

# Specialist Estates Services Notification 24/05

12 January 2024

**For action by:**

Board Level Directors (Fire)

**For information only:**

Chief Executives

Estates/Facilities Directors and Managers, Fire Safety Managers, Fire Safety Advisors

Copy to: Head of Capital Estates and Facilities Department of Health and Social Care,  
Welsh Government

Dear Colleague,

## Fire Alarm Survey Report

Healthcare fire strategies rely on comprehensive, reliable, and effective fire alarm systems which are intended to provide early warning of fire incidents and enable prompt implementation of the response procedures.

Following an all-Wales online survey, the attached report ([here](#)) evaluates key aspects of the current state of fire alarm systems installed across NHS Wales inpatient healthcare facilities. The findings identify significant issues that reduce the effectiveness of the existing systems, which represents a risk to patient and staff safety.

The report makes a series of recommendations that focus on compliance. The main recommendations are summarised below.

- There is a need for NHS organisations to ensure full compliance with the fire alarm system maintenance obligations and user responsibilities contained in BS5839-1 and Firecode. It should be noted that the new version of Firecode WHTM05-3B, that is expected by 2024, will strengthen current best practice recommendations.
- There is a clear need for NHS organisations to establish lifecycle replacement programmes for obsolete/outdated fire alarm panels and detectors throughout their facilities.
- There is a need for NHS organisations to implement procedures to ensure installed systems are working effectively.

- There is a need for NHS organisations to ensure that system upgrades focus on compatibility, consistency, and code compliant fire alarm systems.

Whilst considerable investment has been directed towards fire alarm system improvements, through the ongoing EFAB initiative, NHS organisations are reminded of the importance of effective fire alarm systems and should implement the report's recommendations accordingly.

Any enquiries on the content of this letter should be addressed to Anthony Pitcher, Senior Fire Safety Advisor on 02920 904120 or e-mail [anthony.pitcher@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:anthony.pitcher@wales.nhs.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Douglas', written in a cursive style.

**Stuart Douglas BSc (Hons), PGDip, MRICS, MAPM**

**Director Specialist Estates Services**

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