

# **HOMEWORD**

## **Home Safety News in Scotland**

### **Spring Edition 2008**

#### **Introduction**

Hopefully this is spring well and truly here at last!

I hope that you find the following Homeword interesting, and if you know of anyone else who wants to be added to the mailing list, please let me know.

#### **Changes at RoSPA**

##### **Change in Name**

Due to the inconsistencies and confusion between the names “**Home Injury prevention**” and “**Home Safety**”, it has been decided that we will revert back to our previous name of **Home Safety**. Reasons include:

- A shorter, snappier name.
- Consistent with the name of RoSPA's other safety areas.
- Better established and understood by Home Safety practitioners.
- Avoids confusion with the recently introduced "Home Information Pack".
- Better linkage with the media's use & understanding of the word "safety".

A more positive and "enabling" position rather than the more constraining one of "preventing injuries".

**Elizabeth Lumsden is now Home Safety Manager for Scotland**

**Nikkie Butters is now Home Safety Development Officer for Scotland**

#### **Home Safety Congress 2008**

##### **“Regulating for Home Safety?”**

This years Home Safety Congress is being held in Blackpool at the Hilton Hotel from Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November.

This year's theme is about regulations and do we need them? For example thermostatic mixing valves (regulations in place in Scotland, but not yet in England, or fitting of smoke detectors or sprinkler systems).

#### **A Call for Papers**

If you are a safety practitioner and would like to share your ideas and successes with others and would like to make a presentation at **RoSPA's National Home Safety Congress 2008**, please submit an abstract of about 500 words.

One presenter for each paper, which is accepted, will be entitled to attend the Congress free of charge including travelling expenses.

**Submitted papers should include the following:** Name, title of paper contact details and job title of presenter.

#### **Deadline**

Please submit abstracts to: Kairen Sanderson [ksanderson@rospa.com](mailto:ksanderson@rospa.com) by the end of May.

**An invitation is open to comment on the Children's Environment and Health Strategy for the UK.** (This, of course, is the document that the Child Safety Action Plan was designed to contribute to and in particular Regional Priority Goal 2 on Injuries, Obesity and Physical Activity.)

See [http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1207121679366](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1207121679366)  
(The section you will be interested in is the few pages from p15 onwards and the questionnaire part is on p 53.)

Out of the 550 approx consultees across the UK, around 50 are in Northern Ireland, 40 in Wales and only 20 in Scotland. I would urge you to seriously consider responding to the document - especially given that the priority suggested is **that ensuring accurate surveillance of unintentional injuries is essential....**

Responses have to be in by 13th June. There are only three questions to be answered - with room for 'anything else to add'. **Please send your comments and direct any queries concerning this consultation document to [cehape@hpa.org.uk](mailto:cehape@hpa.org.uk)**

### **Injury Prevention News**

IPN is the joint electronic newsletter of the Injury Observatory for Britain and Ireland (IOBI) and the Collaboration for Accident Prevention and Injury Control (CAPIC)

IPN is a FREE source of information on new initiatives, publications of statistics, research findings, opportunities and training events and will highlight new additions to IOBI and CAPIC websites. IPN is produced three times yearly with editions in January, May and October. To subscribe to future editions please [click here](#).

Please follow the links below to access the Injury observatory and the first issue. Please forward articles, or seminar/conferences that you would like posted on this site to [elumsden@rospa.com](mailto:elumsden@rospa.com) who is the Scottish representative.

[http://www.injuryobservatory.net/documents/IPN\\_1st\\_issue\\_2008.pdf](http://www.injuryobservatory.net/documents/IPN_1st_issue_2008.pdf)

[www.injuryobservatory.net](http://www.injuryobservatory.net)

### **Child Safety Action Plan for Europe**

Work has begun on the new Phase of the **Child Safety Action Plan for Europe**. Elizabeth Lumsden has signed up again on behalf of **RoSPA** to lead on this project, which now includes 36 countries across Europe. Continuing countries such as Scotland will be able to

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offer advice and support to those who have just joined in April. The first meeting of all the countries took place in Nicosia on 14th and 15th April and discussions took place on how the

Plans would progress in the next three years. Following the release of the Report Cards and the launch of the **Child Safety Strategy for Scotland**, there has been a renewed interest in the work of the Child Safety Action Plan for Scotland Steering Group with new members coming on board. The next stage is to work on preparing a more detailed action plan for Scotland as indicated in the Strategy. This will be compiled over the coming months and a draft will be sent to all stakeholders for comment. Work also continues to contribute to the next edition of the Report Cards with the aim to improve Scotland's position regarding child safety in comparison with our European neighbours.

