

**Introduction**

Welcome to our first ever QCS Fire Safety Toolkit in association with London Fire Brigade and our legal partners Napthens.

The toolkit was created for you following a recent court case that ordered a care provider to pay £1.04m (including prosecution costs) - the highest ever fine for fire safety breaches in the UK - after a resident died in a fire while smoking at one of its care homes.

London Fire Brigade brought the prosecution against the care provider under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. The care provider pleaded guilty to contravening Article 11 (1) which relates to the management of fire safety measures. Specifically, the provider accepted that it had failed to:

* Ensure staff understood the risks from the use of emollient creams
* Warn residents using paraffin-based products not to smoke, or require precautions to be taken such as the use of a smock or apron
* Instruct staff not to leave a resident using paraffin-based products smoking unsupervised; and
* Carry out an individual smoking risk assessment of the resident as normal with the control measures in place

The Brigade’s Assistant Commissioner for Fire Safety, Paul Jennings, said: “This case is an absolutely tragic example of what the devastating consequences of failure to comply with fire safety regulations can be.

“If there can be anything constructive to come from this, we hope that it will be that anyone who has a legal responsibility for fire safety in a building – whether as a landlord, property manager, care home provider or any other setting - takes note and makes sure they are complying with the law.

This toolkit aims to do this. By reading this toolkit you will be equipped with vital knowledge that will help you understand your legal obligations under Fire Safety Law. Moreover, this toolkit is designed to help you to understand and manage risks. We have also shared useful templates created by London Fire Brigade and Napthens to ensure fire safety remains a top priority at your care setting to ensure the safety of you, your colleagues and ultimately the people you care for.

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| **Discover your legal obligations** |
| |  | | --- | | Find out more about fire safety law, including Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – what's often known as the 'Fire Safety Order'.  **What is the Fire Safety Order (Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005)?**  If you own, manage or operate a business, you need to comply with fire safety law. The main law is the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or "the Fire Safety Order". It applies across England and Wales and came into force on 1st October 2006.  **Who does it apply to?**  The Order applies to almost all buildings, places and structures other than individual private homes – that's individual flats in a block or family homes.  Other places covered by the Order include shared areas in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), blocks of flats and maisonettes.  **What are your responsibilities?**  You need to make sure:   1. Your premises reach the required standards. 2. Employees are provided with adequate fire safety training.   **What does 'adequate fire safety training' mean in practice?**  It varies from business to business, but generally includes:   * Induction training to cover general fire awareness * Periodic refresher training, or extra training where the level of fire risk increases as a result of changes in your operations * Training to support people in meeting their fire safety duties – for example, keeping your 'responsible people' up to date * Training to build appropriate skills such as fire risk assessment, fire warden or using fire extinguishers   **What about Fire Risk Assessments?**  It's mandatory to carry out a detailed assessment identifying the risks and hazards in a commercial premises. By law, if you are responsible for the premises, you need to make sure that a Fire Risk Assessment has been completed by a competent person. Additionally, your Fire Risk Assessment must be recorded if you have a total of five or more employees or your business has a licence under enactment in force. The responsible person for the premises is also required to:   * Consider who may be especially at risk * Eliminate or reduce the risk of fire as far as is reasonably practical * Provide general fire precautions to deal with any risk * Take additional measures to ensure fire safety where flammable or explosive materials are used or stored * Create a plan to deal with any emergency and where necessary record any findings * Maintain general fire precautions, and facilities provided for use by firefighters * Keep any findings of the risk assessment under review   **You can find out more about and how to complete them on the** [**Fire Risk Assessments page**](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-workplace/fire-risk-assessments-your-responsibilities/) on the London Fire Brigade Website.  **Where will I find guidance about the required standards for my building?**  It depends on the building in question. The best place to start is the [**gov.uk website here**](https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities/fire-risk-assessments) – it provides guidance for most circumstances.  If you are responsible for specialised housing – for example, sheltered housing, extra care housing, or supported housing for people with common characteristics, such as learning disabilities and mental health problems – [**NFCC Specialised Housing Guidance**](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/NFCC%20Guidance%20publications/NFCC_Specialised_Housing_Guidance_-_Copy.pdf) is helpful. | |

