



DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE



# Partner Newsletter

## UPDATE FROM OUR PREVENTION TEAM

### New Chief Fire Officer

Andy Cole QFSM is the new Chief Fire Officer of DWFRS. Andy started his fire service career over 20 years ago as an on-call firefighter for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), based at Castle Cary fire station. In 2008 he joined Dorset FRS as a wholetime firefighter, continuing his on call duties alongside his role in Dorset.



Andy has responsibility for the leadership of the service, providing direction and improvement. He advises the Fire Authority to ensure we

meet our statutory obligations and deliver a highly effective service to our communities, whilst providing value for money.

### Contacting DWFRS

Any partners that need to contact us about Safe & Well or have concerns about vulnerable residents must email [safe&well@dwfire.org.uk](mailto:safe&well@dwfire.org.uk) and **not** the general DWFRS enquiries address. This is particularly important if emails contain personal data about members of the community who need Safe & Well visits.

### Person Centred Framework

If you work in the care sector there are many ways that you can help to keep the people you care for safe. One way to help is to download our [Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment Guide](#). Home care providers should inform their staff about their fire safety responsibilities when working in private homes. Anyone who needs care support is particularly vulnerable to the dangers of fire, for reasons including:

- they may not be able to respond to a fire as quickly,
- they may not be able to escape a fire,
- they may be more at risk due to lifestyle factors,
- they may use healthcare equipment or medicines which carry a fire risk, such as oxygen or emollient creams.

To give the best possible care, you need to:

- be aware of the risks,
- know how you can reduce these risks,
- to take action,
- know where to go for help.

DWFRS **cannot** undertake fire risk assessments on behalf of carers or care agencies. However, we **can** offer a free Safe & Well visit. During the visit we provide good will home fire safety advice, and can fit free smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors. We can arrange a joint visit, if needed.

## Know the Fire Risks

The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) is running a campaign to highlight the fire risks of emollient creams. These are used to treat a range of common skin conditions. If used regularly to a large area of the body and users are aged over 40; smokers; experiencing limited mobility or slow mobility; living alone or receiving care, they are considered most at risk. More information and a video about the fire risks associated with emollients can be accessed [here](#).

## Making a Referral

When making a Safe & Well referral partners are asked to include notes if there are special requests e.g. needing to contact or include a relative or trusted companion. Space on the referral form is limited so notes must be brief, but detailed notes or requests can be emailed to [safe&well@dwfire.org.uk](mailto:safe&well@dwfire.org.uk) along with the name and address of the person being referred. Having as much information as possible means we can be more prepared and able to help vulnerable residents.

## Data Sharing Agreements

A reminder that as part of our commitment to data protection, Data Sharing Agreements are being sent to all partners. Please look out for these and, if one has already been sent to you, do sign and return it. If you have any questions about this, contact [natalie.waters@dwfire.org.uk](mailto:natalie.waters@dwfire.org.uk)

## Advice for Using Wheat Bags

Wheat bags can provide warmth, relief and comfort when used properly. But, as with any product involving heat, there is a danger of fire and a risk of injury if care is not taken. If you use a wheat bag for yourself, or for somebody that you care for, always make sure to:

- follow the heating instructions carefully,
- add a cup or bowl of water on the turntable to stop the wheat from drying out,
- ensure that the wheat bag is not heated for too long, or at too high a temperature, and never leave unattended during the heating process,
- don't use if the bag shows any signs of over-use, e.g. discolouration, smell of burning or charring,
- leave bags to cool on a non-combustible surface, such as a draining board, and never reheat bags until they have completely cooled.



The above image is of a wheat bag that caught alight in the microwave.

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Remember, in the event of a fire: Get out, Stay out and Call 999.

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