#### **Home Safety Scotland Seminar 2008:** **“Raising the Roof on Home safety”**

The conference took place at the very grand Glasgow City Chambers and started with a welcome from **Teresa Murphy, Chair of Home Safety Scotland**.

**Councillor Jim Coleman**, the council's deputy leader, from Glasgow City Council then welcomed the delegates and speakers and spoke about the need for home safety to be built in to new homes, and of the strain on council funds due to the need to fix and fit aids and adaptations into more and more houses as people age. He spoke of an ageing population and the need to future proof our new build homes now, so older people can stay in their own homes for longer.

Councillor Coleman is also an advocate for the installation of sprinkler systems in new houses and was present at the making of the DVD shown by Alan Doyle later in the day. He said, “sprinklers could mean the difference between life and death” and urged house builders to “think seriously about installing sprinklers in their new developments”.

**The keynote speaker was Dr Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland**, who spoke about accidents within the wider health agenda.

His presentation began with the improvement of life expectancy within 16 European countries since the 1950's, but improvement has been slower in Scotland.

In Scotland, the health of the rich is improving faster than the poor. If Scotland's poor had improved at the same rate as our rich, then we would be the same as other European countries.

He went on to say that accidents peak at ages 5-10 and 45-55. Accidental deaths affect Scotland disproportionately as Scotland has a serious alcohol problem, which is a relatively larger contributor to lower life expectancy.

Dr Burns spoke about methods of injury prevention, and that engineering seems to be more effective than education, but engineering needs to be complimented by education. He also expressed a need for up to date data. He advised delegates to keep the pressure on by going to local hospitals, use the Health Board locally, use the Community Health

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Partnerships and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer will keep the Health Boards informed.

There was then an “ask the audience” style quiz, where delegates were asked about their knowledge in home safety. They were then asked some attitudinal questions, which were then asked again at the end of the seminar to gauge whether attitudes had changed after hearing the presentations during the day.

**Dr David Stone’s** presentation was about a public health approach to preventing injuries in the home. He spoke about the £200million cost to the NHS from injuries in Scotland alone. He continued by discussing findings that injury mortality is the leading cause of death in children and young people, and that 30–50% of these child injuries could be avoided by more effective prevention.

Dr Stone emphasised the 3 E’s of injury prevention,

- Education
- Enforcement of legislation
- Environment/engineering

He ended by saying that above all, we must make injuries visible to practitioners, politicians and the public by emphasising the epidemiological burden of injury, the evidence base for counter measures, and the enormous savings that would be made from prevention.

**Alan Doyle from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue** did a presentation on Automatic Water Suppression Systems (AWSS), which included a DVD of two identical flats (purposefully) set on fire. One flat had the AWSS installed and the other did not. The flat that had the AWSS fitted suffered only a very limited amount of damage and the one sprinkler head contained the fire and put it out, where as the other flat was completely destroyed and within minutes had reached 1000 degrees Centigrade. Alan also dispelled some of the myths surrounding AWSS.

**Andrew Lee from the Information Services Division (ISD) of the NHS in Scotland**

informed delegates how to access the website and get the statistical data they required.

Unfortunately, only emergency admissions to hospital are recorded and still not attendances at A&E. Otherwise the statistics are very well collected, by age, by sex, by location (home, road, other), by type; falls, burns/scalds, poisoning etc, by local authority and local health board.

I spoke after lunch about the “**Can the Home Ever be Safe?**” document, and despite my considerable pre-presentation nerves (which lasted weeks), it went well – apparently! I was able to use statistics from the ISD, which are less dramatic than the UK version of the document, but I was determined to use the most up to date information available.

The purpose of the document is to target simple, low cost design improvements to increase safety in the home, which RoSPA considers essential to reduce accidents and fatalities.

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My aim is to update the current document for Scotland in light of the mandatory fitting thermostatic mixing valves since May 2006 in new build and renovations, and add in their place automatic water suppression systems.

Concerning sprinklers, I reiterated some of what Alan Doyle spoke about and hopefully helped to myth-bust popular preconceptions about sprinklers;

- Sprinkler systems DO NOT all go off at once,
- Sprinkler systems DO NOT go off if you burn the toast,
- Sprinkler systems use 10 times LESS water than the fire service would use,
- One sprinkler head activated is sufficient to put out 95% of all house fires,
- Sprinklers save lives. No-one has died in a house where a system has been fitted,
- Sprinklers cost approximately 1% of the total house build,
- Sprinkler heads are inconspicuous.

