



# Fire Safety Learning Briefing 2023

## Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to communicate to all 4LSAB 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 (April 2022-March 2023).

The role of the FSDG is to co-ordinate fire prevention 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 resulting in fire related serious injuries 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 45-55)

### Fire Risk Management

- Care Providers and Adult Services need to be aware that all of their Service Users are eligible for a Safe and Well Visit – even those with 'low level vulnerabilities'.
- All agencies, but in particular Care Providers and Adult Services teams need to embed the 4LSAB Fire Safety Framework and in particular the person centred fire risk assessment into their practice.
- Messages to agencies and staff regarding fire risks and Safe and Well visits need to be regular due to staff turnover.
- Safe and Well visits are not a solution to fire risk and vulnerability on their own without regular review, monitoring and implementation of control measures by agencies and professionals supporting the individual.
- Individuals who are bedbound should automatically be considered for a safe and well visit by partners.
- Professionals should consider whether presenting fire risks and associated circumstances such as potential self neglect should be reported as a safeguarding concern.
- Individuals who may be required to apply emollient products<sup>1</sup> should be aware of the associated fire risks both to the individual and themselves.

### Multi agency risk management

- Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service need to be included in any MARM meetings where a fire risk or behaviour is present.
- The MARM Framework is a useful tool for managing ongoing high fire risks.

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<sup>1</sup> Emollient products are creams, sprays and lotions that may contain paraffin or other products like butters and oils. Both paraffin and non-paraffin emollients can act as an accelerant when absorbed into clothing / fabrics and skin and when exposed to naked flames or other heat sources.

## Identifying fire risks and vulnerabilities

- Professionals should refer to the clutter rating scale when referencing and assessing hoarding. The clutter rating scale is available within the [4LSAB Hoarding Guidance](#).
- Professionals, in particular those working in mental health, to be aware that fire can be used as a means of self harm and suicide. Individuals who use it as a form of self harm may not recognise how uncontrollable / unpredictable fire can be. Advice and education is to be given to Service Users regarding fire being an uncontrollable element.
- All professionals to be aware that self harm and suicide may be considered as a response to stressful circumstances even if an individual does not present vulnerabilities such as poor mental health.
- Professionals do not need to 'cross the threshold' into someone's home to submit a Safe and Well referral – Professionals can refer based on what vulnerabilities they know the individual has in regards to their 'person' or 'behaviour' factors
- Involvement of a family member or unpaid carer should not stop professionals considering and referring for a Safe and Well visit, even when the family member or carer is managing well. Professionals should also consider support for the carer and referral for a carer's assessment. Carer Stress must also be considered.
- A smoke detector being installed is not sufficient alone – an assessment of whether an individual can react and respond to it is required.
- Fire risk must be considered for individuals who decline quickly after being well for a long period of time.

## Fire safety control measures

- When all meal preparation is done by Carers / family etc, consideration should be given to what equipment is used and whether the cooker / appliances can be disconnected.
- Smoke detectors and telecare equipment should regularly be tested by all visiting agencies.
- Telecare smoke detectors should be considered for individuals with physical impairments and cognitive impairments.
- Care Agencies must have fire safety control measures within Care Plans and be aware of what to do to keep a service user safe – for example toaster should not be kept on top of cooker hobs; beds and equipment should not prevent doors from closing; smoke detection must be regularly tested; individual must have access to phone / careline.

## Mental Capacity

- Professionals must consider whether a capacity assessment is required when there is a concern for someone presenting fire setting behaviour, to ascertain if they understand the risks of this behaviour.
- Professionals must remember that because someone is assessed as having capacity when they are not under the influence of alcohol or substances does not mean they will have capacity regarding that decision when they are under the influence of alcohol or substances.
- Assessments of an individual's capacity and their ability to use and implement control measures is required – i.e does an individual know how and when to use a telecare push button or is an interlinked smoke detector required?

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

- Complete a Fire Risk Assessment as outlined within the [4LSAB Multi-Agency Fire Safety Framework](#).
- [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](mailto:community.firesafety@hantsfire.gov.uk)

### Fire Vulnerability Table

The [4LSAB Multi-Agency Fire Safety Framework](#) contains a table of 'Fire Risk Vulnerability Factors', which was put together from the 2015-2018 fire fatality and injury thematic review. Since then and since the development of the Framework, there are additional risk factors and vulnerabilities which are frequently being seen in the case reviews of the Fire Safety Development Group. The Fire Safety Framework is due for review at the end of 2024 and updates will be made at that point, however an updated table of fire risk vulnerability factors is below. Professionals are reminded however that this table is not an exhaustive list and the severity of these factors may vary on a day to day basis.

<b>Fire Risk – Vulnerability Factors</b>		
Factors should be subject to continuous review		
<b>Person</b>	<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Environment</b>
Older Person	Careless smoking practices	Multiple Ignition Sources
Frailty	Alcohol misuse	Living alone
Poor Physical Health	Drug misuse	Smoke alarm / carbon monoxide alarm not present
Poor Mobility	Self-neglect	Smoke alarm / carbon monoxide alarm not working
Poor Mental Health	Hoarding	Hoarding
Dementia	Lack of engagement with Services	Oxygen use
Cognitive Impairment	Suicidal / self harm	Inability to raise an alarm
Sensory Impairment	Poor cooking practices	Evidence of previous fires
Unable to self evacuate	Emollient cream usage	Fuel Poverty / use of gas cookers and heaters
Bedbound		