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| **Advice for residential care homes** |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | If you're responsible for accommodation for older or vulnerable people, here's what you need to  know about protecting them from fire.  If you're responsible for a residential care home, there are specific areas of fire safety you need  to really pay attention to.  **What causes fires in residential care homes?**    In residential care homes, escape planning is particularly important. Do you know how you would  safely and quickly evacuate every person your team cares for?  **Fatal fires involving vulnerable people**  Tragically, there were many fatal fires in care homes and where vulnerable people were being  cared for in their own homes by professional carers, family and friends.    With better fire safety knowledge and emergency planning in place, these numbers could be  much lower. We'll take a closer look at the risks and what you can do to reduce them and  provide advice about creating an emergency plan that will help you make sure everyone can  get to safety if there is a fire.  **Did you know?**  Everyone in business needs to complete a Fire Risk Assessment and emergency plan.  **Why fire safety matters so much...**   * You are risking vulnerable peoples' lives if you don't take care. * It's the right thing to do – you are a professional carer, so you'll want to take proper   care of the people you support.   * It's the law – covered by the Fire Safety Order and the Care Act, which is regulated by the   Care Quality Commission. If you don't meet these legal obligations, you can go to prison  and face an unlimited fine.  **Causes and risks**  **How to provide appropriate care – fire risks to watch out for**  The first step to improving your fire prevention strategy is identifying where things can go wrong.  In 2016/17, firefighters attended many fires in residential care homes across London, and we've  noticed some common factors in the homes that have experienced fires.  **Common fire risks in care homes**   1. **Smoking** – smoking materials being disposed of carelessly, smoking not being controlled   or monitored.   1. **Electrical equipment** – we see many fires where electrical items are placed too close to flammable materials. 2. **Spread of fire** – doors being wedged open giving the potential for fire to spread   throughout the building.  **Emergency planning risks**  As well as fire safety risks, we also see some common areas for concern in care homes.  These include:   1. Plans that aren't up to date or appropriately personalised – vulnerable peoples’ needs   change over time, and plans can quickly become out of date.   1. Lack of practice – fire drills leading to staff who are unprepared. 2. Inadequate staffing in an emergency – staffing levels don’t always support evacuation   strategy, especially at night.  **Help and advice**  **Firefighters’ tips for residential care homes**  When you care for others, you are responsible for helping to reduce their risk of harm, and  planning how you would keep them safe in an emergency.   * Encourage smokers to quit or switch to e-cigarettes (vapes) – find extra advice later   in this toolkit   * Don't support smoking in bedrooms * If smoking is allowed, put strict control measures into place – for example, cigarettes   might be looked after by staff members, so residents can only smoke with supervision   * Make an emergency plan and update it regularly – add a diary reminder to check it at   least once every 6 weeks   * Make sure that fire safety and fire drills are carried out regularly * Install and maintain appropriate fire detection and suppression systems (sprinklers) * Learn the about the risks of specialist healthcare equipment and emollient creams   (see pages 10 and 11) – and how to use these vital aids more safely   * Consider every resident’s needs, and undertake a checklist for person-centred fire risk.   See page 8   * If smoking is allowed, put strict control measures into place – for example, cigarettes   might be looked after by staff members, so residents can only smoke with supervision,  or fire retardant aprons could be provided to ensure dropped cigarettes do not ignite  clothes   * Install and maintain appropriate fire detection or suppression systems (sprinklers) – and   provide a zoned chart by the alarm so that staff and firefighters can easily see which alarm  has activated   * Don't be afraid to ask for expert advice on fire safety topics – the fire brigade is here to   help you care for your residents safely | |   **Help and advice for residential care homes**  Now you understand the risks and how important it is to do all you can to prevent fires, what help is available to you?  **Useful documents to help you**  When it comes to making your Fire Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan, it's important to treat every individual as an individual, and properly cater for their circumstances and needs.  There's a useful guide to help on the gov.uk page[**'Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Means of Escape for Disabled People.'**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people) |

