



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE



Partner Newsletter

Update from our Prevention Team

Our newsletter contains information to help you, and the people you work with and support, to stay safe. Please share.

Annual Awards Ceremony 2025

Prevention team members Tess Cross, (Education Manager) and Sarah Moore, (Safe & Well Manager) were presented with a Making a Difference Award at our Annual Awards Ceremony in May. The awards were presented in recognition of their hard work, professionalism and dedication to our prevention priorities and for their work on supporting Afghan refugees with fire safety in Wiltshire and Dorset. Vikki Thomas – Prevention Delivery Manager, was also presented with her twenty year Long Service Award by Chief Fire Officer, Andy Cole.



Tess Cross, Sarah Moore, Karen Towner (Education Officer) and Vikki Thomas at the Annual Award Ceremony

Community Group Visits

If you run a community group/network or support group, we now have limited availability for our Advisors to come and talk about home fire safety. If this is of interest to you, please do [get in touch](#).

What We Can and Can't Do

A brief reminder on what we can and can't do during home fire safety visits. Our remit is to give advice and guidance on reducing the risk of fire in the homes of those considered to be at risk. We **CAN** fit smoke, heat, and CO detectors, provide (limited) resources to ensure safety and warmth, suggest way to improve safety, and refer on to partner organisations for additional support. However, we **CAN'T** write risk assessments, complete reports and/or provide feedback to **any** partner. For the full list of what we can and can't do please visit our [website](#).

Advice for Hot Weather

Fire safety doesn't stop when you leave the house, especially when the weather is hot and sunny. We want everyone to keep safe when spending time outside. With more people taking to camping, caravanning, barbecuing and general outdoor leisure, always consider the fire risks. The Fire Kills campaign leaflet on fire safety outdoors is available to access [here](#). In addition, Firewise UK has produced 'How to Prepare Your Home for Wildfires' and is available on our [website](#). It shares valuable advice for residents that live close to areas that are at risk of wild fires.

Air Fryer Safety

Air fryers have become an increasingly popular kitchen appliance in homes. Following a fire caused by an online cleaning hack for air fryers, we want to share our top safety tips:



- Always read and follow the manufacturers instructions for use and maintenance,
- always unplug the air fryer when not in use,
- don't use in a non-ventilated area or under a kitchen cupboard and pull the air fryer away from the wall and open windows if there is no extraction fan,
- don't let the air fryer hot air ventilation openings blow into electrical outlets; it is important to leave space around the unit for the vent to circulate.

More advice on air fryers, and cooking safely in general, can be found on our [website](#).

Risks of Emollients

Emollient creams are skin products used to treat dry skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis. They can also be used for some patients who may be in bed for lengthy periods due to illness or impaired mobility, and are at risk of bed sores or ulcers. Emollient products come

in a variety of forms – creams, lotions or gels. All cover the skin with a protective film to reduce water loss. Emollient products can be found in many households and can be very flammable so are a fire safety concern, particularly where smoking takes place in the house. Fabrics that have dried-on emollient should be kept away from fire or flames. A build-up of residue on bedding, clothing and dressings can increase flammability, so wash affected fabrics regularly at the highest temperature recommended by the manufacturer. Washing fabrics may reduce the risk but will not eliminate it. More information can be found on our [website](#).

Do You Know the Risks?

We support some of the most vulnerable people in the community to stay safe from the risks of fire. But are you aware of the what to look out for with people you know/support/work with? Here are some of the things that would warrant making a referral to us for a home fire safety visit:

- Over the age of 65
- using emollients
- smoking, especially smoking in bed
- hearing or vision loss
- living alone
- long term health issue and/or oxygen user

If you work with anyone who fits this criteria, or who you think is at risk of fire, you can make a referral on our [website](#).

Information Sharing Agreements (ISA)

A polite request for any partner that has been sent an ISA, but has yet to return it, to please sign and send back. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with our [Partnerships Officer](#) with any questions or need to discuss. Thank you in advance.

Guest Blog

This newsletter introduces our new guest blog. We're keen to cover a wide range of subjects and if you would like to share your expertise and be a guest blogger in an upcoming newsletter, please email our [Partnerships Officer](#) to discuss.

Decluttering our thinking about...Hoarding

by Ian Porter – Psychologist/NW HHH Group Network Coordinator

Hoarding can be something it is tempting to write off as:

An eccentric novelty; a bad habit; the result of laziness; or a “lifestyle choice”.

BUT, it is NONE of these things – it is an overwhelming psychological condition defined, in part, when someone cannot discard or part with their items without feeling extremely distressed.

In short, it is a recognised mental health disorder but, unlike other mental health issues e.g. anxiety (a perception of threat) or depression (a perception of loss) – it is continually defined and stigmatised by what people have in their HOMES, instead of what people have in their HEADS! Because of the complexity of the disorder – there is NO QUICK FIX (and no SKIP big enough to provide one!).

If you want to provide anything that resembles effective support, then, in the first instance you need to “see the person and NOT the ‘hoard’”. In other words – start off by personalising, not pathologizing or stigmatising – it will pay dividends.

People who exhibit hoarding behaviours are tired of being ‘othered’ and often self-stigmatise (experience debilitating shame, embarrassment and/or self-loathing) because of the unhelpful initial responses of other people – even those who purport to ‘support’!

So, here are the ‘TOP 10’ tips about what to do and NOT do when you first encounter a person who you believe to be impacted by their hoarding behaviours:

DO



1. Start with compassion, kindness and an attempt to understand the PERSON
2. Remain consistent, constructive and non-judgemental
3. Build rapport, trust and remember that ‘hoards’ aren’t built in a day – so they can’t be addressed in one either!
4. Proceed at the person’s pace and COLLOBORATE to agree realistic steps/goals/objectives
5. Accept that this will be a long haul (irrespective of whether you can stay for the duration!) and that there is NO QUICK FIX!

DON'T



6. Display any ‘stigma-reinforcing’ phrases e.g. ‘self-neglect’ or visible behaviours e.g. that ‘shock-horror’ look! i.e. DON'T become part of the person’s problem!
7. Use threats, the language of enforcement or coercive behaviours – these create negativity, anxiety and lead to CLOSED DOORS!
8. Ignore the impact on or perspectives of ‘significant others’ in the person’s life i.e. family (including) children, friends or any support the person has already got
9. Impose YOUR own personal values on the person and/or their situation. What you consider to be an ‘organised’, ‘acceptable’, ‘liveable’ etc is largely irrelevant!
10. Assume authority or agency over the person – make decisions WITH them – not FOR them!

And remember...

The thing about hoarding... The most important thing about hoarding:

Is that it's about more than just hoarding.

<http://hoardershelpinghoarders.com>