prevent members from returning to the building.
- Report any concerns immediately to the Fire Warden.

Staff should not spend time collecting personal belongings, coats, bags, or paperwork unless this is safe and does not delay evacuation.

### 6. Fire Exits and Evacuation Routes

The premises has two fire exits:

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- Fire exit at one end of the building with wheelchair ramp.
- Fire exit at the opposite end of the building with wheelchair ramp.

Staff should use the nearest safe exit. If one exit is blocked by fire, smoke, obstruction, or any other danger, staff must use the other safe exit. Both fire exits, ramps, and escape routes must be kept clear at all times. Doors must open easily and escape routes must be checked daily.

### 7. Wheelchair Users and People with Limited Mobility

As both exits have ramps, wheelchair users should be evacuated through the nearest safe ramped exit. Staff must support wheelchair users and people with limited mobility in line with their Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), care plan, moving and handling guidance, and the current fire risk assessment.

- Reassure the person before moving them.
- Check that the route and ramp are clear.
- Move at a steady and controlled pace.
- Avoid rushing.
- Keep the person away from smoke, fire, congestion, traffic, or uneven ground wherever possible.
- Support the person to the assembly point or safest alternative location away from the building.
- Make sure the person remains with staff and the group after evacuation.

Any member who may not be able to leave the building safely without support must have a PEEP. The PEEP should include mobility needs, whether the person uses a wheelchair or walking aid, which exit is normally safest, whether one or two staff are needed, dementia-related communication or distress needs, moving and handling requirements, and any equipment needed to support evacuation.

### 8. Supporting Members Living with Dementia

Staff must assume that members may become anxious, confused, distressed, slow to move, reluctant to leave, or at risk of wandering or returning inside. Staff should use calm, simple instructions and reassurance.

- Come with me.
- We are going outside.
- You are safe.
- This way, please.
- Everyone is meeting outside.
- I will stay with you.

Staff should approach members from the front where possible, use the person's name, give one instruction at a time, avoid lengthy explanations, avoid repeatedly saying fire if this increases distress, use familiar staff to support anxious members where possible, offer an arm or gentle guidance where this is part of the person's care plan, and report immediately if a member refuses to leave or becomes distressed.

If the verbal alarm causes panic or erratic behaviour, staff should calmly explain that everyone needs to go outside and reassure members that staff know exactly what to do. The priority is to appear calm, keep members reassured, and move people safely rather than quickly.

### 9. Assembly Point and Road Crossing

The assembly point is on the opposite side of the road outside the building. This introduces a traffic-related risk during evacuation.

When moving to the assembly point, staff must:

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- Guide members across the road carefully.
- Where staffing allows, have one staff member lead and one staff member remain at the rear.
- Individually support wheelchair users and slower walkers.
- Keep members together.
- Keep members away from the building.
- Keep members away from emergency vehicles.
- Keep members safe from traffic or moving vehicles.
- Reassure members continuously.
- Complete a roll call.
- Prevent anyone from returning to the building.

If the road is unsafe to cross, staff should move members to the safest available location away from the building and tell the Fire Warden. No one may re-enter the building until the Fire and Rescue Service or authorised responsible person confirms it is safe.

### 10. Roll Call

The Fire Warden or nominated staff member must check:

- Members present.
- Staff present.
- Volunteers present.
- Visitors present.
- Contractors present.

Any missing person must be reported immediately to the Fire and Rescue Service. Staff must not re-enter the building to search for someone unless instructed by the Fire and Rescue Service.

### 11. If a Member Refuses to Leave

7. Stay calm.
8. Use the member's name.
9. Use short, reassuring instructions.
10. Ask another familiar member of staff to assist.
11. Avoid arguing or raising your voice.
12. Try changing the wording, for example: Let's go outside together. Everyone is meeting outside. I'll come with you.
13. Inform the Fire Warden immediately if the person still refuses.

If there is immediate danger, staff should follow the person's care plan, moving and handling guidance, PEEP, and emergency risk assessment.

