



**PREVENTION**



# Partner Newsletter

## Summer 2024

Issue #02

Welcome to the second edition of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) Prevention Partners Newsletter. We will be sending the Newsletter out bi-annually which will bring together highlights from our work. We hope you will find it helpful.

We appreciate the support we receive from all our partners across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. We have received over 1,000 partner referrals in the first six months of 2024. We have referred out to partner agencies nearly 200 times. We have completed just under 3,500 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs). Thank you so much for your continued support.

## HOW CAN I ARRANGE A VISIT?

Complete your **FREE** online Home Fire Safety Check now by visiting:

[hwfire.org.uk/advice/professionals-and-carers/](http://hwfire.org.uk/advice/professionals-and-carers/)

For further information about a **FREE** Home Fire Safety Visit call the Prevention Team on

**0800 032 1155**

## Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms – what's right for you and your home?

Working smoke alarms should be fitted on every floor as a minimum, in the right place and suitable for the person's needs.

If the person can hear their alarms and there are no additional needs, standard alarms may be sufficient.

If the person takes their hearing aids out at night and is unable to hear their alarm then they may require alarms linked with a vibrating pad and strobe light which can be supplied by HWFRS. If the person is profoundly deaf and cannot hear any alarms they may require a Bellman's system which Action Deafness (Herefordshire) and the Sensory Impairment Team (Worcestershire) can support with.





If the person is unable to either understand what the alarms operating means and/or respond appropriately, please consider referring to Telecare for Assistive Technology as these alarms can be linked to a call centre who will know that the alarm is activating and will call HWFRS to attend as required.

A holistic approach that is person-centred and considers the person, their specific needs/risks and their living environment is essential. Please refer to HWFRS for a HFSV for advice and/or where alarms and other fire safety equipment may be required; please be aware that if they are a tenant, it is the responsibility of their housing provider to ensure appropriate alarms are fitted. HWFRS can still visit to give fire safety and escape planning advice.

## NFCC – Seven Steps to Prevent smoking-related fires

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) released its [Seven Steps to Prevent Smoking Related Fires Toolkit](#) in June 2023. The toolkit aims to support Fire and Rescue Services to prevent accidental fires caused by smoking materials.

We will be identifying local and national organisations to work in partnership with, so please contact us if you would to work collaboratively with us to support individuals to prevent smoking-related fires.



## Fire safety advice

### Smoking

If you are visiting anyone who smokes, the following advice can be given to them to reduce the risk of a fire from happening in their home.

- Never smoke in bed – if you need to lie down, don't light up. You could doze off and set your bed on fire.
- Take extra care when you're tired, taking any sort of drugs or drinking alcohol. It's very easy to fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning.
- Make sure your cigarette is fully extinguished. Put it out, right out!
- Never leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended – they can easily overbalance as they burn down.
- Use a proper, heavy, ashtray that can't tip over easily and is made of a material that won't burn. Make sure your cigarette is not still burning when you are finished – put it out, right out.
- Do not empty your ashtray into a bin because this can cause the bin to catch fire. A drop of water in the ashtray will help to make it safe, then leave it to cool down fully.
- Make sure to keep your smoking materials (cigarettes, lighters etc) out of sight and reach of children.

## Drugs and Alcohol

- Don't drink/ take drugs and fry/cook – you could be burnt, cause a fire or fall asleep and leave cooking on.
- Alcohol/drugs can also cause drowsiness and can make you less alert to the signs of fire.
- Alcohol/drugs can heighten feelings of disorientation, making it difficult to escape.

- If you have had a drink or taken drugs consider if you would hear your smoke alarms.

HWFRS can complete a HFSV, check the right alarms are in place and fit equipment. If you see burn marks when you visit or have concerns about someone smoking unsafely then we can provide fire retardant bedding, blankets and mats when completing a HFSV.

## Water Safety

Drowning is amongst the leading causes of accidental death in the UK. We want to make people safer by making them aware of the risks and dangers when around water, what to do if they fall into water and how to help someone who is in trouble in water. In the last 5 years, more than 1,500 people have accidentally drowned across the UK and Ireland and many more have non-fatal experiences, sometimes

suffering life-changing injuries. HWFRS and RLSS UK work in partnership, to educate people to enjoy water safely, to keep their families and friends safe and to know what to do in an emergency. The RLSS UK offer valuable support and counselling services to friends and families that have been affected by drowning incidents.

## Summer Water Safety

46% of drownings occur in the summer months and this rises to 75% amongst 13 – 17-year olds. Rivers and lakes/lochs pose the greatest statistical risk as there are often hazards that the average person is not equipped to handle and there is a lack of professional supervision. Accidents are mostly preventable with the correct knowledge and judgment and here are our tips to staying safe in the water during the summer.

For full details of how to stay safe in and around water, please visit the [Water Safety page](#) on our website.

### ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE



#### Whenever you are around water:

**STOP AND THINK**

Take time to assess your surroundings. Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.

**STAY TOGETHER**

When around water always go with friends or family. Swim at a lifeguarded venue.

#### In an emergency:

**CALL 999**

Ask for the Fire and Rescue Service when inland and the Coastguard if at the coast. Don't enter the water to rescue.

**FLOAT**

Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.

Enjoy Water **Safely**

Learn basic lifesaving and CPR skills. Visit [www.rlss.org.uk](http://www.rlss.org.uk)



## Barbecue Safety Tips

To avoid injuries or damage to property follow these simple precautions:

- Never leave a barbecue unattended.
- Ensure the barbecue is on a flat site, well away from a shed, trees or shrubs.
- Keep children, garden games and pets well away from the cooking area.
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies.
- Ensure the barbecue is cool before attempting to move it.



For home and business fire safety advice and information about our services please visit [www.hwfire.org.uk/advice/](http://www.hwfire.org.uk/advice/)

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)



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