

# Partner Newsletter

## 2026

Issue #04

### Welcome to the fourth edition of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) Prevention Partners Newsletter.

This edition focuses on HWFRS learning from recent serious incident reviews, including Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Regulation 28 Prevention of Future Death reports and our own internal Fatality and Significant Incident reviews.

We appreciate the support we receive from all our partners across Herefordshire and Worcestershire and look forward to working together to reduce risk within our communities.

#### Fire retardant bedding:

In some situations, individuals require additional fire safety measures, such as fire-retardant (FR) equipment, which may include bedding, blankets, and mats. This equipment can help prevent a smouldering fire from escalating and provide added protection for those whose vulnerabilities may limit their ability to escape in the event of a fire.



We want to highlight the fire safety risks posed by using non-FR scatter cushions or similar items alongside FR bedding. This compromises the effectiveness of the FR equipment and can significantly reduce its ability to safeguard against fire.

**Did you know?** HWFRS can provide free FR equipment to vulnerable individuals as part of our Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV).

## Telecare:

### Why does Telecare linked smoke detection matter?

National and local Data shows people have died in accidental dwelling fires where their telecare was in place but not linked to smoke detection. **HWFRS recommends that all users of Telecare have linked smoke detection.**

When installed and operated in line with the relevant British Standards, **Telecare linked smoke detection can significantly improve a person's chances of surviving a fire.**

It is also vital to ensure pendant alarms are within easy reach of the person if they decline to wear them. **Agencies visiting should also check that the equipment is plugged in and working.**

## Emollient cream:

Emollients are not flammable in themselves. However, regular use of these products, especially when applying to large areas of your body, can cause the product to build up on clothing, bedding and bandages/dressings leaving a flammable residue. If you then introduce an ignition or heat source such as accidentally dropping a lit cigarette, match or lighter, sitting too close to a gas, halogen, or open fire, catching clothing on a hob when cooking, a fire can ignite. The fire will burn very intensely, spread within seconds and could lead to serious injury or death.



**More information:** For further advice please visit <https://www.hwfire.org.uk/advice/safety-in-the-home/emollient-safety/>



## Oxygen Therapy use at home:

It is essential to **identify and share concerns** where people are smoking whilst using medical oxygen as doing so poses a fatal risk. **HWFRS also strongly advises against vaping or using e-cigarettes while using home oxygen therapy.** Oxygen significantly increases the speed and intensity of fires, and the heating elements or battery components in vapes can act as ignition sources, significantly increasing the risk of severe or fatal burns.

## Incontinence:

**Incontinence pads are highly combustible** and can present as a significant fire risk, especially **when used by people with limited mobility**, as they can **quickly turn a small ignition into a fatal fire**. They are often stored in large quantities near heat sources and can act as additional fuel for fire.

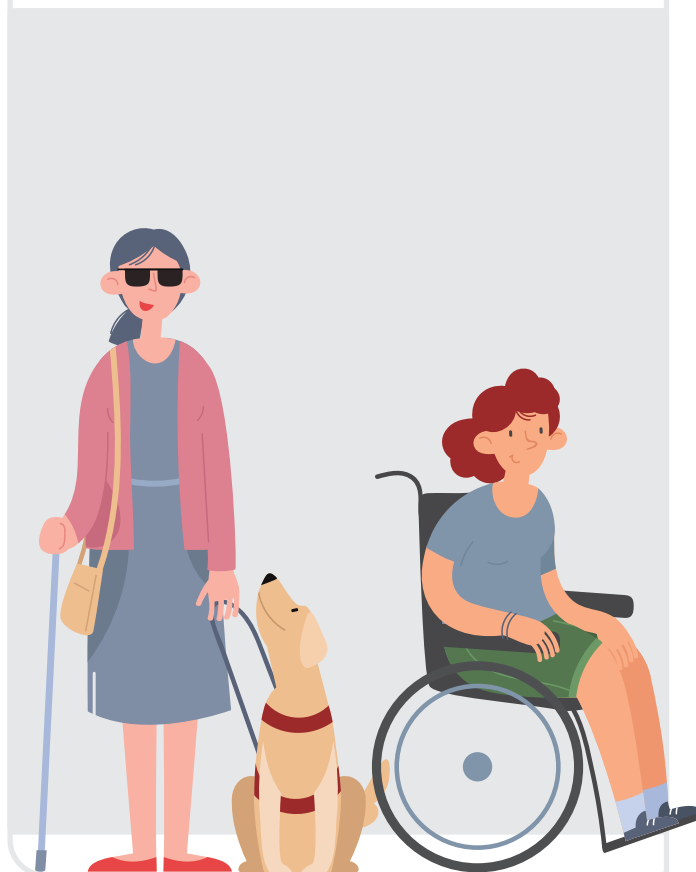
Using incontinence pads with an electric riser recliner chair presents potential damage to the chair's electronic components. Moisture may pass through the pad and damage the chair's electric motors, transformers, or hand controller, leading to malfunction or fire.

**i** To reduce this risk, use large, high-capacity washable or disposable chair pads. Regularly inspect the electrical cables and transformer (usually under the chair) to ensure they are dry. Keep the area around the chair clear and check the wiring frequently.

**i** Do not use an electric blanket if you experience incontinence, even if you wear protective pads.

## Immobility:

Where there are concerns about mobility, it's important to check the positioning of beds and chairs. If they are placed close to air vents, there is a risk that airflow could accelerate the spread of fire in the event of an incident.



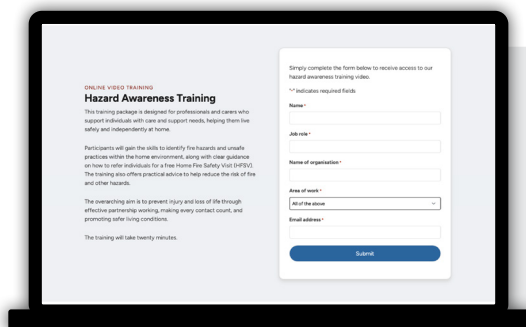
## Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) referrals:

We triage all referrals and our system is most effective at reducing risk when we have the full information about the individual and their circumstances. Use of the clutter image rating levels and noting if the occupier is immobile allows us to inform our Fire Control at the point of referral.



If the person you are supporting moves address, please consider submitting a further referral. This allows us to carry out a follow up HFSV and remove any risk information from the previous address. It is also important that any equipment provided to reduce risk is moved with them.

**Attention:** We kindly ask partners to include as much detail as possible when submitting a referral for a HFSV.



## FREE Online Video Hazard Awareness Training for Professionals

We have an online video hazard awareness session. The training is free and accessed via the link below. Complete the online form to access the video.

During the session, participants will gain the skills to identify fire hazards and unsafe practices within the home environment, along with clear guidance on how to refer individuals for a free HFSV. The training also offers practical advice to help reduce the risk of fire and other hazards.

## Online Hazard Awareness Training for Professionals:

<https://www.hwfire.org.uk/HazardAwarenessTraining>

If you need any advice or support with regards to signposting or HFSVs, or any of the items mentioned in this newsletter, contact the Prevention Team on **0800 032 1155** or email [signposting@hwfire.org.uk](mailto:signposting@hwfire.org.uk)