At the end of the seminar, the “ask the audience” quiz was repeated for the attitudinal questions only, and it was interesting to see that the biggest change in attitude was for fire sprinklers.

The survey asked if you were buying a new house, would you consider having a sprinkler system installed if it was an option?

**The before (pre presentation) vote was;**

Yes 60%, No 2%, don't know 6% and Depends on cost 32%.

**The after (post presentation and de stigmatising of sprinklers) vote;**

Yes 95%, No 2%, don't know 0% and Depends on cost 2%. (and someone didn't vote), So we got 30% of the “depends on cost” people and all of the “don't knows” in favour.

All in all, the seminar was a great success, with each of the presentations running on in topic from the previous one, and my presentation brought it round full circle.

I will be doing a poster presentation on **“Can the Home Ever be Safe?”** in October for the 2nd European Conference on **'Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion'** on 9 - 10 October 2008. Paris here I come!

### **Up to date statistics**

#### **Information Services Division (ISD)**

Please follow the direct link to the required page of unintentional injuries data for emergency admissions. It can be difficult if you have not been shown how to get in. David Lee from ISD was a speaker at the Home safety Scotland Seminar.

<http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/3664.html>

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#### **RoSPA/City and Guilds Home Safety Auditors Course.**

Elizabeth and myself have recently completed an auditors training course for Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service. All 19 candidates passed successfully – well done to you all.

Do you need a qualification to consolidate your skills in preventing injuries in the home environment? Is it a while since you did the City & Guilds Introducing Home Safety Course? If so, the RoSPA/City and Guilds Auditors Course could meet your requirements.

This is a five-day course, which is a shorter version of the original two-week introductory course, and will be of interest to those whose remit includes any aspect of home accident prevention work. A wide range of relevant topics are covered, giving even the more experienced a chance to find out the latest developments:

On the first day we look at the history of home injury prevention and which agencies are responsible. We also cover data - where to find it and how it can be displayed. The final session on the first day looks at both the causes and the costs of injuries in the home.

The second day concentrates on the two most vulnerable groups - young children and older people - giving the reasons why they are more susceptible and how the accidents can be prevented.

On day three we look at the different agencies with a role to play in home injury prevention and we hear from guest speakers who cover Environmental Health and the Role of Trading Standards. The third day finishes with a short mock exam to ensure that delegates are prepared for what it is like to answer questions under official exam conditions.

On the fourth day we will go over the answers to the mock exam before more invited speakers go on to look in detail at safe environments including the Health and Safety at Work Act, risk assessment theory, fire safety and what to look for when completing an audit of potential hazards in the home.

Finally, on the morning of day five, delegates have the opportunity to pull together what they have learned over the week and to practice their communication skills by supporting, preparing or delivering short presentations. The week finishes with a two-hour examination on the main topics covered.

The whole course involves a variety of learning methods such as listening to short presentations and taking part in both group and individual exercises. Although delegates are given a comprehensive manual to take away with them, they are also expected to take notes where appropriate and a fair amount of evening reading is required over four nights in preparation for the final exam.

**We plan to run the next course around October/November, in Scotland**, so if you think the auditors course is for you then please contact Elizabeth Lumsden or Nikkie Butters in the Edinburgh office on 0131 449 9379 for further information.

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#### **Other Courses**

**Child Safety in the Home** and **Older peoples Safety in the Home** courses are still available and the dates will be posted soon.

**Choosing and Using** is a new course we will be taking in Scotland, information for which you can access by following the link below

<http://www.rospace.com/homesafety/training/equipment.htm>

[http://www.rospace.com/homesafety/training/safety\\_checks.htm](http://www.rospace.com/homesafety/training/safety_checks.htm)

If you have a group of people within a council authority area who require training, we will be happy to come to you and tailor the training to your needs.

Please contact Elizabeth Lumsden or Nikkie Butters in the Edinburgh office on 0131 449 9379 for further information.

**If you or your organisation requires leaflets, please e-mail me [nbutters@rospace.com](mailto:nbutters@rospace.com)**

#### **And last but not least, in its usual spot, the least coveted award**

#### **Darwin Awards**

More from the Darwin Awards - the most ridiculous way to die or eradicate yourself from the gene-pool through accidents and complete stupidity!

<http://darwinawards.com>