

Fire Safety Learning Briefing

Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to communicate to all LSAB partner agencies the key learning from the fire deaths and near miss incidents reviewed by the 4LSAB Fire Safety Development Group (FSDG) which were identified over a 12 month period.

The role of the FSDG is to co-ordinate work across the 4LSAB area. The group aims to ensure fire safety and risk management is embedded into the day to day work of partners. The Group also maintains oversight of fire incidents and deaths involving adults with care and support needs.

Partner agencies are required to review the identified learning, consider their own agency procedures, ensure this learning is fully embedded within their organisations and to develop internal mechanisms to identify, support and effectively manage fire risk for all individuals across the 4LSAB areas.

Learning from 4LSAB Fire Safety Development Group Case Reviews (cases 18-29)

Identifying Fire Risk and Vulnerabilities

- Factors that may make an individual vulnerable to having a fire should be considered for all individuals, regardless of their housing arrangements whether they have a fixed address or are homeless
- Agencies should have an awareness that fire setting may be a method for self-harm or suicide, and to consider indicators that may suggest this
- An individual's capacity in regards to presenting fire risks, mitigating fire risks, and how to respond in the event of a fire must be considered and where applicable capacity assessments completed, with the support of Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS).
- When an individual is assessed as having capacity in regard to fire risk, professionals need to be aware of and acknowledge the complexities regarding mitigating risks whilst respecting the individuals right to make unwise decisions. A clear record of decision making must be maintained.
- Professionals need to have an awareness of the fire risks associated with emollients (i.e emollient creams) to enable informed decisions to be made about an individuals presenting fire risk.

Fire Risk Management

- Professionals should share concerns regarding non-functioning or missing smoke detection directly with the appropriate Housing Provider.
- Care Providers need to be informed of fire safety measures that are in place to reduce presenting fire risk; embed these fire safety measures within care plans i.e testing of smoke detection, ensuring fire retardant bedding is washed appropriately and used correctly, ensuring a means of summoning help is available and within reach; and regularly review the care plan and the measures within. Records of compliance or any issues with maintaining these fire safety measures should be recorded within the care plan. Family and friends should also be made aware of the control measures and actions required to maintain them.
- An individual with physical impairments which affects their ability to evacuate a property, should be considered and assessed for telecare interlinked smoke detection, regardless of their ability to call 999 or activate a push button alarm.
- Professionals from all agencies should, when possible, check for and test smoke detection on all visits into individuals' homes, and encourage individuals and their family members to test smoke detection regularly.
- Professionals should be aware that referrals to HIWFRS for Safe and Well visits can be made for individuals presenting any level of fire risk or with a vulnerability factor which increases their risk of fire. Safe and Well visits are not just for individuals who are presenting significant fire risks.

Multi Agency Arrangements

- All professionals must make the appropriate referrals necessary to support an individual based on the presenting risk and information available. Professionals must not assume that another agency has made the required referrals.
- Support and intervention that is available from Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service must be continually promoted throughout the 4LSAB, by all partner agencies.
- All agencies must consider the Family Approach when concerns for fire risk and vulnerabilities are identified in a home where children reside or visit. Referrals to Children's Services should be considered where children are at risk due to presenting fire risks.
- Professionals should be aware that individuals who are open to and in receipt of support from Mental Health Services may still benefit from Social Care Support. Mental Health professionals should make referrals where appropriate for Care Act Assessments and Carers Assessments.
- Professionals should be aware that the 4LSAB Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework can be initiated for any individual who does not meet statutory safeguarding thresholds but is presenting complex needs, and not just individuals who are presenting as high risk. The MARM Framework can be initiated by any professional involved with the individual – professionals should not assume another agency or professional has the responsibility for this or that they will initiate a MARM.

Agency Training Needs

- Key agencies such as Care Providers, should ensure that 'Management of Fire Risk training', provided by Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service, is embedded within the training plans for all frontline employees.
- All agencies should review and adopt the 4LSAB Multi-Agency Fire Safety Framework and identify and implement training to support the use of the framework. This training should include guidance for professionals on fire safety protocols of the agency and how to complete a risk assessment.

Best Practice

Think...Person, Behaviour and Environment – The most effective way to assess a person's vulnerability to fire is to identify the individual risk factors of which impact upon their health, safety and wellbeing. This includes the person, such as physical or cognitive impairments, their behaviours, such as unsafe cooking practices or carelessness with smoking materials and their environmental considerations, such as hoarding, trip hazards or blocked escape routes. The more risk factors identified the greater their vulnerability.

Care Plans and Person Centred Risk Assessments – For individuals who are in receipt of a social care Services, the management of their fire safety should be risk assessed and embedded within their individual care plans. Ensuring an individual is kept safe from the risk of fire must be a key component to their overall care provision. Ensuring smoke detection systems are tested weekly, fire retardant bedding is in use or the individual has an ability to summons assistance in the case of an emergency are simple steps that will greatly increase a person's safety in the event of an accidental fire occurring within the home. As with all care plans, their vulnerability to fire should be regularly reviewed and documented. Should the vulnerability increase, then so should the fire safety control measures in order to appropriately manage and mitigate the risk. A template of a persons centred fire risk assessment can be found within the [4LSAB Multi-Agency Fire Safety Framework](#).

Risk Management – It should be recognised that there are situations where an individual may be presenting significant fire risks to themselves as well as others but chooses not engage support Services or adhere to the fire safety advice provided. In such cases, it is essential that agencies work together and consider the Multi Agency Risk Management Framework as a method of fully understanding the risks being presented and in order to develop an action plan to mitigate the impact of the actions of the individual and to ensure safety and wellbeing of others.

What to do if you are concerned for a person's safety due to fire risks

- Complete a Fire Risk Assessment -
- [Refer to Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service's for Safe and Well interventions](#). Partner agencies can make a direct referral for Safe and Well intervention across the Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth and Southampton areas through completing the online referral form.
- Consider implementing the [Multi Agency Risk Management Framework](#)
- Follow the guidance and support detailed within the [4LSAB Hoarding Guidance](#)
- Management of Fire Risk training is available for all frontline practitioners and agencies from Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service. To request this training, agencies should email community.firesafety@hantsfire.gov.uk