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| **Checklist for person centred fire risk** |
| A good way to understand every resident's needs – and plan to meet them – is to complete a checklist for person-centred fire risk. You'll find a document to help you inside this toolkit. This template has been designed as a simple tool to use to identify fire risk and can be used by anyone that provides or is in receipt of care. |

Person-centred fire risk assessment checklist

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of resident |  | | |
| Full address |  | | |
|  | | |
| Date | DD / MM / YYYY | Form completed by |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Does the individual have an increased fire risk?** | | | | | |
| Yes |  | If yes, tick all the fire risk factors they exhibit |  | Burns or scorch marks on carpets and furniture/previous fires. | |
|  | Smoking – unsafe use of smoking or vaping materials (eg. smoking in bed). | |
| No |  | Skip to next question |  | Use of emollient creams (lotions, creams or gels that are used to prevent dry skin). | |
|  | Air pressure mattress or oxygen cylinders are used. | |
|  |  |  |  | Unsafe cooking practices (e.g. cooking left unattended). | |
|  |  |  |  | Overloaded electrical sockets/adaptors or extension leads. | |
|  |  |  |  | Faulty or damaged wiring/electric blankets that are old or worn. | |
|  |  |  |  | Unsafe candle/tea light use (eg. left too close to curtains or in reach of children or pets). | |
|  |  |  |  | Hoarding of any kind (eg. excessive storage or build up of clutter). | |
|  |  |  |  | Unsafe use of portable heaters (eg. placed too close to flammable items). | |
|  |  |  |  | Other (please specify): |  |
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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2. Would the individual be less able to react to an alarm or fire?** | | | | | |
| Yes |  | If yes, tick all the fire risk factors they exhibit |  | Mental health issues (e.g. dementia, anxiety or depression). | |
|  | Cognitive or decision making difficulties. | |
| No |  | Skip to next question |  | Alcohol dependency or misuse of drugs. | |
|  | Sensory impairments (e.g. hard of hearing or sight loss). | |
|  |  |  |  | Other (please specify): |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3. Does the individual have a reduced ability to escape?** | | | | | |
| Yes |  | If yes, tick all the fire risk factors they exhibit |  | Have restricted mobility, are frail or have a history of falls. | |
|  | Are blind or have impaired vision. | |
| No |  | Skip to next question |  | Lacks capacity to understand what to do in the event of a fire. | |
|  | There are cluttered or blocked escape routes or internal doors are left open at night.. | |
|  |  |  |  | Would be unable to or have difficulty unlocking the front door to escape. | |
|  |  |  |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Other (please specify): |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4. Are there any smoke or heat alarms fitted within the individual’s home?** | | | | | |
|  | | | | | |
| Yes |  | If yes, please specify which rooms have them fitted: | | | |
| No |  |
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| **What to do next** |
| If there are any questions in sections 1–3 that have been answered ‘Yes’, or there are no smoke, CO or heat alarms fitted (or they are broken or poorly sited), immediate action is required. Please follow the instructions below to ensure risks are managed and that control measures are put in place |

**If you are a family member or an informal carer, contact London Fire Brigade (LFB) to arrange for a free home fire safety visit:**

Freephone: 0800 028 4428

Email: smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk

Text/SMS: 07860 021 319

Book via our website: london-fire.gov.uk

Remember, extra support may be available. Contact Adult Social Care Teams or your local council.

**If you are employed by a company or organisation you must follow procedures and:** return the completed form to your manager to implement appropriate risk control measures.

* inform the resident or family members of the risks identified, if you are certain they will understand.
* note all actions taken in the care plan. refer to other agencies, as appropriate.

