



NFCC
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The professional voice of the
UK Fire & Rescue Service

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Fire suppression systems in care homes for Children
Building Regulations
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Sent via email to: enquiries.brconstruction@gov.wales

7 March 2023

Fire suppression systems in care homes for children consultation response

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is pleased to respond to this consultation released on 14 December 2022, on the proposal to amend the Building Regulations 2010 to include the requirement for automatic fire suppression systems (AFSS) in children's homes.

The NFCC is the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue services and is comprised of a council of UK Chief Fire Officers. This submission was put together by NFCC's Protection Policy and Reform Unit (PPRU).

General Comments

NFCC believe that AFSS are an essential component of fire safety in children's care homes. Children in care homes may have mobility or cognitive issues that could make it difficult for them to escape in the event of a fire. By having effective fire suppression systems in place, children in care homes can be better protected from death or injury.

NFCC is fully supportive of the proposals within this consultation and agree with the policy intent to provide parity between care homes for children and care homes for adults, in relation to the requirement for AFSS. Given the vulnerability of all residents in care homes it is illogical to require AFSS in one, and not the other. Where more than once piece of legislation causes confusion and inconsistency in application this should be amended.

NFCC is pleased that the government is proposing to widen the scope of the definition of "institution." This is important as it takes into account the individual needs of all children in care homes and ensures that AFSS are installed to protect all vulnerable children in the event of an emergency regardless of age.

NFCC is also pleased that the government is proposing to explicitly require AFSS in the Building Regulations for children's care homes. It supports the wording as set out in the draft

Regulation. Replicating the provision contained in the Measure 2011 in the Building Regulations will reduce confusion and inconsistency, and provide parity between children's care homes and care homes for adults, without affecting other provisions in the Building Regulations.

We trust the attached submission is helpful and welcome further discussions following the outcome of the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Coombe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Nick Coombe
Head of Protection Policy and Reform Unit
National Fire Chiefs Council

Organisational Information

What is your name?

Nick Coombe

What is your position?

Head of Protection Policy and Reform Unit

What is your email address?

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What is your organisation?

National Fire Chiefs Council

What is your type of organisation?

Charity

Questions

Q1. Do you support the proposed amendment to the definition in Regulation 2 of the Building Regulations?

Yes

No

Unsure

Please explain your reasoning:

NFCC agrees that the proposed amendment to the definition in Regulation 2 of the Building Regulations, as set out in the draft legislation, will provide greater clarity. When it comes to fire safety in residential buildings, the age of the residents should not be the only factor considered. While NFCC accepts that children under 5 may have more difficulty escaping in the event of a fire, their vulnerability to the flames and smoke should not overshadow the vulnerability of children over 5 years old. The amendment takes into account the individual needs of all residents and ensures that automatic fire suppression systems are installed to protect all vulnerable children in the event of an emergency regardless of age.

Q2. Do you agree the amendments to Regulation 37A of the Building Regulations provide equivalence to the provisions in the Measure?

Yes

No

Unsure

Please explain your reasoning:

NFCC agrees that the proposed amendment to Regulation 37A of the Building Regulations, as set out in the draft legislation, will provide equivalence to the provisions in the Measure. As care homes for adults and care homes for children are defined separately and are regarded as two distinct types of building under the Measure, we agree that any amendments should reflect this. In NFCC's view, the wording in the draft regulations do so.

We have not identified any risks or impacts to other provisions in the Building Regulations if the amendments, as set out in the draft legislation, are implemented.

Q3. If you have any further comments to make regarding the proposals, please set them out here

NFCC supports all the proposals as they aim to reduce potential confusion and inconsistency in the application of the regulations and ensure that children's care homes are subject to the same fire safety standards as care homes for adults.

Q4. Do you agree the impact assessment previously undertaken remains relevant

Yes

No

Unsure

If no, please explain and provide evidence of what you consider to be unidentified costs.

Q5. We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed amendments would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

N/A – NFCC does not hold views on the effects that the proposed amendments would have on the Welsh language

Q5a. Please also explain how you believe the proposed actions could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects, or increased positive effects, on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

N/A – NFCC does not hold views on how the proposed actions impact the Welsh language