### 12. Checking the Centre

If safe to do so, staff should check:

- Main activity areas.
- Toilets.
- Kitchen or refreshment area.
- Office area.
- Storage areas.
- Quiet spaces or side areas.

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Staff must not place themselves at risk by entering an area affected by fire or smoke. Doors should be closed behind staff where possible to help slow the spread of smoke and fire.

#### 13. Fire Risk Assessment - Generic Controls Added to Carterton Procedure

The following generic fire risk assessment content should be used alongside the site-specific fire risk assessment for Dementia Active Carterton. It identifies common hazards and controls that support a planned response to fire or suspected fire.

Hazard	Prevention and controls	Needs action / Yes-No / Notes
Sources of potential ignition: electrical equipment, kettle, microwave, toaster or kitchen appliances, portable heaters if used, chargers, extension leads, faulty plugs, sockets, lighting, and temporary equipment.	All electrical equipment should be visually checked before use and PAT tested where applicable. Fixed equipment should be serviced in line with manufacturer guidance. Staff must report burning smells, damaged leads, overloaded sockets, faulty appliances, or equipment that becomes hot.	
Sources of combustible fuel: furniture, soft furnishings, paperwork, activity materials, waste bins, cleaning products, coats, bags, personal items, and flammable substances.	Keep combustible materials to a minimum. Furnishings should comply with fire safety requirements. Paper, rubbish, packaging, coats, bags, and activity materials must not be allowed to build up. Bins should be emptied at the end of sessions. Flammable substances should not be stored unless required and controlled by risk assessment.	
Oxygen sources and open routes allow smoke or fire to spread.	Keep unnecessary doors and windows closed where safe to do so during evacuation. Doors should be closed behind staff where possible to help slow the spread of smoke and fire. Staff must never delay evacuation to close doors.	
Escape routes, fire exits, and wheelchair ramps blocked or difficult to use.	Both exits and both ramps must be kept clear and safe. Doors must open easily. Escape routes must be checked daily and must not be blocked by furniture, bags, mobility aids, deliveries, or activity equipment. If one exit is blocked by smoke or fire, staff must use the other safe exit.	
No fire alarm buttons or manual call points.	The centre uses a verbal alarm because of its small size. Staff must raise the alarm clearly by shouting "Fire - everyone out", alert the Fire Warden or senior staff member, and make sure 999 is called. The suitability of verbal-only alarm arrangements should be confirmed in the formal fire risk assessment.	
Members may not respond to a verbal alarm.	Staff must respond immediately to the verbal alarm and guide members directly. Training and drills must test the verbal alarm method. Staff must use calm, simple instructions and avoid lengthy explanations.	
Road crossing to assembly point creates traffic risk.	Staff must guide members carefully across the road. Where staffing allows, one staff member should lead and one should remain at the rear. Wheelchair users and slower walkers should be individually supported. If the road is unsafe to cross, move members to the	

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	safest available location away from the building and inform the Fire Warden.	
Fire safety equipment not functioning or being misused.	Fire extinguishers and fire safety equipment should be suitable for the premises and maintained. Only trained members of staff may use equipment, and only if safe to do so and evacuation is not delayed. Evacuation is always the priority.	
Emergency lighting or signage not adequate.	Exits should be clearly marked and signs must not be blocked. Emergency lighting should be provided if needed. Staff must not rely on members understanding signs and must actively guide members to safety.	
Staff, volunteers, or visitors do not understand their role during evacuation.	The Fire Warden or most senior staff member on duty takes charge. Staff and volunteers must receive site-specific fire training including the two exits, ramped access, verbal alarm, road-crossing procedure, roll call, calling 999, and support for people living with dementia.	
Response to suspicion of fire is delayed or unclear.	Always investigate a smell of burning if safe to do so. If smoke, flames, or a serious fire risk is discovered, raise the verbal alarm immediately, alert the Fire Warden or senior staff member, call 999, begin evacuation if safe, and close doors behind you where possible.	
Members living with dementia become anxious, confused, distressed, slow to move, reluctant to leave, or try to return inside.	Staff must appear calm, use the person's name, give one instruction at a time, and use simple reassuring phrases such as "Come with me", "We are going outside", "You are safe", "This way, please", and "I will stay with you". Allocate staff at the assembly point to keep members together and prevent anyone returning to the building.	
Wheelchair users or people with limited mobility cannot leave quickly.	Both exits have ramps. Any member who may not be able to leave safely without support must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). The PEEP should cover mobility needs, wheelchair or walking-aid use, safest exit, whether one or two staff are needed, dementia-related communication or distress needs, moving and handling requirements, and any equipment needed.	