Remember, if in doubt contact LFB for advice or guidance

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| **Fire safety in the home** |
| **What happens during a home fire safety visit?** Firefighters or trained staff will visit the resident and offer advice based on individual needs, this includes information on how to **prevent** fires, the importance of smoke alarms to **detect** a fire and having **escape** plans in the event of a fire. They will also fit smoke alarm if required.  Some basic fire safety advice has been provided below or you can download safety booklets from our website. |

**Prevention**

* Stopping smoking is a good way to reduce fire risk.
* Anyone who smokes should try to do so outside.
* Use deep, heavy ashtrays and always make sure cigarettes are **put right out**.
* Consider using fire retardant bedding, nightwear and throws.
* Never smoke or vape:
  + in bed or in an armchair if there’s a chance of falling asleep
  + on or close to an airflow pressure relief mattress.
* Oxygen is highly flammable, users should never smoke/vape or use matches and candles, or allow others to nearby.
* Emollient creams should be kept away from cigarettes and other heat sources. A build up of oily residue on bedding and clothing can increase flammability.
* Candles, tea lights and incense burners should be placed in stable, heat-resistant holders and kept well away from curtains, furniture and clothes.
* Sit at least one metre away from heaters and keep them well away from anything that can catch alight.
* Don’t overload electrical sockets.
* Close all doors at night – this helps to prevent fire and toxic smoke spreading.

**Early warning and detection of a fire is essential**

* Fit smoke alarms in the rooms that are used the most, eg:
  + in the lounge/living room, bedrooms, landings and hallways.
  + a heat alarm in the kitchen.
  + CO alarms anywhere that gas or solid fuels are used.
* Specialist alarms can also be fitted, eg. strobe light and vibrating pad alarms for the deaf or hard-of-hearing.
* Test all alarms monthly.
* Fitting alarms that are linked and all activate together is the best way to be alerted in the event of a fire.

Note: Anyone less able to react, or with reduced ability to escape a fire, should consider Telecare monitoring services. These provide 24hr call centre support that links to detection systems fitted in the home. Staff are trained to deal with situations as they arise and will call the emergency services if needed.

**Escape**

* Have an escape plan and practice it regularly.
* Make sure escape routes are kept clear of anything that may slow down or block escape or exit routes.
* Mobility aids and any methods of calling for help should always be kept close to hand (eg. mobile phone, link alarm/pendant).
* Ensure security gates can be easily opened from the inside without the need for a key.
* Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

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| **Emergency Plan** |
| Our legal partners, Napthens, have created an emergency plan template for you – use it to ensure everyone is aware of what to do if there is a fire. |

1. **FIRE EMERGENCY PLAN**

The purpose of a fire emergency plan is to ensure:

* All people on the premises know what to do in the event of a fire
* That appropriate actions are taken in the event of a fire
* The premises can be evacuated safely

1. **CONTENTS OF A FIRE EMERGENCY PLAN**

* How people will be warned if there is a fire
* Action people should take on discovering a fire
* Action people should take in the event of a fire
* Arrangements for calling the fire and rescue service
* Evacuation procedures
* Fire assembly points
* Any machines, appliances or processes that need to be stopped or isolated
* Firefighting arrangements
* Procedure for meeting the fire and rescue service
* Access arrangements for the fire and rescue service
* Provision of information on the incident to the fire and rescue service
* Vulnerable people and those with reduced mobility

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| **Fire Emergency Plan Template** | |
| **Organisation:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Address:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Date of plan:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Review date:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **How people are warned if there is a fire** | | | |
| Shouting |  | Visual alarm / strobe |  |
| Air horn |  | Vibrating pillow |  |
| Whistle |  | Personal alarms |  |
| Continuous bell |  | Others (please state below) |  |
| Continuous siren |  | Click or tap here to enter text. | |

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| **How the alarm is raised** | | | |
| Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) |  | Manual Call Points |  |
| Commence manual warning, e.g.  whistle/bell/shout |  |  |  |
| **Provide detail of procedure:** | | | |
| If fire is discovered by a member of staff ……………  Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| If fire is discovered by visitor…………...  Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| If fire is discovered by resident…………..  Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |

