



## COVID-19: Quarantine Hotels

4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – Issue 2

### The use of hotels for the purposes of quarantine

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This advice note provides general information that should be considered by Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in their dealings with hotels where they are being used for the purposes of quarantine.
- 1.2. This note replaces Protection – COVID-19 Quarantine Hotels, Issue 1, dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- 1.3. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, international travel arrangements changed to incorporate a traffic light system which permitted international travel to certain countries and in certain circumstances. The following applies to those returning to [England](#) who have been in a country on the list in the previous 10 days:
  - 1.3.1. *Green list* - are not required to quarantine.
  - 1.3.2. *Amber list* – 10 day quarantine at home or the place they are staying.
  - 1.3.3. *Red list* – quarantine in a managed hotel for 10 days although this might be extended in certain circumstances.
- 1.4. Different rules apply to those entering [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#). Fire and rescue services should familiarise themselves with the appropriate rules.
- 1.5. This note will be updated as necessary, but all fire and rescue services should ensure they keep up-to-date with the latest Government policy and requirements, the details of which can be found in the individual country links above.
- 1.6. This note is only intended to cover specific risks which have come about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It represents non-statutory guidance in order to provide FRSs with general advice to assist with a consistent, standardised approach across all services. The guidance does not constitute legal advice. FRS legal duties will remain those specified by law, in particular article 26 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), during the COVID-19 pandemic, but if any fire and rescue services consider that difficulties arise in relation to compliance with those duties, they should take legal advice.

## 2. COVID-19 measures

2.1. As the premises being used for the purpose of quarantine are existing hotels, there is already a need for them to provide a COVID Secure environment in accordance with government guidelines. The implementation of such measures can affect the existing fire safety arrangements that are in place. As a result, it is important that responsible persons (RPs) consider any impact these measures might bring about. Any impact must be managed in order to maintain compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), by reviewing their Fire Risk Assessment (FRA). Areas for consideration include:

- Staffing levels and training
- Means of Escape limitations due to obstructions
- Extended travel distances due to one-way systems
- External access for use in emergencies

2.2. NFCC have produced a range of guidance which will assist in ensuring RPs are given consistent advice. This guidance is available at the [NFCC COVID-19 webpage](#). Documents that might be of particular use are:

- Advice to Premises
- Scenario based guidance (in particular, Section 8 – Repurposed Premises)

## 3. Establishment

3.1. The establishment of a managed quarantine hotel is a matter for HM Government.

3.2. While people who require the use of managed quarantine hotels can only arrive at one of 6 designated airports, the managed quarantine hotel allocated to them may not necessarily be in the immediate vicinity of the airport they arrived in. As transfers may take up to 90 minutes, the hotels may be located a significant distance from the port of entry. This means FRS may have managed quarantine hotels in their service area even though they do not have a designated port of entry.

3.3. In some cases, the premises to be used for this purpose receive very little notice, 48 hours being an example. This gives RPs a limited amount of time in which to review their fire risk assessments and put any additional measures in place as required.

3.4. Fire and rescue services may not be notified regarding the establishment or operation of managed quarantine hotels. As a result, FRS may have a limited time to undertake any enquiries with the RP to ensure their duties under the FSO are still being met.

3.5. In some cases, FRS may only be aware of and be able to undertake activities around managed quarantine hotels after they have begun to be used for this purpose.

## 4. Security

4.1. Where a hotel is classed as a managed quarantine hotel, it will have specific requirements with regard to security. Hotel quarantine residents, for example, are not permitted to leave their hotel room unless in specific circumstances. It should be noted that evacuation in cases of emergency is a specified exemption.

- 4.2. The specific security arrangements will vary between premises. The security of premises and the management of those in quarantine will be the responsibility of the host.
- 4.3. Due to the general COVID Secure measures and any additional measures specific to a large number of persons in quarantine in relatively confined areas, it is possible that these may significantly impact on several elements of safety.

## 5. Fire Safety Concerns

There are number of fire safety specific concerns that FRS need to consider when dealing with these premises. It is important to ensure that these issues are reviewed by the RP as part of their fire risk assessment review. These points should not be regarded as exhaustive.

- 5.1. Where additional staff are used who do not normally work at the premises, security staff for example, they will require site specific training for fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures.
- 5.2. Additional security measures may result in restrictions in the number, size and location of the escape routes and the access to them. These should not be compromised and where changes are made, they should still allow for escape within in the required time and with relevant levels of protection.
- 5.3. Additional security measures to reduce the movement of residents may result in safety compromises. An example of this is where residents have been permitted to smoke within their rooms rather than have to go outside.
- 5.4. Any changes to the fire precautions as a result of the use of the hotel as a quarantine facility must be communicated to those who are stay and work at the hotel.
- 5.5. The demographic of those staying may differ from that which would normally be resident. This may lead to difficulties in communication due to language and cultural behaviours which may result in an increased risk of fire.
- 5.6. The prolonged nature of the stay may result in certain behaviours forming such as smoking in rooms and covering of fire detection. These may increase the risk of fire, compromising the safety of residents.
- 5.7. The simultaneous nature of the normal evacuation policy in hotels may be modified due to the need to maintain COVID Secure distances.
- 5.8. The number and location of assembly points may need to be reviewed to allow for appropriate distancing between people. Assembly points should be marked, their locations notified to those who might use them and they should be suitable for the purpose of locating and accounting for those who have evacuated.
- 5.9. Residents may feel that the normal evacuation procedures do not apply to them due to their quarantine status and their desire not to be in close proximity to other guests. See the items above for related issues and solutions.

## 6. Other Considerations

These concerns are not specific to Protection but may have the potential to impact on Protection activity in general. These may represent topics that are being dealt with elsewhere within your organisation such as operations or emergency planning.

- 6.1. In the event of an incident, operational personnel will need to be aware of the status of the hotel. It is important that details are passed to your operational teams. This will also include the out of hours or operational response of Protection personnel where your FRS uses them.
- 6.2. In the event of an evacuation, consideration should be given to working with the RP to ensure that their business continuity plan takes into account the status of the residents and the need for them to maintain quarantine.
- 6.3. Planning should also take into account the interactions with other premises which are not providing managed quarantine accommodation. This is especially important where there are shared escape routes or common assembly points in the event of several buildings being evacuated.

## 7. Actions

- 7.1. Where you have a managed quarantine hotel in your service area, you should contact the premises and identify the RP. It is good practice to establish a reliable line of communication with the quarantine hotel.
- 7.2. You should make enquiries to seek assurance that the premises is meeting the requirements of the FSO.
- 7.3. The review of the fire risk assessment should be the first action for the RP. Using the issues outlined above may be useful when interrogating any documentation or giving advice to the RP on the extent of their fire risk assessment.
- 7.4. Where actions are required, ensure that they have been implemented.
- 7.5. Ensure that there are effective measures in place for cooperation and coordination. This is especially important where the both the staff and security hold particularly important functions.

## 8. Additional considerations

- 8.1. Consideration should be given to the fact that the building is still being used for the purpose for which it was designed i.e. as a hotel. Issues found that are specific to the building being used will likely present a similar risk.
- 8.2. It is suggested that the premises is reviewed on a regular basis while it is in use as a managed quarantine hotel to better understand the risks such premises represent and the effectiveness of the RP's measures.

If there are any comments, feedback or questions related to this document, please contact the NFCC Protection Policy and Reform Unit at [PPRUAdmin@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](mailto:PPRUAdmin@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk).