



HAMPSHIRE
**FIRE AND
RESCUE**
SERVICE

Self Neglect and Multi Agency Risk Management

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A safer Hampshire

Introduction

Accessing the most vulnerable people is nothing new for HFRS, however with the evolution of the Care Act, developing safeguarding processes and multi agency procedures, we recognised that a higher level of provision was required for certain complex cases. This has led to:

- Policy Development – Multi Agency Risk Management Procedure.
- Improved Referral pathways.
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub representation.
- Multi Agency Review referral Procedure (Fire Death / significant Injuries.)
- HFRS Community Safety Officer team – Safe and Well Interventions.
- Provision of Multi Agency training – Management of Fire risks.
- Putting in place preventative measures and thresholds to identify those with additional needs of care and support.
- Training of all frontline staff to effectively recognise cases of self neglect.

Hoarding Case Study - MFRS

October 2016

- Merseyside Fire and Rescue responded to 'persons reported' domestic dwelling fire
- Early informative confirmed ' Fire with two persons unaccounted for, search and rescue in progress'
- The incident resulted in a double fatality involving a 75 year old female and a 72 year old male.
- Fire Investigation confirmed that the most likely cause of fire was due to an overheated fan igniting high levels combustible material causing rapid fire development.
- The excessive hoarding hampered the rescue operation to such an extent that the property had to be fully excavated and demolished to recover the two bodies.

February 2017

Case heard at Coroners court and a '*Regulation 28 – Report to prevent future fire deaths*' was issued to Rt Hon. Amber Rudd MP (Secretary of state) with the main matter of concern:

'The powers of entry afforded to Fire and Rescue Services in private dwellings'. Key points included:

- Current legislation does not address the risk of fire caused by behaviour of occupants in domestic dwellings.
- Where the behaviour of occupants are challenging and complex, a more holistic approach should be taken by all relevant agencies to safeguard the safety of these people.
- Fire and Rescue Services to strengthen local partnerships in order to reduce the risk of such a tragedy from reoccurring.

As a direct consequence of the Regulation 28 Report, MFRS and Local Authority (MASH) team developed 'Multi Agency Hoarding Protocol'.

28th December 2017

- MFRS attended a multi agency 'Emergency Strategy Meeting' following an Ambulance Safeguarding referral.
- Referral was due to an occupier being found in a hallway of a heavily hoarded property with sever headwounds.
- Son and daughter of occupant refused paramedics with further access to the property stating that their parents lived in 'squalor'.
- Son and daughter also confirmed that their mother was bedbound and lived on the first floor of the property.
- Both occupants had historically refused engagement with support / health services.
- Conditions inside the property were described as 'floor to ceiling' with combustible materials, blocked escape routes throughout.

Conclusion

- Clear similarities of the previous incident involving two fire deaths and the subsequent Regulation 28 Report.
- Considerable fire risks to occupants, neighbouring properties and concerns for the safety of response crews in tackling a fire at the address.
- Environmental Health applied for a 'Warrant of Entry' under the Housing Act, citing the previous incident as 'reasonable grounds to gain entry in order to conduct safety interventions.
- This warrant of entry was subsequently granted and MFRS entered the property on 6th February 2018 with colleagues from Adult Social Care and Environmental Health.

'This landmark ruling provides an important case study that demonstrates the effectiveness in partnership working to overcome obstacles from explicit occupier refusal, that in the past have prevented interventions to tackle serious fire risk from hoarding to vulnerable persons in owner occupier residences'.

HFRS Case Study- Mrs W

- Mrs W is a 76 year old lady living in a supported housing property.
- Mrs W had a limited family and social network.
- Long history of self neglect and lack of engagement with support services.
- Mrs W's living environment presented high levels of fire (hoarding) and health risks
- HFRS, Environmental Health, Housing, and Adult Services all had concerns for Mrs W.
- Mrs W had a reluctance to engage with any agency believed to be due to a bad previous experience of a house clearance taking place without her consent during a period of hospital admission.
- Adult Services could not confirm needs of care and support or assess capacity due to unwillingness to engage with social worker.

Multi Agency involvement with Mrs W

- HFRS was aware of Mrs W due to various call outs to her address, referrals for a safe and well visits from SCAS & environmental health (continuous cycle)
- Various agencies had difficulty engaging with Mrs W – resulting in agencies submitting various referrals backwards and forwards to each other to try and support her.
- Housing Provider confirmed eviction proceedings would be initiated unless conditions improved.
- A risk Management meeting was called together and hosted by HFRS – bringing together all the relevant agencies who could support Mrs W – Housing, adult services, environmental health, and Mrs W's nephew.
- Action plan formulated and agreed for all agencies to support Mrs W and reduce risks moving forward. Adult Services identified as lead agency.
- Risk Management meeting (Review) 5 weeks later - Action plan reviewed.

Actions Agreed (overview)

- Adult Services:
 - Consider support worker for Mrs W.
 - Consider capacity assessment for Mrs W in regards to fire risks being presented.
 - Involvement of Health professional(s)
- Environmental Health:
 - As a result of multi agency risk management meeting, no formal action to be taken at this time. Situation to be monitored.
- HFRS:
 - To offer further safe and well intervention to Mrs W, and develop an action plan with Mrs W to reduce fire loading /risks within property.
 - To provide Safe and Well intervention to all neighbouring properties.
 - To provide fire safety presentation at residents coffee morning.
- Nephew:
 - To work with Mrs W in improving and reducing the fire loading and associated risks within her living environment.
- Housing
 - To provide support in removal of unwanted/needed belongings and to delay taking formal eviction proceedings.

Outcomes

- Improved engagement of Mrs W with all agencies
- Improved / safer living conditions
- Mrs W agreed to access support from adult / health services
- Health risks significantly reduced
- Escape routes cleared
- Fire loading reduced
- Ignition sources reduced and better managed
- Improved relations with family members
- Acceptance of support worker from housing, enabling monitoring of risks.
- Tenancy no longer at risk

Risk Management Framework - Learning

- The Risk Management Framework (RMF) ensures a multi agency approach is applied to addressing high levels of risk.
- The RMF enables each agency to demonstrate all necessary actions are being taken to support the adult at risk.
- By using the RMF process, the cycle of concerns being reported, with little or no action being achieved can be broken.
- The RMF process is beneficial in engaging with the family of the adult at risk and ensuring the wishes and feelings of that adult are communicated and included within the action plan.
- The RMF process can assist in actions and progress being set at a pace of the adult at risk.
- Clear and accurate recording of decision making and the rationale behind this can be obtained.
- Monitoring of ongoing risks is achievable allowing the necessary intervention to be put in place at a time when needed.

Questions.

