



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the
UK Fire & Rescue Service

National Fire Chiefs Council
West Midlands Fire Service
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

Telephone +44 (0)121 380 7311
Email info@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk

Fire Safety Unit consultations
Home Office
2 Marsham Street, Fry Building
London
SW1P 4DF
United Kingdom

Sent via email to: FireSafetyUnitconsultations@homeoffice.gov.uk

19 July 2021

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on *Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in High-Rise Residential Buildings – recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report*.

NFCC believes that buildings should be suitable for the people who live in them, rather than people having to be 'suitable' for buildings. Building design should ensure that disabled and vulnerable people who may wish to leave the building if a fire occurs even if not in their flat, should be able to do so.

This consultation provides an opportunity to really enhance the safety of residents. It is clear that the current system of regulation which has allowed for the use of unsafe materials and failed to ensure high standards of construction, also fails to consider the needs of people when they are living with impairments.

Any policy response needs to consider that the operation of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) is intimately related to the Buildings Regulations and Approved Documents, and that these parts of the regulatory framework for safety in residential buildings do not exist in silos. Making buildings safe in the first place provides the best protection.

Our comments set out some specific aspects of the current proposals that require further consideration. In particular, the concept currently set out in the proposals does not seem to meet the needs of a PEEP as they are commonly understood, or what is ordinarily expected.

There are a range of wider measures NFCC have called for to support people to safely evacuate, and to ensure residents are safe in their homes. Measures range from Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments to the retrofitting of sprinklers.

Important findings from the GTI have concluded there should be plans in place for evacuating high rise buildings, should the need arise. This is particularly important for residents with reduced mobility and those who may require support to respond in an emergency who may require a PEEP. In October 2017, two years in advance of the Phase 1 findings, NFCC co-ordinated a group of fire safety industry representatives to produce guidance for those in buildings where the need for evacuation may arise. This guidance (now known as the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance) highlighted the need for

Responsible Persons to consider the need for PEEPs on a risk assessed basis in buildings where a stay put strategy has been suspended. For buildings where there has been a change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy, all residents who are unable to evacuate by themselves should have a PEEP formulated. This should not just be a plan, but a way of ensuring that the resident can evacuate the building safely.

The best way to support residents' safety in the event of a fire is to ensure that buildings are designed, built and maintained well.

PEEPs are for those with an impairment or reduced capacity to self-evacuate. They should not just be a plan, but provide practical means to implement that plan to allow those who need it, to make their way to a place of safety. The proposals seem to suggest that an outcome of the PEEP could be a conclusion that the resident will not be able to evacuate the building. We are concerned that the proposals as drafted amount to a paper exercise that will not improve the safety of residents. It is the common understanding that where a PEEP has been prepared that measures are in place to support it, and this may require the provision of equipment or assistance to help a resident to evacuate.

The consultation does not outline how the findings from PEEPs will be implemented and how they will inform the fire risk assessments of buildings. Clarity in this area is essential to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to assist in carrying out PEEPs and also so that FRS are able to ensure that Responsible Persons are carrying out their duties under the FSO.

The proposals also need to address the possibility that there may be visitors to the building that may require assistance to evacuate. Any guidance of fulfilling Responsible Person duties under the FSO should consider the need to formulate General Emergency Evacuation Plans in order to inform their fire risk assessments.

There are varying definitions and interpretations of PEEPs. The proposals would benefit from greater use of shared language and terminology, to ensure all sectors understand the Government definition. This is covered in more detail below.

NFCC cautions against PEEPs being viewed as 'job done' or creating a false sense of security, without measures in place to ensure that they can be executed. PEEPs should encourage a stronger focus that needs to be placed on ensuring buildings are safe, and that such a system would never need to be used.

Mitigations, safety systems and sprinklers

Sprinklers can be retrofitted at an estimated cost of £150k in an average high-rise building, and are hugely effective ways of supporting safe evacuation. Sprinklers are shown to be 99% effective in extinguishing or controlling a fire.

