# NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Wilful Fire Raising Policy

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| Approved By: | Board Health and Safety Forum |
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# Contents

## 1.    Introduction and Aim

Wilful Fire Raising (Arson) is defined in the Criminal Damages Act (1971) as the "unlawful damage by fire of property belonging to another". Although the term 'arson' may be encountered in common usage it is not a term that is recognised in Scotland to describe the offense of wilful fire raising.

The Scottish Fire Practice Note (SFPN) 6, version 3 (published September 2007) "The prevention and control of deliberate fire raising in NHSScotland healthcare premises" forms part of the NHSScotland 'Firecode' suite of documents and the basis of the guidance provided within this Policy.

Wilful fire raising is increasing in all types of premises including the healthcare environment. SFPN 6 (v3) states that 29% of fires in all hospitals are caused by wilful fire raising, increasing to 39% of fires within Mental Health hospitals. Some of the issues that may contribute to wilful fire raising on NHS Scotland premises include:

- premises/areas that are unoccupied (either permanently or temporarily) or infrequently visited;
- easy access/egress to premises/areas due to the nature of the healthcare environment, with access often available 24 hrs per day;
- areas containing large quantities of ignitable materials (chemical, gas or paper/waste based);
- many hospital campuses comprise a widely dispersed range of buildings with limited external lighting;
- the large number of staff, patients and visitors, contractors and labourers, volunteers and students, that may be on site at any one time, and the ever changing nature of this population assists in potential offenders going un-noticed or un-challenged.

Whilst wilful fire raising can not be fully preventable however actions can be taken to minimise the risk to the lowest practicable level taking into account all circumstances. Security arrangements and fire detection systems are put in place to prevent unauthorised entry into buildings/areas and to enable prompt response in the event of a fire. Alertness towards general security related principles including the wearing of ID badges, prompt removal and safe disposal of combustible waste sources, and ensuring that areas are kept secure and free from undetected/unauthorised persons will assist in preventing wilful fire raising activities. Suspicious persons or suspicious activity should never be left unchecked or unreported; security awareness is intrinsically linked with wilful fire raising awareness.

It should be noted that there is no set age or demographic profile for persons attracted to wilful fire raising activities. The cause of the activity could be linked to any of the following:
- behavioural problems or attention seeking behaviour
- mental health issues including pyromaniac tendencies
- recent grievances with the health service or their policies
- economic or political motivations
- vandalism
- to conceal or destroy an item or evidence of a criminal act or fraud.

The revised Fire Risk Assessment guidance (SHTM 86) includes a reference note on Wilful Fire Raising (GN 03). The reference note supports the relevant question in the risk assessment by providing indications as to what is and is not acceptable.

The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Wilful Fire Raising (Arson) Policy applies to all areas and buildings controlled by the Board and to all personnel working for the Board. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde aims to create a safe and secure environment for all staff, patients, visitors, and all other persons that have cause to be present on site.

## 2. Associated Policies

The following policies should be referred to in conjunction with the Wilful Fire Raising (Arson) Policy. The Wilful Fire Raising (Arson) Policy does not specifically cover the subject matter contained within these documents:

- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde No Smoking Policy
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Fire Safety Policy
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Security Policy
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Safety Policy
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Lone Worker Policy
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Waste Management Policy

## 3. Responsibilities of Staff Groups

This section details staff responsibilities that can assist in preventing wilful fire raising from occurring by taking appropriate precautions and being reactive to behaviours and occurrences that they witness.

**Chief Executive**
The 'Fire Safety Policy for NHSScotland' identifies that the overall responsibility for fire safety is via the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will manage the Wilful Fire Raising (Arson) Policy through the Board Corporate Management Team and ensure clear guidelines are provided for those tasked with compliance of legislative and statutory standards.

**Director of Facilities (Nominated Officer, Fire), Chief Operating Officer (Acute), CH(C)P Directors, Service and Corporate Directors and General Managers**
The Director of Facilities is the nominated senior officer for fire safety (Nominated Officer, Fire) and is responsible for developing the Board's overall strategy response on all matters relating to fire safety (including wilful fire raising), for managing staff who advise on fire safety matters, for monitoring performance of the Board, reviewing incidence of fire outbreak, for producing an annual report on fire safety and for making recommendations on a Board-wide basis on any deficiencies identified. In fulfilling this responsibility the Nominated Officer (Fire) will liaise with the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer (Acute), CH(C)P Directors, Service and Corporate Directors and General Managers.