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| **Action people should take on discovering a fire** |
| Example – delete or amend when necessary  The following action will be taken when the fire alarm is sounded:   1. Sound the fire alarm 2. The fire and rescue service should be informed by the person discovering the fire 3. Tackle the fire only if trained and safe to do so 4. Leave the building by your nearest safe exit route 5. Do not stop to collect personal belongings 6. Do not use lifts 7. Make your way to the fire assembly point 8. Do not re-enter the building 9. Fire wardens proceed to the pre-determined positions to assist members of staff, residents and the public to the nearest possible escape route   10. Arrange a roll call of floor sweep |

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| **Action people should take in the event of a fire** |
| Example – delete or amend when necessary  On hearing the firing alarm:   1. Leave the building by your nearest exit 2. Do not use lifts 3. Do not stop to collect personal belongings 4. Make your way to the fire assembly point 5. Do not re-enter the building |

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| **Arrangements for calling fire and rescue service** |
| Who will contact the fire and rescue service?  What are the means of calling the fire and rescue service? |

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| **Evacuation procedures (including emergency exit routes)** |
| Does everyone know how to evacuate the building after the alarm is activated?  They should know which route to take and how the evacuation is carried out (simultaneous or phased).  Additional arrangements may be required for vulnerable people or those with reduced mobility.  Are drawings displayed to detail escape routes, fire assembly points, etc.? |

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| **Fire assembly point location** |
| Where is at located? Is it a safe distance from the premises?  Is there more than one fire assembly point?  Which people go to which fire assembly point? |

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| **Machines, appliances or processes that need to be stopped or isolated** |
| Does any equipment need to be turned off? For example, gas shut offs, mains water, oxygen/gas cylinders. |

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| **Firefighting equipment (fire extinguishers)** |
| Is the location of fire extinguishers shown on the fire emergency plan drawings?  Detail where fire extinguishers are located:  Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Procedure for meeting the fire and rescue service** |
| Who meets the fire and rescue service?  Are they able to direct the fire and rescue service to the fire? |

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| **Access arrangements for the fire and rescue service** |
| What are the access arrangements for the fire and rescue service?  Do locked gates need opening, do car park barriers need lifting? |

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| **Information to provide to the fire and rescue service on their arrival** |
| Is anyone missing? When were they last seen? Where the fire is? Contents of the building the fire is  in? Any hazardous materials that are stored in there? Any unusual activities such as construction or  temporary works? |

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| **Arrangements for vulnerable people and those with reduced mobility** |
| This may include:  Progressive horizontal evacuation – could be used in buildings where alarm is phased. Passing from one fire compartment into another that is not part of the initial evacuation zone.  Evacuation by lift – only possible where lifts have a secondary power supply or battery back up and the lift shaft is structurally fire protected.  Evacuation by stairs – the use of such equipment as evacuation chairs.  Use of refuges – a procedure for ensuing any vulnerable people or those with reduce mobility are evacuated to a designated safe refuge, until they can be evacuated safely. |

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| **Understand and reduce the risks** |
| |  | | --- | | **Emollient and skin creams**    **What do we mean by emollient and skin creams?**  Emollient and skin creams are an important and effective treatment used to prevent or treat dry skin conditions like:   * Eczema * Bed sores * Ulcers * Psoriasis   They come in a variety of forms: creams, lotions, ointments, gels or sprays. They can also include soap alternatives. They may be water-based, contain paraffin or natural oils. All cover the skin with a protective film to reduce water loss.  Emollients and skin creams alone are not flammable. However, a build-up of emollient/skin cream residue (even from just one application) on fabrics such as bedding, clothing and dressings, can increase flammability. These are especially a fire safety concern when used by people who spend extended periods in a bed or armchair due to illness or impaired mobility.  **How can you use emollient and skin creams more safely?**  If you care for someone who needs emollient and skin creams, lotions or gels, or if you use these products yourself, you can help to keep them and yourself safe by understanding and reducing the related risks.  **Understand the risks**  Anyone using emollients or skin creams regularly should keep well away from fire, naked flames or heat sources. A build-up of residue on bedding, clothing and dressings can increase flammability.   * Don't smoke * Loose clothing can easily catch fire – take care not to lean over a hot hob and roll up your sleeves if possible, when cooking * Keep candles away from your clothing, including when lighting them * Sit at least one metre away from a heater – sitting too close could easily set light to your clothes or chair. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructio | |

