

Dementia Active Banbury

Fire Evacuation and Fire Safety Procedure

Combined version: this Banbury-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 Banbury arrangements have been retained, including the three ground-floor exits, first-floor arrangements, break glass points, Evac Chair practice, and assembly point at the car park of Unit 6.

Centre	Dementia Active Banbury
Floor level	Ground floor and first floor / mezzanine
Layout	Main activity areas on the ground floor, with first-floor rooms including the upstairs dining room
Fire exits	Ground floor has three fire exits: main entrance, side entrance, and rear entrance. The side and rear exits have green push button door releases.
Accessibility	Lift must not be used in a fire. People with mobility needs and wheelchair users must be supported to the safest available exit or protected area. Evac Chair arrangements should be practised and reviewed.
Assembly point	Car park of Unit 6, at the front of the building
Fire alarm buttons/call points	Smoke and heat alarms are fitted throughout the building. Break glass points should be used if smoke or flames are seen and the alarm is not sounding.
Members supported	People living with dementia, including people who may need reassurance, direction, supervision, mobility support, wheelchair access, or support to manage anxiety and confusion
Evacuation strategy	Controlled evacuation to the assembly point where safe. If evacuation is not immediately possible, use the protected areas set out in the current evacuation plan and fire risk assessment.

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 panic when an alarm sounds, 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 or protected-area response.
- Confirm which exit or protected area is safest to use.
- Direct staff to support members to the nearest safe exit or protected area.
- Ensure wheelchair users and people with limited mobility are supported in line with their PEEP and the current risk assessment.
- Make sure ground-floor activity areas, first-floor rooms, toilets, kitchen or laundry areas, office areas, storage areas, and quiet spaces are checked if safe.

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- 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.
- Direct everyone who can evacuate safely to the assembly point at the car park of Unit 6, at the front of the building.
- 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 or in a protected area.

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

Smoke and heat alarms are fitted throughout the building and will be triggered in the event of a fire. If there is a smell of burning, smoke, flames, or another serious fire risk, staff must act immediately.

If smoke or flames can be seen and the alarm is not sounding, the person discovering the fire must break the glass in the nearest fire break glass point, alert the Fire Warden or most senior staff member, and make sure 999 is called.

Staff should also use a clear verbal instruction so members and the team know to move immediately:

Fire - everyone out.

All staff must know how the alarm is raised, where the break glass points are, and how to respond immediately when the alarm sounds or the instruction to evacuate is given.

4. Immediate Action on Discovering a Fire

1. Raise the alarm immediately by using the nearest break glass point if the alarm is not already sounding.
2. Shout clearly: Fire - everyone out.
3. Alert the Fire Warden or most senior staff member.
4. Call 999, or make sure another named staff member does so.
5. Begin evacuation or protected-area response if safe.
6. Close doors behind you where possible to help slow the spread of smoke and fire.
7. 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 or protected area as directed.
- Use the main entrance, side entrance, rear entrance, stair routes, or protected rooms depending on which route is safest.
- Support wheelchair users and people with limited mobility in line with their PEEP and moving and handling guidance.
- Never use the lift during a fire.
- Support members who can evacuate safely to the assembly point at the car park of Unit 6.
- Keep members together once outside.
- Prevent members from returning to the building.
- Report any concerns immediately to the Fire Warden.

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

6. Fire Exits, Stairs, and Evacuation Routes

The ground floor has three fire exits:

- Main entrance.
- Side entrance with green push button door release.
- Rear entrance with green push button door release.

The first floor has two flights of stairs at opposite ends of the building. Staff should use the nearest safe exit or stair route. If one route is blocked by fire, smoke, obstruction, or any other danger, staff must use another safe route or follow the protected-area plan. All fire exits, stairs, internal routes, and protected areas must be kept clear at all times.

7. Wheelchair Users and People with Limited Mobility

The lift must not be used in any circumstances during a fire. 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 is clear and safe.
- Move at a steady and controlled pace.
- Avoid rushing.
- Keep the person away from smoke, fire, congestion, stairs, or uneven ground wherever possible.
- Use the Evac Chair only where staff are trained and it is safe to do so.
- Make sure the person remains with staff and the group after evacuation or while waiting in a protected area.

Any member who regularly needs help to leave the building should have a PEEP. The PEEP should include the support the person needs, whether they use a wheelchair or walking aid, which route or protected area is normally best, whether one or two staff are needed, dementia-related communication or distress needs, and any moving and handling requirements.

