



## Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board

### Learning from Regional and National SAR Cases

<b>Title of Review:</b>	Fire Task & Finish Group Report
<b>Theme of Review:</b>	Fire Risks
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Sutton Safeguarding Adults Board
<b>Date Published:</b>	February 2022
<b>Link to Full Report:</b>	<a href="#">Sutton SAR - Fire Deaths</a>
<b>Summary Reports:</b>	<a href="#">Summary Reports</a>
<b>Learning Briefing:</b>	<a href="#">Learning Briefing</a> (EE)

#### Case Details:

In June 2019, Sutton Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) published a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) report following the deaths of two individuals (EE and GG) and the serious injury of another (HH) in separate fires within supported living accommodation. The report identified common factors in all three incidents, namely smoking related risks, self-neglect concerns and mental ill health.

In October 2020, London Fire Brigade (LFB) notified the SSAB that, following a house fire, a gentleman had died (Case A) and recommended a SAR be completed for this case. In May 2021, the LFB notified the SSAB of a further fire death (Case B) within sheltered accommodation of an elderly gentleman.

As a result of these two incidents, the SAR Sub-Group felt it would be important to explore if the learning from the EE review was imbedded within the borough, if there were any remaining barriers to recognising fire risks and if so, what more needed to be done to disseminate lessons.

Since the commissioning of the review the borough experienced a further four fatal fires, three involving adults and one involving four young children.

A Task & Finish Group was formed to consider all cases and whether fire risk management is robust across partner agencies, with particular focus on indicators of high concern such as smoking, hoarding, loss of mobility, learning disability or mental health. An audit and questionnaire of partner agencies was carried out to support their findings and national fire statistics were reviewed.

#### Key Findings for TSAB

##### Fire Risk and Awareness Training

- Agencies understood their responsibilities in terms of fire safety within the workplace, but not necessarily when applying this to the risk within the homes of their clients/tenants. The term 'home fire risk awareness' is now used to better describe risks rather than a generic term of 'fire safety'.
- Some practitioners misunderstood the term 'Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment' believing that it was risks associated with the property<sup>1</sup>.
- Some partners, particularly from the Local Authority or Public Health associated services do not have specific training for home fire risk awareness.
- Some practitioners were unaware of LFB's [checklist](#), which can be used for a quick and easy assessment of elderly or vulnerable residents in their own home. (This has now been replaced with a [national checklist](#)).

<sup>1</sup> A person-centred fire risk assessment will help identify residents who are at higher risk from fire in their own accommodation – whether this is due to their behaviours or their ability to respond and escape from a fire.

**Recommendation: The SAB and Safeguarding Children Partnership will investigate with LFB to train staff and multi-agency practitioners in person centred fire risk awareness and assessment.**

### **Hospital Discharges**

Any patient who is vulnerable and unable to react in the event of a fire either from cognitive or physical ability, should have a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) included as part of a discharge plan.

**Recommendation: LFB, Social Services and NHS Hospital Trust will work together so any patient who is vulnerable has a HFSV included as part of a discharge plan, with the HFSV completed by the LFB as soon as practically possible after their return home.**

### **Commissioning Standards**

Commissioning contracts stipulated that “fire safety” training must be completed by the service provider but as mentioned previously, this term is ambiguous meaning it was not clear whether the training by the service provider includes person-centred fire risk awareness/assessment or just fire safety in general.

**Recommendation: Commissioning agencies’ service provider contracts detail more specifically the requirement to complete and record person-centred fire risk awareness and assessment training.**

### **Self-Neglect, Hoarding and Mental Health**

- Nearly half of those who answered the questionnaire, were unaware of the Clutter Image Rating Scale.
- Hoarding is a complex issue with different pieces of legislation that can be used in such cases (Public Health Act, Environmental Protection Act, Care Act). It is recognised that long term support is often required.
- There were some initiatives highlighted that support people who hoard:
  - Drop in sessions at a local fire station and facilitated by the NHS Trust’s cognitive behaviour therapists to help people to overcome hoarding.
  - The Local Authority and Mind Charity run support groups for those suffering from hoarding disorder. There is the opportunity for one-to-one sessions with trained counsellors who act as ‘declutter’ buddies to help practically and emotionally.
- The Sutton Council’s Health and Wellbeing strategy 2016-2021, made no reference to self-neglect or hoarding.

**Recommendation: The SAB is tasked with setting up a multi-agency panel, jointly led by Adult Social Services and the LFB, to identify and reconcile hoarding risks in the borough, the services that are able to address the risk and if necessary create a business case to resource a long term solution to the problem of hoarding through the Council's revenue growth process.**

### **Smoking**

Neither the fire service nor local authorities have any general power to regulate or prevent smoking within individual private homes. The Mental Capacity Act states that a ‘person should not be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision’. This principle requires consideration of the person’s capacity in a time and issue specific manner, so their ability to realise and weigh up the risks smoking poses must be explored.

**Recommendation: the time and issue specific mental capacity assessment approach to the smoking risk is included as a key message in any Mental Capacity Act and home fire risk awareness training.**

The Task & Finish Group found that there can sometimes be ‘grey’ areas as to what type of dwellings are classed as ‘private’ and which premises should be subject to the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order](#) (RRO). This is being raised nationally. There is no reason why smoking management conditions, such as applying and the adherence to person-centred risk assessments, cannot be included in tenancy agreements.

Care homes and similar settings are subject to the RRO and should identify any resident smokers and have a person-centred risk assessment to identify their personal risk factors in smoking. This should identify any measures personal to them to enable them to smoke without risk of harm from fire e.g. that they do so in a specific area, are supervised, wear a smoking apron etc.