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| **Understand and reduce the risk** |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Healthcare Equipment**    Healthcare equipment and products used in the home allow people to be cared for in familiar surroundings. It's important that this equipment is used as prescribed and provided by a medical professional as these items can ease discomfort and improve quality of life.  However, it's also important to be aware that in the event of a fire they may increase the spread and intensity of the fire. So how do you reduce fire risk when using/caring for someone who uses:   1. Home oxygen therapy (oxygen cylinders and portable units)? 2. Dynamic airflow pressure relieving mattresses and overlays? 3. Incontinence products (pads and underwear)?   **How can specialist healthcare equipment be used safely?**  If you care for someone who needs specialist healthcare equipment, or use this type of equipment yourself, make sure that you always follow the manufacturer's safety advice.  **Home oxygen therapy**  **Understanding the risks**  Used by people with severe respiratory conditions, oxygen therapy provides air that contains more oxygen than normal. Specialist equipment (which can include cylinders and portable units) is used to pipe medical oxygen through either a nasal cannula or face mask to the patient.  Unfortunately, though, the addition of concentrated oxygen into the room or surrounding environment will greatly increase the intensity of a fire should one start.  Smoking or the use of any naked flames (such as candles, fires and cooking) anywhere near oxygen is extremely dangerous and increases the risk of significant injury in the event of a fire.  **Fire safety advice**   * Never smoke or let anyone else smoke nearby whilst using oxygen equipment. This includes e-cigarettes and their chargers * Do not use matches or any naked flames (such as candles, incense sticks or oil burners, gas stoves, portable or open fires) where oxygen equipment is used * Make sure oxygen is turned off when not in use   **Dynamic airflow pressure relieving mattresses and overlays**  **Understanding the risks**  These items are used for the prevention and treatment of pressure sores and ulcers that can be caused by extended periods of immobility. The mattress is filled with air by a pump which adjusts pressure according to the patient’s needs.  When punctured by any heat source (e.g., a cigarette or match) the escaping air can cause a fire to spread rapidly. The emergency back up battery may also continue to pump air, which can cause the fire to burn longer and with greater intensity.  **Fire safety advice**   * Never smoke near an airflow mattress or let the person you care for smoke in bed * Keep ignition sources (such as matches, cigarettes, candles, incense sticks or oil burners) away from airflow mattresses * Never use an electric blanket on an airflow mattress * Ensure that electrical equipment is well maintained and kept a safe distance from airflow mattresses * Keep fires and heaters away from airflow mattresses * Never charge electrical items or place anything hot (such as hair straighteners or hairdryers) on an airflow mattress   **Incontinence products**  **Understanding the risks**  These are often supplied in large quantities to people who have continence problems. They contain plastics and other chemicals, in addition to paper or textile padding which provide additional fuel to a developing fire.  **Fire safety advice**   * Never smoke or allow others to smoke close to stored incontinence products * Always store incontinence products safely away from anything that has a flame or is likely to get hot, for example heaters, candles, fires, chargers and other electrical appliances * Try not to store the supplies all in one place – ideally not next to the person’s bed or chair | | |