8. Supporting Members Living with Dementia

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

- We all need to go outside.
- Everyone stand up.
- Please follow me.
- Come with me.
- You are safe.
- 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.

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If the alarm causes panic or erratic behaviour, staff should calmly explain that everyone may need to leave the building 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

The assembly point is the car park of Unit 6, at the front of the building.

At the assembly point, staff must:

- 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.
- Check staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors.
- Prevent anyone from returning to the building.
- Wait for instructions from the Fire Warden or Fire and Rescue Service.

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

8. Stay calm.
9. Use the member's name.
10. Use short, reassuring instructions.
11. Ask another familiar member of staff to assist.
12. Avoid arguing or raising your voice.
13. Try changing the wording, for example: Let's go outside together. Everyone is meeting outside. I'll come with you.
14. 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. Banbury Evacuation Plan - Downstairs and Upstairs

The following plan must be checked against the current fire risk assessment and used only where it is safe to do so.

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Downstairs: everyone in the small activity areas should be taken into session room 1 if this is the safest protected route. Session room 1 has a one-hour fire door and a fire exit. Once everyone is in the room, the fire door must be kept closed to reduce the risk of smoke inhalation.

Upstairs: anyone who is not mobile enough to walk down the stairs into the back hall and out of the fire exit from the hallway should be taken into the upstairs dining room. This room has a one-hour fire door and is in a separate wing of the building from the kitchen and laundry area, which is the most likely site of a fire.

Staff must not place themselves at risk by entering a room 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 Banbury Procedure

The following generic fire risk assessment content should be used alongside the site-specific fire risk assessment for Dementia Active Banbury. 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: cooking equipment, washing machine, tumble dryer, consumer unit, TV monitors, sound system, office electrical equipment, heating, air conditioning, portable appliances, sockets, chargers, and temporary equipment.	All electrical equipment should be visually checked before use and PAT tested where applicable. Fixed heating and air conditioning units should be serviced in line with manufacturer guidance. The consumer unit should be checked in line with BS7671 requirements. Staff must report burning smells, damaged leads, overloaded sockets, faulty appliances, or equipment that becomes hot.	
Sources of combustible fuel: soft furnishings, laundry, stored activity materials, paper, rubbish bins, packaging, cleaning products, and flammable substances.	Keep combustible materials to a minimum. Furnishings should comply with fire safety requirements. Laundry, rubbish, paper, and packaging must not be allowed to build up. Activity materials should be stored safely in cupboards where possible. Bins should be emptied at the end of sessions. Flammable substances should not be stored unless required and controlled by risk assessment.	
Structure of the building, internal fire doors, and protected areas do not contain smoke or fire adequately.	Fire doors and protected areas must be kept available for use as set out in the evacuation plan. Fire doors should not be wedged open. The current fire risk assessment should confirm the condition and rating of fire doors, the mezzanine / first-floor arrangements, and any protected waiting areas.	
Escape routes, fire exits, stairs, and protected areas blocked or difficult to use.	The main entrance, side entrance, rear entrance, stair routes, session room 1, upstairs dining room, and any other protected areas used in the evacuation plan must be kept clear. Furniture, bags, mobility aids, deliveries, and activity equipment must not block routes, exits, or stairs.	
Alarm systems or emergency lighting not functioning or not adequate.	Smoke and heat alarms throughout the building should be service checked annually by a certified company. Emergency lighting should be checked regularly. The alarm system should be checked weekly and records kept. Any fault must be reported and acted on	