In December 2020, NFCC called for a mandatory requirement to retrofit sprinklers in all high-rise residential buildings over 18m, or 6 storeys, that are served by a single staircase. Sprinklers and other suppression systems can buy crucial additional time in firefighting operations, and may mean that evacuations are not necessary in the first place.

NFCC recognises the potential which has been noted in the consultation for these costs to be passed on to leaseholders, in a similar way to waking watch costs. Data published by MHCLG shows the average cost per dwelling for buildings with a waking watch in London is £499 per month (or £6k per year, per dwelling).

This compares to the one-off cost of retrofitting sprinklers of £2,500¹ per dwelling, with annual maintenance costs of around £34 per year. Measures such as sprinklers can often provide significant mitigation against fire risk, avoiding the need for other, more expensive, measures.

Evacuation Alert Systems, alongside measures such as sprinklers can allow for controlled partial evacuation, and reduces the likelihood of needing to enact PEEPs by evacuating people who may be in unaffected parts of a building. Tele-assisted living provisions can also support the safety of vulnerable people.

Building regulations and supporting guidance should reflect how society has changed.

Building regulations and supporting guidance do not reflect societal changes. Flats have been described as general needs housing since the development of large tower blocks in the 1960s. Sixty years on we now know that tower blocks are homes to people with complex needs. Fire safety design does not reflect this. This needs to change.

All housing should meet safe standards, otherwise the elderly and those with impairments have limited options for safe housing. People are living longer lives, and impairment can affect anyone, at any time. Housing for less mobile people should become an exemplar for mainstream housing, and meet higher standards for safety. This would ensure those with disabilities aren't discriminated against when finding accommodation.

A range of measures in addition to those above would bring English building safety standards closer to those of other countries to support safe evacuation. These include:

- Multiple staircases and refuges with communications, with new buildings having a minimum of two staircases;
- Evacuation lifts and refuge areas
- Detectors linked to FRS Alarm Receiving Centres

Buildings should be suitable for the people who live in them, rather than people having to be 'suitable' for buildings. This would lead to greater autonomy for many with impairments, providing the option to leave a building in an emergency in the same way those without impairments can.

These are considerations for future building design to meet the needs of vulnerable persons and keep them safe, but the principles could be applied retrospectively where possible and certainly during major renovations of existing housing stock to reduce the reliance and need for PEEPs in order to keep people safe.

The consultation should be mindful that in some cases, the measures required to ensure that a PEEP can be implemented may rely on expectations of external intervention which may be neither realistic nor possible in the case of those with severe impairments. In these cases, advice in carrying out PEEPs should also look to include a Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment, to aim to reduce the risk of a fire occurring and implement measures to minimise the effects of any that do occur.

Safety is our paramount concern, and we must ensure this is achieved in a way that does not have unintended detrimental consequences. PEEPs must ensure that where possible, residents with impairments can evacuate safely in the event of a fire, and do not face discrimination or stress due

¹ Estimated costs per dwelling https://www.bafsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2017/09/CALLOWMOUNT_web0407LR_lowres.pdf

https://www.bafsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2017/11/FOCUS_nov17_web.pdf

to safety or financial concerns. NFCC has absolute confidence that these risks can be navigated and mitigated successfully, to enhance the safety of those with impairments.

Below we have included some general comments and areas for further consideration to ensure the successful development of meaningful and effective PEEPs. NFCC would welcome further discussion on how to ensure the effectiveness of these proposals.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomlinson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gavin Tomlinson

**Protection and Business Safety Committee Chair
National Fire Chiefs Council**

General Comments

Person Centred Risk Assessments

NFCC views Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRAs) as an essential precursor to the consideration of PEEPs, given they can prevent fires. PCFRAs consider individual characteristics, behaviours and capabilities to identify risk from fire, and the value of adaptations/control measures to reduce that risk, such as Telecare linked detection, safer smoking/cooking aids and personal protective suppression in areas of risk. These measures are particularly important for those who cannot self-evacuate their flat, let alone their building.