**14. Fire Prevention and Daily Checks**

The Fire Warden or nominated staff member should make sure:

- Both fire exits are clear.
- Both wheelchair ramps are clear and safe to use.
- Doors open easily.
- Escape routes are not blocked by furniture, bags, mobility aids, deliveries, or equipment.
- Combustible items are kept away from heaters, sockets, and kitchen equipment.
- Electrical equipment appears safe.
- Attendance records are accurate.
- Staff know which members may need support to evacuate.

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- The assembly point remains suitable and accessible.
- The road-crossing arrangement remains safe and understood by staff.
- Bins, paper, activity materials, coats, bags, and packaging are not allowed to build up.
- Any smell of burning, damaged equipment, blocked route, signage issue, ramp issue, or other concern is reported immediately.

### 15. Training

All staff and volunteers must be trained in:

- This fire procedure.
- How to raise the verbal alarm without fire alarm buttons or manual call points.
- The location of both fire exits.
- The use of both ramped exits.
- Supporting people with dementia during evacuation.
- Supporting wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.
- Moving members safely to the assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building.
- The road-crossing procedure and what to do if the road is unsafe to cross.
- Roll call procedure.
- Calling 999.
- What to do if someone refuses to leave.
- What to do if one exit is blocked.

Training should make clear that staff must not use lengthy explanations during an evacuation. New staff and volunteers must receive individual fire training on evacuation procedures, member support needs, routes, the verbal alarm, ramped exits, and the assembly point.

### 16. Fire Drills

Fire drills should be carried out regularly and recorded. Drills should test:

- Use of each of the two exits.
- Wheelchair ramp access at both exits.
- Staff response without fire alarm buttons or manual call points.
- Moving members safely to the assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building.
- The road-crossing procedure, including what to do if the road is unsafe to cross.
- Roll call accuracy.
- Supporting members who are confused, distressed, reluctant, or slow to leave.
- Staff understanding of their roles.

Drills involving members with dementia should be handled sensitively, but staff must still be able to show that the evacuation plan works in practice.

### 17. Review

This procedure should be reviewed:

- After any fire, evacuation, false alarm, drill, or near miss.
- If the layout of the centre changes.
- If the assembly point changes.
- If the road-crossing arrangement changes or becomes unsuitable.
- If the number or needs of members change.

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- If a member starts using a wheelchair or needs more support.
- If staffing levels change.
- If fire exits, alarms, extinguishers, ramps, or assembly arrangements change.
- After advice from the Fire and Rescue Service or a competent fire safety adviser.
- After the fire risk assessment is reviewed.
- At least annually.

### 18. Key Safety Statement

Dementia Active Carterton is a small ground-floor centre with two ramped fire exits, one at each end of the building. In the event of fire or suspected fire, staff must raise the alarm verbally, call 999, support all members to leave by the nearest safe ramped exit, and move everyone to the assembly point on the opposite side of the road outside the building where safe.

Staff must give particular attention to members living with dementia, wheelchair users, and anyone who may need reassurance, supervision, road-crossing support, or physical support to evacuate safely. If the road is unsafe to cross, staff must move members to the safest available location away from the building and inform the Fire Warden.

### Review Record and Actions

Andrew Gill 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Review date 17<sup>th</sup> May 2027

Review at least annually and after any fire, evacuation, drill, near miss, or change to members' needs or site arrangements.