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| **Understand and reduce the risk** |
| **Caring for smokers**  If you support a vulnerable person who smokes, here's how to make them as safe as possible from a fire safety perspective.  **Quitting, vaping and being a safer smoker**  LFB’s top fire prevention suggestion? Smoking cessation.  The best way to prevent smoking-related fires is to stop smoking. It has been the top factor in fatal fires for many years. So, if you're caring for someone who smokes start by encouraging them to quit. You could save their life in more ways than one. Find help and advice through the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/).  **Vaping is better than smoking**  If the person you care for isn't ready to stop, reducing risks is the next best thing – and e-cigarettes are much safer. A lit cigarette dropped on a bed, or a chair can quickly cause a fatal fire. A vape? No problem. If they switch to e-cigarettes, make sure they buy a good quality device, and learn to [charge it safely](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/electrical-items/batteries-and-chargers/).  **Signs it's time to act**  If you see any of the below in the home of the person you care for you should take immediate action:  **High-risk smoking**   * Does the person smoke anywhere they may fall asleep? * Does the person smoke near any oxygen-based equipment? * Have they dropped cigarettes on floors, furniture or clothing? * Have you noticed scorch marks on the floor, furniture or clothing? * Are their ashtrays overflowing? * Are their ashtrays within easy reach?   **Smoke alarms**   * Do they have enough smoke alarms fitted? * Do they only have a smoke alarm fitted in the hallway – there should be an alarm in every room where a fire could start? * Does their smoke alarm actually work – be sure to check regularly? * If the person you care for has Telecare fitted, is it linked to smoke alarms?   **Other factors**   * Response – could they respond to a fire or a smoke alarm without help? * Mobility – could the person escape from a fire without help? * Does the person use paraffin-based products like emollient creams or use an airflow mattress? * How do they light their cigarettes? Lighters are safer than matches, as a dropped match can start a fire * Do they smoke alone? Encourage them to only light up if there is someone around to make sure they are safe   **Time to act**  Fire safety advice when caring for smokers  As a carer, we understand that you have a lot of responsibilities. But by taking action, you can save a life or prevent serious injury.  10 small steps to safer smoking:   1. Talk to the person about a home fire safety visit. 2. Point out the risks to the person as they may not be aware of the danger. 3. Point out that it's never too late to quit – and that vaping is safer than smoking. 4. Encourage them to only smoke if there's someone at home with them. 5. Always provide proper ashtrays and empty them regularly. 6. Make sure ashtrays are within easy reach. 7. Don’t let the person smoke in bed or where they sleep. 8. Never smoke when using oxygen. 9. If they need emollient creams talk to their GP or pharmacist about the potential of using a non-flammable alternative and putting in control measures such as ensuring bedding is washed according to the guidance. 10. Consider the use of fire retardant bedding and nightwear.   **Message from LFB**  London Fire Brigade can talk to the person you care for about all of this in a home fire safety visit – we visit at home for free, and provide expert, personalised advice. Visits can be arranged at any time (24/7), and we even fit free smoke alarms if the person you care for needs them.  **Worried about someone you care for?**  Carers, support workers and other healthcare professionals have access on a daily basis to people’s homes and living spaces. They play a vital role in the assessment of high-risk individuals.  If you are a formal carer, support worker or other healthcare professional, record and report your concerns to your line manager so an action plan can be put into place.  If the person you care for or support is also in receipt of other care, or other agencies are also involved with them, do share your concerns so that you are all working together. Make sure that fire risk is included in the person’s care plan including things like using flame retardant bedding, appropriate management of emollient and skin creams, and how to care for people who smoke.  Communicate with the person’s family or other supporting agencies to consider how Telecare can help to keep vulnerable people safer.  Consider training to help you spot signs that may indicate the person you care for is at risk of injury from fire – and learn what steps you can take to reduce those risks.  **Consider limited mobility**  If the person you care for is bed bound or spends most of their time in a chair, they are particularly at risk. Please consider their needs and make sure appropriate measures are taken so they can safely escape if there is a fire. |

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| **Understand and reduce the risk** |
| **Useful Online Information**  Please find additional information that you may find useful to further your knowledge on fire safety  Fire safety risk assessment: residential care premises  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-residential-care-premises>  Home Fire Safety Checker  <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/>  Fire Risk Checklist  <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/carers-and-support-workers/using-a-fire-risk-checklist/fire-risk-checklist/>  Guidance Note 66 – also available in other languages  <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/4821/gn_66_london-fire-brigade-fire-safety-guidance-note.pdf>  Fire Safety  <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm>  \*QCS is not responsible for any content on any external website. |

**QCS would like to give a special thank you to the London Fire Brigade for helping us produce this toolkit.**

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