Helpsheets
Disability Helpsheet 12: Fire Evacuation Guidance

This Guidance is to assist students who are disabled in the event of a fire evacuation. It is of particular relevance to persons who use wheelchairs, or have impaired mobility. It is also of relevance to any person who has a disability which is less obvious, for example, heart problems, arthritis etc., and also those who have poor sight or hearing.

Refuge Areas
Within University buildings there are areas, such as stairwells, which are protected from fire for a minimum of 30 minutes. On reaching such a location a person is safe from the danger of fire for sufficient time for them to be evacuated from the building should this be required. Within the University these areas have been identified as ‘Refuge Areas’. Some Refuge Areas have intercom installed which are linked to the University’s Security Control Room and their locations are identified by a green and white sign with a wheelchair symbol.

Any person who may require to use a Refuge Area during a fire alarm activation should make themselves familiar with their location in advance. Details on the location of Refuge Areas may be obtained from the Health and Safety Office.

Evacuation of Disabled People
The problems encountered by disabled people evacuating a building in the event of a fire will vary with the disability of the individual and the physical configuration of the building. Whatever the parameters of each individual case, in the event of a fire alarm sounding a disabled person should try to leave the building.

Lifts must not be used in the event of a fire evacuation.
If you consider you will encounter difficulty evacuating a building, it is important that you make your Course Tutor and student accommodation Sub-Warden familiar with your difficulty, to ensure that you can be assisted in the event of an evacuation and that the following is understood.

Impaired Mobility
If it is not possible for a disabled person to leave a building, they should go to a Refuge Area and arrange for someone to inform the person in charge of the evacuation (from either the University or Fire Brigade) of their location to ensure that, should it be necessary, they are evacuated.

A friend/colleague can stay with a disabled person in the Refuge Area. In addition, if there is an intercom in a Refuge Area you may use it to confirm your location with the University’s
Security Control Room, who will also notify the person in charge of the evacuation of your location.

For more information

W: https://libguides.tees.ac.uk/disability
E: disability@tees.ac.uk
T: 01642 342279