There will not be one solution that fits all situations. To truly reduce the risk to an individual may require bespoke and innovative solutions depending on the building, flat, disabilities and agreement of the individual resident.

It should be clearly recognised that the actions and processes identified for a PEEP in the event of a fire can only commence once the resident has received information or warning that a fire is occurring in their flat or elsewhere in the building – therefore the warning mechanism needs to be a key part of any PEEP or PCFRA process.

A PEEP could be just one of the outcomes of a PCFRA. Where someone self-identifies as unable to evacuate by their own means a PCFRA should be carried out, and the PEEP should be just one consideration, that also includes the means of warning them of an incident in their building, a personal rescue plan, and 'in flat' prevention and protection measures. A vulnerable person is still most at risk from a fire in their own flat rather than elsewhere in the building. A Telecare system interfaced with an Evacuation Alert System and with full coverage detection, personal suppression and additional prevention measures, (such as scooter charging arrangements, automatic front door opening and closing etc.) is much more likely to aid a vulnerable person in the event of fire than a PEEP by itself. This will only be discovered through a broader Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment.

We note that the FSO does not apply to dwellings/domestic premises. We view PCFRA as the best means for improving safety within individual flats. Adjustments within the home, such as misting systems, can reduce the risk of a fire starting, spreading or affecting the home.

In a well maintained building, the greatest risk to vulnerable residents will stem from a fire in their own flat. To focus on PCFRA and duty of RPs to refer residents at high risk for Home Fire Safety Visits etc. would be more effective when it comes to saving lives, than solely relying on PEEPs, and would go beyond the GTI recommendations.

It needs to be considered whether an FRA can be 'suitable and sufficient' if it has not taken into account the risks posed by residents' behaviours, abilities, and evacuation needs. Fire service input via the safe and well process can signpost safeguarding issues where people are vulnerable, where the processes that other agencies might employ in these cases may not have consideration for evacuation in a fire. NFCC's Fire Safety in Specialised Housing Guidance includes a diagram to a 9 step approach to PCFRAs (page 87²).

²https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20Guidance%20publications/NFCC_Specialised_Housing_Guidance_-_Copy.pdf

Building Design

The nature of the built environment has changed significantly since the concept of stay put was introduced. Experience has shown us that modern materials and construction methods are, at times, not tested to provide confidence that they can meet the functional requirements of the Building Regulations.

Buildings should be built [or retrofitted] with measures that will allow for depth and breadth in safety. This could include elements such as sprinklers. In December 2020, NFCC called for a mandatory requirement to retrofit sprinklers in all high-rise residential buildings over 18m, or 6 storeys, that are served by a single staircase.

Further details on NFCC's previous submissions and comments about the Approved Documents and Design Guidance is available on our website³.

Equity

Reliance on evacuation must not be viewed as a mitigating measure against other fire safety issues. If a building is designed, constructed and maintained properly, unless heat or smoke from a fire is affecting a resident, the structure of the flat – walls, floors, and doors should provide appropriate protection. However, measures must be implemented to remove the risk of a single point of failure, or in instances where a stay put strategy has shifted to a simultaneous evacuation strategy.

Requirements which only apply in buildings that are 18m and above create a question of equity for people who may be as or more vulnerable in similar, lower rise buildings. A person who needs assistance to evacuate from a ground floor flat requires that assistance regardless of whether the building is 18 storeys high or 3 storeys high. Additionally, there are other building types where the proportion of residents with vulnerabilities is much higher and the likelihood of residents requiring assistance to evacuate will be much more common, such as specialized housing⁴.

Expectations and communication

The proposals would benefit from further clarity where there appears to be a lack of shared language and common understanding. Some terms would benefit from further definition, for example, 'rescue', 'evacuation' and 'unable to self evacuate'. Some proposals themselves suggest two different situations "assist effective evacuation during a rescue by the Fire and Rescue Service".

