accidents don't have to happen

Impact of COVID -19 and issues presented for home accident prevention in Northern Ireland

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Northern Ireland – Background information

- Population size is 1.9 million
- Part of the United Kingdom
- NI has a border with the Republic of Ireland
- Northern Ireland Assembly has responsibility for devolved matters but many areas of policy are reserved for the British Government

Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2015-2025

- Strategy aim – to minimize injuries and deaths caused by home accidents
- Partnership approach with various organisations, for example, Public Health Agency, Local Councils, Health and Social Care Trusts, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Health, RoSPA
- Priority groups:
  - Babies and children under 5
  - People over 65
  - Other vulnerable groups

The Strategy Objectives

- Empower people to better understand home safety risks and make safe choices
- Promote safer home environments
- Promote and facilitate effective training, skills and knowledge in home accident prevention
- Improve the evidence base

Impact of COVID - 19

- Action plans have been disrupted
- Staff have been redeployed
- Partnership working is challenging – new communication methods and ways of working have developed
- The impact of COVID-19 specifically on the four strategy objectives, is set out in the next four slides

1. Empowering people to understand home safety risks and make safe choices

Impact

- The majority of the planned awareness raising programme continued as intended
- Additional elements were included that related to the pandemic

Issues presented

- Many older people are not online therefore consideration needed to be given to communicating safety messages effectively to them

2. Impact on promoting safer home environments

Impact

- Home safety assessment visits were suspended
- Supply of safety equipment was suspended

Issues presented

- Promotion of safer home environments widened to address additional risks as “home” became a workplace for adults and a place of education for children
- Delivery of the service is in the process of being adapted

3. Impact on promoting and facilitating effective training, skills and knowledge

Impact

- Classroom training suspended
- Communication and exchange of information among partners was still possible

Issues presented

- Training courses are being adapted for online delivery
- An opportunity was provided to review existing courses and update information on emerging issues and statistics

4. Impact on improving the evidence base

Impact

- Progress with data collection for falls was mostly halted
- Available resource was allocated to other evidence based projects eg data from a hospital consultant relating to magnet injuries and the formation of a focus group to progress issues

Issues presented

- Data is available from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service connected to the effect of lockdown on house fires
- Other evidence is not available yet, however a study is being considered to gather data of the effects of COVID-19 on home accidents and injuries in Northern Ireland

Thank you!

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