The Chief Operating Officer and Sector Directors are responsible for supporting the Director of Facilities in the development of the Board's overall strategy in relation to

fire safety and along with Corporate Directors for ensuring implementation within their areas of responsibility.

The Director of Facilities is responsible via his management structure for directing the operation of Site Facilities Groups within Acute sites which have Fire Safety management and Security management as a main agenda item. Additionally, the Fire Implementation Group meets quarterly to review fire activity within the Board and develop appropriate Action Plans.

Fire Safety should be an agenda item on all Acute directorate Health and Safety structures as Facilities report Fire Safety matters through the Acute Health and Safety Forum to ensure co-ordination between Directorates. Within Partnerships, CH(C)P Directors are responsible for nominating site specific senior officers who are responsible for ensuring that fire safety and security is considered within the terms of reference of Partnership and CH(C)P Health & Safety Committees/Groups. These groups will include representatives from the Facilities Directorate who will enable these individuals to fulfil their responsibilities.

**Managers**
Managers have a responsibility to:
- ensure that they implement this Policy in the areas for which they are responsible;
- ensure that the requirements of this Policy are brought to the attention of their staff including bank staff, agency staff and part time staff members;
- ensure that their security and fire precaution procedures are reviewed annually or following any security or fire event, to ensure the contents remain valid;
- ensure that security is enforced and staff wear a photographic ID badge and wear their uniform in accordance with the Uniform Policy to assist in easily identifying members of staff;
- ensure that all reasonable and practical measures are taken to ensure that areas under their control are secured from unauthorised persons at all times (especially during non core hours of operation) and any periods that a building, or parts of a building, are unoccupied;
- ensure all staff complete the appropriate fire safety training at the appropriate frequencies and keep up to date records of training attendance;
- record any breaches of this Policy on Datix;
- keep their workplace free from risk by not allowing combustible materials to accumulate and by securing waste and other materials as per relevant safety protocols and guidelines;
- participate in departmental risk assessments and respond accordingly to the findings/outcomes;
- respond accordingly to any concerns voiced to them by staff, patients, visitors etc. that could elicit possible wilful fire raising;
- Guide staff (and others) to post incident support if required, following an event.

**All Staff**
All staff have a responsibility to:
- complete the appropriate fire safety training at the appropriate frequency, and note the actions required of them in the event of a fire alarm;
- familiarise themselves with the associated NHSGG&C policies listed in Section 2 (above);

- providing it is safe to do so, challenge strangers in controlled areas and challenge strangers displaying suspicious behaviour, and ask for identification. Anyone acting suspiciously should be reported to your manager and/or member of site facilities management team immediately;
- respond accordingly to any wilful fire raising risk that they encounter, which may include preventing the act initially by securing an area or removing accumulated combustible materials, or reactive response to a fire;
- report any broken fences/doors/windows immediately to the site manager/estates managers for immediate repair;
- report any keys that have been lost/stolen to the appropriate manager to consider whether it is necessary for locks to be changed;
- inform their Manager if they notice a new risk, or the potential for a situation to become a risk;
- treat all fire alarms as an actual fire event and immediate initiating the fire evacuation procedure for the area;
- report any unlocked waste holding area, service yard, or storage room/area to the appropriate manager to prevent this becoming a target;
- record any incident appropriately (see Section 4);
- shall not wilfully damage or negate any fire safety measures e.g. wedge open or obstruct fire doors, extinguishers or break glass points or store combustibles in stairway enclosures or corridors.

## 4. Recording of Fire Alarm activations and Fire events

It is important that all Fire Alarm activations and Fire Events are recorded on the Datix incident reporting system on the staff intranet (click on Applications>Datix>New Incident) which is then sent automatically to the Fire Safety Officer. It is requested that as much information as possible is provided including police incident numbers (if applicable) and a timeline of events (if known).

As there is the potential for wilful fire raising events to proceed to court action, staff are requested to keep detailed notes of any event that they witness, or are involved in. The Police officers involved will be able to provide more information on this, if required.

The Datix should be completed by any person/s who took any form of fire related action (e.g. broke glass call point, assisted in extinguishing a fire) or witnessed anything in relation to the incident.

All fire events within the Board and all fire alarm activations are investigated by a Fire Safety Officer. The information provided within the Datix incident report may be sufficient to prevent an investigation from occurring. Any recommendations that should be considered/applied to prevent a re-occurrence of a similar event from happening are noted and the appropriate actions taken at site level.