We would like to understand whether 'unable to self evacuate' means that one cannot get out of the building unaided during normal day to day living, and is always accompanied, but at other times they are on their own. Such definitions will be necessary when it comes to bringing policy to life, for example, will those who live with carers need to identify? We also would like to see a higher level of detail in analysis of PEEPs. For example there is a need to distinguish from a PEEP if a resident's flat is on fire and a PEEP for where there is not a fire within the flat, but the resident wishes to leave either through being affected by smoke etc., or a wish to evacuate the building.

³ NFCC Response '[Raising Accessibility Standards in New Homes](#)'; NFCC Response '[Sprinklers and other fire safety measures in high-rise blocks of flats](#)'; NFCC Response '[Technical Review of Approved Document B call for evidence](#)'

⁴ Part A of NFCC's guide for [Fire Safety in Specialised Housing](#) gives further detail on the risk to residents in these building types when compared to other forms of residential accommodation gives further detail on the risk to residents in these building types when compared to other forms of residential accommodation

It is essential that adequate measures are in place to carry out a PEEP. Without this, a PEEP is at best an expectation that the FRS will intervene and carry out a rescue on arrival, and at worst has the potential to notify a resident that they will not be able to evacuate the building.

There is a reasonable expectation from residents and the FRS that every effort will be made to undertake rescues where it is determined that people are at such risk. These activities should not be regarded as assisting in evacuation and may vary significantly from any measures put in place as part of a PEEP. FRS can be assisted in these activities by the provision of rescue information as outlined in the PIB Code of Practice.

In some cases, fighting a fire to prevent it affecting other areas of a building may negate the need for residents to evacuate and prevent them entering smoke filled environments. Data recorded using the Incident Recording System⁵ showed that between April 2010 and March 2017, there were around 57,600 (primary) fires in purpose built blocks of flats across England. Of these around 93% of fires required no evacuations, and around 91% required no rescues.

In a number of instances, it would therefore only be necessary for the FRS to go to those who need rescuing and/or reassurance. These proposals will need carefully considered communication and engagement strategies to avoid an expectation that the FRS will go to every person at every incident.

Enforcement

We would welcome further clarity on the policy intent around when and to what extent FRS will be expected to determine compliance and enforce non-compliance. For example, by what means FRSs will be able to determine during an audit that the RP has provided a PEEP for all residents who have self identified, and who will determine whether the PEEP is adequate for the residents' needs. Similarly, whether FRS will have the power to 'require/enforce' physical provisions if certain thresholds are met like retrofitting sprinklers, fitting evacuation lifts, and against what standard this will need to be considered.

While neighbours and family will be committed to supporting evacuations of those with impairments, we are not clear that the Responsible Person would be able to discharge their legal duties under the FSO in this way, without resilient planning. Further clarity on the policy intent of this is welcomed.

Implementation in care settings and other buildings where it is expected PEEPs will need to be carried out, generally relies on staff being present onsite full-time. The context within residential buildings is very different.

As above, we note that the FSO does not apply to individual dwellings. Currently, the FSO allows FRS to enforce against a range of measures in relation to the evacuation requirements for residents in a range of non-domestic premises where the evacuation strategy for the building is phased or simultaneous. This includes the ability to take enforcement action under various provisions of the FSO related to on-site staffing, staffing levels (such as overnight), and training of staff.

It is vital that where necessary, FRSs have the powers to ensure that robust precautions can be required in order to protect the most vulnerable members of society. We hold some concerns that allowing PEEPs to be seen as a paper based planning tool only in some circumstances, would dilute the existing ability to hold RPs to account for the provision of more robust evacuation procedures elsewhere. For example whether providers of care services in the future may seek to challenge FRS ability to require certain staffing levels, on the basis of lesser requirements in other premises.

It is unclear how vulnerable residents who do not have friends or neighbours willing to assist will be supported if there is no requirement to make adaptations to the building or to provide on-site staffing.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables>

Areas for further consideration include availability, the responsibility and potential liability this may impose on volunteers and whether the same training will apply as outlined in current guidance.

