



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Our Ref: MD/VW

31 January 2013

Managers and Proprietors
All regulated residential care establishments

Dear Sir/Madam

Competence of persons carrying out fire risk assessments in regulated residential care establishments

During the course of 2012, RQIA have written to registered providers of residential care establishments regarding fire safety. As a follow on to this, I am writing regarding the competence of persons carrying out fire risk assessments.

A key to good fire safety practices and ensuring that premises are suitably safe in the event of a fire lies in a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. While the competency of persons carrying out fire risk assessments is of the utmost importance, this is often difficult to establish.

The fatal accident inquiry into the deaths of 14 residents in Rosepark Care Home in Scotland concluded that the home's fire risk assessment was insufficient and unsuitable and that this was a significant factor in the loss of life that occurred.

RQIA believes that people carrying out fire risk assessments in residential care premises should demonstrate their competence by having attained recognised registration or certification

There are a number of registers of persons who are registered by professional bodies as competent to carry out fire risk assessments. These include registers operated by professional bodies such as The Institution of Fire Engineers (I.F.E.), The Institute of Fire Safety Managers (I.F.S.M.), and the Institute of Fire Prevention Officers (IFPO), as well as certification schemes operated by third party certification bodies (TPCBs), such as Warrington Certification and The Registrar of Skilled Persons Ltd, both schemes of which are accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

Ultimately, it is desirable that companies or organisations carrying out fire risk assessments as a service to regulated residential care establishments hold recognised third party certification by a UKAS accredited TPCB. Company certification addresses not only the competence of the persons who carry out the fire risk assessment, but the quality management systems within the company in question.

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At the time of writing, the only TPCBs that are UKAS accredited to certificate companies that carry out fire risk assessments are those operating a scheme published by British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE) as their scheme, BAFE SP 205. However, it is likely that, in the future, other UKAS accredited schemes will be available.

RQIA believe that use of a company that is certificated by a UKAS accredited TPCB to carry out fire risk assessments will offer the optimum degree of assurance as to the quality of the fire risk assessment. In the alternative, at the very least, the fire risk assessors who carry out the fire risk assessment should be registered by one of the professional bodies or certificated by a UKAS accredited TPCB. However, it should be noted that this alone does not warrant that the quality management system of the fire risk assessor's company is adequate.

Subsequently as of 1 April 2014, I would ask providers to ensure that all new fire risk assessments and those due for review are so carried out by a person, or, preferably, a company, holding appropriate registration or certification, such as outlined above.

RQIA inspectors will seek confirmation of this during regular inspection activity.

Guidance on sources of competent fire risk assessors and fire risk assessment companies has been produced by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council. That guidance can be found on RQIA's website at: [http://www.rqia.org.uk/what we do/registration inspection and reviews/ser vice provider guidance.cfm](http://www.rqia.org.uk/what%20we%20do/registration%20inspection%20and%20reviews/service%20provider%20guidance.cfm).

I trust that you will give this matter immediate attention.

Yours sincerely



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