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	promptly.	
Fire safety equipment not functioning or being misused.	Fire safety equipment should be checked annually and in line with the current fire risk assessment. Only trained members of staff may use fire safety equipment, and only if safe to do so and evacuation is not delayed. Staff and volunteers must never put themselves at risk.	
Staff, volunteers, or visitors do not understand their role during evacuation.	The CEO, Operations Coordinator, Fire Warden, or most senior staff member on duty is responsible for managing the response to a fire or suspected fire. Staff and volunteers must receive site-specific fire training, including evacuation routes, break glass points, alarm response, protected areas, 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 or flames can be seen and the alarm is not sounding, use the nearest fire break glass point, alert the Fire Warden or most senior staff member, call 999, and begin evacuation if safe.	
Miscommunication between staff and volunteers during an emergency.	The Fire Warden or most senior staff member takes charge. Group leaders should communicate clearly with staff and volunteers. The priority is to keep members calm, guide them to safety, and prevent anyone returning to the building.	
Members living with dementia become anxious, confused, distressed, slow to move, or behave unpredictably when the alarm sounds.	Staff must appear calm, use the person's name, give one instruction at a time, and use simple reassuring phrases such as "We all need to go outside", "Everyone stand up", "Please follow me", "You are safe", and "I will stay with you". Familiar staff should support anxious members where possible.	
Wheelchair users or people with limited mobility cannot leave quickly.	Practice evacuations should include the use of the Evac Chair. Staff must not use the lift in any circumstances during a fire. People who can safely leave should be assisted to the nearest safe exit. Anyone who regularly needs help to leave should have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) covering support needs, best route, staffing, communication needs, and moving and handling requirements.	
Unclear evacuation plan for downstairs or upstairs areas.	Downstairs: everyone in the small activity areas should be taken into session room 1 if this is the safest protected route. Session room 1 has a one-hour fire door and a fire exit; once everyone is in the room, the fire door must be kept closed to reduce smoke inhalation risk. Upstairs: anyone not mobile enough to walk down the stairs into the back hall and out of the hallway fire exit should be taken into the upstairs dining room, which has a one-hour fire door and is in a separate wing from the kitchen and laundry area. Staff must	

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	follow the current risk assessment and Fire Warden instructions.	
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14. Fire Prevention and Daily Checks

The Fire Warden or nominated staff member should make sure:

- The main entrance, side entrance, rear entrance, stair routes, and internal escape routes are clear.
- Doors open easily and green push button releases are unobstructed.
- Session room 1, the upstairs dining room, and any protected areas are available and not blocked.
- Escape routes are not blocked by furniture, bags, mobility aids, deliveries, or equipment.
- Combustible items are kept away from heaters, sockets, kitchen equipment, and laundry areas.
- Electrical equipment appears safe.
- Attendance records are accurate.
- Staff know which members may need support to evacuate or move to a protected area.
- The assembly point remains suitable and accessible.
- Bins, paper, activity materials, laundry, and packaging are not allowed to build up.
- Any smell of burning, damaged equipment, blocked route, alarm fault, emergency lighting fault, or other concern is reported immediately.

15. Training

All staff and volunteers must be trained in:

- This fire procedure.
- How to raise the alarm and where the break glass points are located.
- The location of the main entrance, side entrance, rear entrance, and first-floor stair routes.
- The protected-area arrangements for session room 1 and the upstairs dining room.
- The rule that the lift must not be used in any circumstances during a fire.
- Supporting people with dementia during evacuation.
- Supporting wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.
- Use of the Evac Chair where staff are trained.
- Moving members safely to the car park of Unit 6.
- Roll call procedure.
- Calling 999.
- What to do if someone refuses to leave.
- What to do if one route is blocked.

Training should include practice evacuation arrangements where appropriate and 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, break glass points, and protected areas.

16. Fire Drills

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

- Use of the main entrance, side entrance, and rear entrance.
- Use of first-floor stair routes where relevant.
- Use of session room 1 and the upstairs dining room as protected areas where relevant.
- Staff response when the alarm sounds or a break glass point is used.
- Evac Chair arrangements where relevant.
- Moving members safely to the car park of Unit 6.
- Roll call accuracy.

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- Supporting members who are confused, distressed, 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, drill, or near miss.
- If the layout of the centre changes.
- If the assembly point changes.
- If the number or needs of members change.
- If a member starts using a wheelchair or needs more support.
- After the fire risk assessment is reviewed.
- At least annually.

18. Key Safety Statement

Dementia Active Banbury has ground-floor fire exits at the main entrance, side entrance, and rear entrance, with first-floor stair routes and protected-area arrangements for people who cannot immediately evacuate. In the event of fire or suspected fire, staff must raise the alarm, call 999, support members to leave by the safest available route where possible, and move everyone who has evacuated to the assembly point at the car park of Unit 6.

Staff must give particular attention to members living with dementia, wheelchair users, and anyone who may need reassurance, supervision, or physical support to evacuate safely or remain safely in a protected area until further assistance is available.

Review Record and Actions

Andrew Gill 18/05/2026

Review date 17/05/2026

Review at least annually and after any fire, evacuation, drill, or near miss.