Impact Assessment

We think it is important to provide analysis of the resourcing of PEEPs. Any new burdens on FRS under the FSO will need to be quantified and resourced. Additional guidance will be needed to outline what adjustments could be categorised as 'reasonably required' in terms of the FSO in order to ensure that measures in PEEPs can be implemented.

It is essential that consideration is given to the fact that someone can develop an impairment, or have their impairment intensify over time at any stage in one's life. People cannot be expected to move to buildings that 'cater' for their impairment where reasonable adjustments can be made to support their continuing to reside in their homes. It is simply impractical and inequitable. That is why buildings need to be safe as possible for all people, regardless of impairments. In saying this, we would add that where accommodation is being sought for someone with an existing impairment, their needs are respected from the outset and they are not placed in housing that does not suit their needs.

Firefighting Operations

Information on where vulnerable people may be in a building is useful for Incident Commanders. PEEPS and Personal Rescue Emergency Plans (PREP), as outlined in the Code of Practice for the Provision of Premises Information Boxes in Residential Buildings, are not the same things. The PREP process can be delivered via the implementation of PEEPS, so guidance should make reference to link the two together.

Accuracy and currency of information are crucial elements, and we would support practical and reasonable measures to ensure these things.

Rescues can take place if someone is in danger. That danger is presented by the spread of smoke and flame in or on the building. The Incident Commander has to assess between dealing with the fire or undertaking a rescue where it may not be clear that person needs rescue – the stop gap between the two is the need for them to evacuate should there be the chance of danger (if that is possible and determined by the PEEPS).

Number of rescues required will vary and in some cases it will not be possible for FRS to support the speed and weight of attack required to firefight and undertake the rescues where the rescue of persons is a default position due to any failure of the PEEPS process.

Pre-determined firefighting aspects such as dedicated or designated staircases for firefighting activities will impact on the scope of the PEEP, and vice versa. E.g. the closest stair for evacuation may be the one which is used by FRS which may lead that staircase to become impassable or increase the evacuation time.

Rescues may require specific equipment and levels of resources which are unavailable within a suitable timescale even where they are identified in a rescue plan or part of a PEEP. There are no standard FRS attendance times, or levels of Pre-Determined Attendance for these types of incidents across the country. As a result, every PEEP has the potential to be different due to this, creating possible inequalities if there were to be an unrealistic reliance on FRS intervention as part of a PEEP.

The provision of information for rescue or evacuation where specific equipment is in use for either the movement of a person or their general wellbeing would need to be communicated to FRS to make rescues viable beyond the short term (e.g. specific equipment that must be removed with them). Careful consideration will be needed to ensure clear communication and systems are in place to

manage this information; where advance planning is needed it may be beneficial to consider measures additional to the PIB.

Annex A, PEEPs template

The proposals could benefit from greater clarity about how these proposals are intended to be implemented and supported. However, some suggestions are included below:

- *Do you know what to do in case of a fire?"* could be split into three parts - 'in case of fire in your flat', 'if you become aware of fire in another flat or part of the building', and 'if the evacuation alert system sounds'. This will reflect the different actions needed in 'stay put' vs total evacuation buildings with emergency evacuation systems).
- *Do you have difficulty self-evacuating?* could be split to ask if they would have 'difficulty self-evacuating from their own flat' and also 'self-evacuating from the building'. A resident may have some mobility or be a wheelchair user and be able to escape from their own flat, but not able to use the stairs to leave the building.
- *Do you use any equipment or devices?* could read "Do you have any equipment to assist your evacuation or have any critical medical equipment/medication that must accompany you if you have to be evacuated from the building for a period".
- *Description of the Personal Evacuation Plan* in the section marked "Should consider":
 - There should be an opening section that explains the principle of 'Stay Put'.
 - Bullet 1 "Agreed place of safety to evacuate to away from the building" needs addition of "or to a safe refuge to await evacuation by the FRS"
 - Bullet 5 - Change to "List any equipment to assist evacuation or critical medical equipment/medication".
 - Before Bullet 7 insert - "Any special requirements or considerations required during movement or evacuation " (eg critical medical condition, number of people needed to support evacuation).

