



Welcome from the Chair of the HSAB (Bernie Flaherty)

Welcome to the latest edition of the HSAB's quarterly newsletter. As you know from the April edition, the focus for the Board in 2017 is community safety and this newsletter continues with that topic. In the context of the recent care home fire in Hertfordshire and of course the tragic events at Grenfell Towers, Fire Safety will be high on the Board's agenda for the next few months and we ask that everyone is vigilant to protect those who may be most at risk – for example people with very poor mobility. As always, we are keen to receive any comments about the newsletter or suggestions for future editions which can be sent to either Sue Spurlock (sue.spurlock@harrow.gov.uk) or Seamus Doherty (seamus.doherty@harrow.gov.uk).

“Fire hazards from emollient creams”

Fifteen Londoners have died in the last three years in fires where it's believed that a flammable skin cream was found to have spread flames across bed sheets or clothing.



Many commonly used moisturising creams contain paraffin and petroleum bases and can be readily bought off the shelf from any supermarket or chemist. The cream seeps into the bedclothes and if wearers drop a cigarette, sheets and night clothes act like a wick allowing flames to quickly spread across the body. The London Fire Brigade is urging health professionals, social care workers and carers to stop using flammable emollient creams, especially when the patient/service user smokes.

Dan Daly, Assistant Commissioner for Fire Safety, said: “It's a horrific reality but if you're wearing creams with flammable ingredients and you accidentally drop a cigarette or a match, you are literally setting yourself on fire. Dropping cigarettes or matches onto clothing is dangerous but when flammable creams are involved, this really increases the chance of a fire starting and becoming much more intense. The people most vulnerable to fires are older people and those with mobility problems and it's exactly these people who tend to rely on emollient creams. If they are smokers too, it's a deadly combination”.

“Worse still, people using emollient creams tend to have beds with airflow mattresses. In effect, the bedding with the cream soaked in, acts as a wick. When the mattress comes into contact with a flame, the mattress essentially can act as a blow torch, intensifying the fire.

“I can't stress how important it is to switch to non-flammable brands and carers should never allow users of these creams to smoke unsupervised, especially if they could become confused or fall asleep while smoking.”

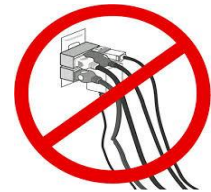


Discussion topic: “home fire safety checks”

These are the “top tips” from the Fire Service about keeping older/less mobile people safe from fire in their own home. Do you and your Team have vulnerable patients/users that you could pass it on to?



- fit and maintain working smoke alarms
- test alarms weekly - a working smoke alarm can give time to get out, stay out and dial 999
- stay safe in the kitchen - this is the area where the majority of house fires start, so cooking should never be left unattended
- in the event of a fire the advice is ‘get out, stay out and call 999!’ - do not delay for any reason
- plug sockets should not be overloaded - one plug per socket is the rule
- get ‘key clever’ - keys for windows and doors should be in an accessible place so everyone can get out quickly in the event of a fire
- plan an escape route - make sure your patient/user knows the quickest way out in a fire
- electric blankets should never be used with a hot water bottle. Statistics show that fires caused by electrical appliances and electric blankets have the highest rate of injury



The Fire Service offers **free** home fire safety checks. These can be booked by contacting Seamus Doherty, or with the LFB direct by calling: 0800 028 44 28



Training



The Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) full 2017/18 programme is now available. All the courses can be booked in the usual way through <http://harrow.learningpool.com/>

“Coming soon” on the programme are:

- Domestic abuse and safeguarding – 8th August
- Human trafficking/modern slavery – 11th August
- Basic awareness – 5th September

Fire Safety in Care Homes

The LFB recommends that fire risk assessments are updated. This should be for individual residents and is particularly crucial for smokers. Further information on fire risk in care homes, including individual smoking risk assessments can be found on the LFB website:

<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/Fire-risk-in-care-homes.asp>

The Council’s Safeguarding Quality Assurance Team has also developed a quick check list to assist you and can get a copy by contacting them at: sags@harrow.gov.uk



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