**Recommendation: The LFB and the Local Authority Health and Wellbeing lead continue to work together to establish ways to promote methods of smoking cessation to multiagency partners and practitioners.**

#### **Declining Home Fire Safety Visits**

**Recommendation: For those people that refuse or decline a HFSV by the LFB, a system is established so the relevant partner contact the LFB to provide relevant advice, support or training so the HFSV is completed by the appropriate agency on the LFB's behalf.**

#### **Personal Protective Systems**

A personal (or portable) protection system (PPS) is a self-contained water mist system in one room of a building. These systems are designed for people who spend most of their time confined to a specific area of their home. Water mist systems use a spray of fine water droplets that can suppress a fire by cooling, wetting and displacing oxygen. It can also connect to existing autodialer or telecare systems to alert monitoring or emergency services that the system has activated. They can be quickly installed to protect a vulnerable person and can be moved or re-used as required.

**Recommendation: The LA and housing providers investigate options to enable Personal Protective System's to be available and appropriate people within the borough be trained to install and maintain them, for use by all partners.**

#### **Considerations for Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board**

- Do partner agencies feel that practitioners (including care providers) have the right level of home fire risk awareness training to support them in their role when carrying out home visits/visits to care providers/supporting their residents? Particularly relating to person-centred fire risk assessments and effective ways to reduce the risk of harm from fire?
- Is there any existing good practice training available that could be tapped into? Cleveland Fire Brigade, Housing Providers? E-learning, fire risk awareness videos?
- Are Home Fire Safety Checks routinely considered at discharge planning meetings when a person's cognitive or physical ability is compromised which may increase a person's risk linked to fires?
- What specific support is available within Tees regarding hoarding disorder? Can we signpost via newsletters and social media and are they included on TSAB's Find Support In Your Area webpage? (North East Hoarding Partnership led by Northumbria University are being invited to a future Operational Leads Sub-Group meeting).
- Self-Neglect and Hoarding is recognised within TSAB's portfolio of work – do the Health & Wellbeing Boards have any priorities linked to this? Could we work together?
- Do Commissioners/CQC consider and check person-centred fire risk assessments and any fire risk mitigation options that are in place when they visit care providers? Are fire risks considered as part of the Responding to and Addressing Serious Concerns process?
- How widely used /well known are Personal Protective Systems in Teesside?

The OLSG Sub-Group can consider learning from this SAR as part of Adult K Action Plan when reviewing TSAB's Self-Neglect Policy and Guidance.

- Are there any existing tools that may help practitioners to identify fire risks within a person's home and support with sign posting/ referral options? To consider use of the [national checklist](#)
- Page 20-21 of the SAR report highlights smoking risk mitigation options which may be useful.

This summary report to be shared with Board Partners including Cleveland Fire Brigade, LAs, Hospital Trusts (including district nursing teams), commissioning colleagues, NEAS and CQC for further consideration/action where appropriate.

This report will be logged as evidence against TSAB's Adult K Action Plan.

NB: the Board has recently raised awareness of Cleveland Fire Brigade's home fire safety checks via social media and newsletters.

### Useful Resources

- [TSAB Self-Neglect Policy, Guidance and Clutter Rating Tool](#)
- [Self-Neglect Briefings for Practitioners](#) and [What to do about Self-Neglect](#) animation developed by North East SAR Champions Network
- [TSAB Self-Neglect Posters](#) (including an easy read version)
- [Guide to Working with Adults Who Hoard](#) – CC Inform Article (licence and login required to access)
- [Preventing Fire Deaths Briefing](#) – developed by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- [Fire Risk Awareness Video linked to Emollient Creams](#) – shared via TSAB's social media
- [Fire Safety Briefing for Practitioners \(MS WORD 1.73MB\)](#) – Hertfordshire SAB



7.1.2 - Sutton

- Thematic SAR of Fire I
- [Victoria SAR](#) – Bexley SAB

## Learning from Regional and National SAR Cases

<b>Title of Review:</b>	Deborah
<b>Theme of Review:</b>	The impact of Domestic Abuse on Self-Neglect
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board
<b>Date Published:</b>	June 2023
<b>Link to Learning Briefing:</b>	<a href="#">7 Minute Briefing</a>

### Case details

Deborah had care and support needs and lived with her brother and her partner. Professionals assumed her partner and brother were her carers because they lived with her.

Services struggled to engage with Deborah who would often cancel appointments or refuse to allow professionals into her home.

Deborah was admitted to hospital with evidence of serious neglect and self-neglect. It became apparent that Deborah had been a victim of domestic abuse by her partner for many years. Deborah survived and currently lives in a care home.

The full report for this SAR has not been published.

### **Key Findings**

- Understanding the impact of domestic abuse on self-neglect
- Use of Adult Safeguarding Enquiries
- Impact of self-neglect cases on practitioners
- Being clear about caring roles and use of family support networks
- Considering mental capacity and wider legal duties
- Multi-agency working
- Taking opportunities to support people to change

In cases of self-neglect such as this, professionals should rule out the role of Domestic Abuse in the individual's self-neglect as opposed to waiting for evidence of the Domestic Abuse.

### **Considerations for Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board**

The OLSG Sub-Group can consider learning from this SAR as part of Adult K Action Plan when reviewing TSAB's Self-Neglect Policy and Guidance.

This summary report to be shared with Board Partners including voluntary sector, Cleveland Fire Brigade, LAs, Hospital Trusts (including district nursing teams) and NEAS for further consideration/action where appropriate.