About you and your response

Respondent details	
Q1: Organisation (if applicable)	National Fire Chiefs Council
Q2: Please select in what capacity you are responding to this consultation	(m) Professional body
Q3 a) Name of organisation b) Your Role c) Your responsibilities	National Fire Chiefs Council Protection and Business Safety Committee Chair National Lead for Protection
How many people does the organisation employ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50–249
Q4: If you are responding on behalf of a trade body or other representative group of individuals or organisations, please provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The name of the group Brief description of its objectives (250 words) Brief description of its membership (250 words) Number of members 	The NFCC is the professional voice of the UK FRS. NFCC represents a council of all UK CFOs. NFCC represents Enforcing Authorities of the Fire Safety Order.
Address (including postcode)	99 Vauxhall Road, Birmingham, B7 4HW

Questions

Q5: To what extent do you agree with proposal 1: We propose to require the Responsible Person to prepare a for every resident who self-identifies to them as unable to self-evacuate (subject to the resident’s voluntary self-identification) and to do so in consultation with them?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

Q6: If you wish, please explain your position (250 words).

When determining whether there is a requirement for PEEPs, other factors need to be considered alongside the height of a building. Where possible, residents need be able to safely evacuate from a building regardless of its height. For instance, a person who would require assistance to evacuate from the second floor of a building will require that assistance regardless of whether their flat is in a 7 storey building, or a 17 storey building.

Consideration needs to be given to costs to ensure there are no adverse impacts on those requiring PEEPs. Costs should not jeopardise vulnerable peoples’ ability to secure and stay in their accommodation. This could occur if landlords or other residents had to absorb ongoing costs, and were unable or reluctant to do so. We also would not want to see a situation where those with impairments have to take on the financial burden of their PEEP. This could lead to vulnerable people choosing not to self-identify, and RPs and FRS being unaware of residents with compromised ability to self-evacuate.

Responsible persons have a duty for fire safety measures under the Fire Safety Order regardless of the height of a building. To limit the requirement for PEEPs using an 18m threshold would put a cap on existing responsibilities; any changes should apply to buildings of all heights.

Q7: To what extent do you agree with proposal 2: We propose to provide a PEEP template to assist the Responsible Person and the residents in completing the PEEP, and to support consistency at a national level?

Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	Tend to Agree				

Q8: If you wish, please explain your position (250 words).

The proposals could benefit from greater clarity about how they are intended to be implemented and supported. However, a template could be useful to ensure consistency in the information being collected. Corresponding guidance for RPs would help to ensure they understand their responsibilities and requirements with regards to PEEPs, the various options available to those who might not be able to self-evacuate, how to action PEEPs, and how PEEPs may impact FRS and other residents. It is important that the RP understands that PEEPs may require the building’s Fire Risk Assessment to be updated.

We note the reference to the Guidance: *Means of Escape for Disabled People* which also includes templates for PEEPs. We would stress the urgent need to review this guidance.

Further consideration may be needed around the practicality of identifying people who could assist the evacuation of a vulnerable resident. The named resident might not always be ready, willing, or able to assist in the event of a fire. Clarity would be welcomed on the Home Office’s enforcement expectations under the FSO in this scenario.

Consideration should be given to whether there should be a competence requirement attached (the current Means of Escape for Disabled People guidance states that, “*training is essential*” for those formulating PEEPs) and for the need to be accounted for in a premises fire risk assessment.

If the PEEPs lead into a PREP, then this should be captured within the proposed template.

Q9: To what extent do you agree with proposal 3: We propose to require the Responsible Person to complete and keep up to date information about residents in their building who would have difficulty self-evacuating in the event of a fire (and who have voluntarily self-identified as such), and to place it in an information box on the premises to assist effective evacuation during a rescue by the Fire and Rescue Service?

Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Strongly Agree					

Q10: If you wish, please explain your position (250 words).

NFCC agrees that this would be a useful addition to the information contained in a Premises Information Box. We would note that it is vital that there is a consistent approach to the Emergency Response Pack content in the PIB. Any guidance to accompany the formulation of this information should take into account the *FIA/NFCC Code of Practice for Premises Information Boxes* (FIA PIBS) guidance. Such information should be secondary to the initial PEEP assessment, as focus should be on facilitating a successful evacuation so that a rescue is not needed. The PEEP assessment should look to implement building safety measures to ensure that those with impairments have a plan for evacuation and should only require rescue in circumstances where this main plan cannot be implemented.

This consultation should give careful consideration to not implying that a successful evacuation will always be possible, and rescue never needed; in some cases of severe disability, evacuation or rescue by FRS will be the only option.

It should also be made clear whether there would be an expectation for responsible persons to add information that they are aware of, for example, where they have been notified about a person with mobility impairments who has not self-declared or has refused a PEEP. Clarity is requested on whether the RP would be fulfilling the duties under the FSO.

It should be noted that the PIB CoP includes rescue information for FRS which is not the same as a PEEP; this applies even where a PEEP is declined since the amount of information required from the person is minimal.

Q11: To what extent do you agree with proposal 4: We propose, in order to assist the Responsible Person and support consistency at a national level, to provide a template to capture the key information to be provided in the information box?

Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Strongly Agree					

Q12: If you wish, please explain your position (250 words).

The proposals could benefit from greater clarity about how these proposals are intended to be implemented and supported to comment in better detail. NFCC would recommend regard is given to the FIA PIBs Code of Practice to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Q13: Do you think other information than in Annex A should be included in the PEEP template and if so, what? (250 words)

As above, the proposals could benefit from greater clarity about how they are intended to be implemented and supported in order to provide better comment. However, the template could benefit from additional information, including:

- A provision that the PEEP should feed into a review of the premises FRA.
- If use of refuge areas is to be relied on, details about the method of communication from the place of safety.
- Consideration of the provision of guidance to support RPs on these and other matters about how to consider PEEPs in an FRA.
- It is unclear whether the last section "Do you agree to this information to be shared with the local Fire and Rescue Service" is as intended. Is the intention to share with FRS, or is it asking whether they agree to a summary being kept in the PIB for use by FRS to locate and support them in an emergency?
- Is the resident recorded in the rescue information located in the PIB?
- Suggested amends to specific parts of the PEEPs template provided at Annex A can be found in NFCC's letter attached to this response (sections addressed are: *Do you know what to do in case of a fire?; Do you have difficulty self-evacuating?; Do you use any equipment or devices? Description of the Personal Evacuation Plan*).

It is important that the template does not have the unintended consequence of being unsuitable for some people with impairments. We would like to see the template cater for all people with vulnerabilities. It may be appropriate to have one template for residents, and one for visitors.

Q14: Do you think other information than in Annex B is necessary for the Fire and Rescue Service to undertake a rescue and should be included in the information box; if so, what (250 words)?

As above, NFCC would recommend regard is given to the FIA PIBs Code of Practice to avoid unnecessary duplication. The template should be reviewed along with the newly published guidance to ensure consistency.

Recommendations regarding specific information boxes are as follows:

- (d) The box providing *Brief summary of why assistance is required* includes, in the brackets *Cognitive impairment, brittle bones*, and should include "Bariatric, Mobility impairment, Vision impairment" should also be included.
- (e) Amending the box providing *Any special equipment of the resident that may compromise /affect assistance* to "Any critical equipment/medication that must accompany the resident if evacuated (eg Oxygen, medication etc)."

Q15: How often should the PEEP be reviewed?

C – As soon as practicable if the resident indicates a change in circumstances to the Responsible Person. A regular review of PEEPs is also required to mitigate the risk of changes to circumstances going unnoticed because residents have not updated their RP. Any temporary changes should also be recorded to ensure that in the case of a fire, FRS are operating with accurate information.

This should include a requirement that the PEEP be reviewed if the RP becomes aware of a change in the building that may impact the PEEP in place, e.g. refurbishment works, or the installation of sprinklers.

Ongoing engagement through the Resident Engagement Strategy should assist with reviewing the PEEPS process rather than just the PEEPS themselves. Technological solutions should also be considered as a means for allowing people to access and change their details etc. remotely.

In future, these buildings will also be subject to regular reviews of the Safety Case by the Building Safety Regulator, once the Building Safety Bill has been passed. These should include any holistic considerations regarding any PEEPs in the building.

Q16: How often should the information in the information box on the premises be updated?

C – As soon as practicable if the resident indicates a change in circumstances to the Responsible Person.

Please also refer to comments under Q15.

Consideration is needed around how to keep the information up to date while still respecting privacy considerations. Temporary mobility issues could provide real challenges for RPs to ensure information was up to date. As noted in the consultation, firefighters responding based on information which was out of date could risk their lives or critical time trying to locate a resident who was not there, or is no longer vulnerable.

Q17: Do you have any further comments that you think would be important for policy officials to consider as part of this consultation? (400 words)

NFCC has provided comments in our covering response.

NFCC is concerned that the policy response to this issue seeks to retrospectively apply solutions which may pass significant costs to leaseholders and vulnerable residents, over and above consideration of measures such as sprinklers. The way the proposals are set out could create situations where disabled residents face discrimination when looking for accommodation, and yet will not achieve the same level of safe outcomes as other more affordable measures such as sprinklers.

Meanwhile, non-worsening provisions in the building regulations mean that even when significant investments are spent on major refurbishments for commercial gain, where other countries require improvements, building owners and developers in England are provided with loop-holes to avoid any improvements to safety or accessibility measures, and increase their profit margins. In December 2020, NFCC called for a mandatory requirement to retrofit sprinklers in all high-rise residential buildings over 18m, or 6 storeys, that are served by a single staircase.

Current design guidance does not consider the needs of those with impairments to evacuate buildings adequately which leads to a lesser provision of safety. Building design currently only considers the needs for accessibility in buildings, which empowers people to enter buildings. However, egress is not given the same consideration. This can lead to a situation where a person can get inside a building, but they cannot get out in an emergency. For example, they may be able to access the building by way of a lift, but may not be able to exit because the lifts are not fire protected.

Many of the assumptions within the current design guidance are based on 1950s post-war building studies, conducted with fit and able-bodied people. They do not take account of people with mobility issues, impairments, or disabilities.

Buildings should be suitable for the people who live in them, rather than people having to be 'suitable' for buildings.

Q18: Do you have any comment on or data to support the impact assessment (250 words)?

The impact assessment is only concerned with the formulation/drafting of the PEEPs themselves. NFCC assume the timings referred to are for gathering information and write up. NFCC was not consulted on these specific proposals as part of the development of this Impact Assessment.

Consideration is needed of the impacts of implementation, how they will be deployed in practice and what measures are in place to ensure they are ready to be enacted. A paper based exercise would not improve the safety of occupants in these buildings and may have implications for levels of FRS Pre Determined Attendance as in effect a paper-only plan relies on an assumption the FRS will intervene and conduct a rescue.

If the provision of PEEPs is a requirement of the duties of the Responsible Person, then the impact will be felt across all residential buildings. The equality impact assessment should take account of the potential disparity in provision for those living in buildings over a certain height when compared to those living in other types of accommodation, such as sheltered or supported living.

There are likely to be more people potentially affected than indicated in the Impact Assessment, for instance, the English Housing Survey Adaptations and Accessibility Report 2014-15⁶ identified that 1.9 million households in England had one of more people with a long term limiting illness, impairment

⁶ [Adaptations and Accessibility Report.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421112/Adaptations_and_Accessibility_Report.pdf)

or disability that required adaptations to their home, with 19% of these requiring the installation of grab rails outside the home and 18% requiring a ramp.

Consideration should be given to the fact that someone can develop an impairment, or have their impairment intensify over time at any stage in one's life.