



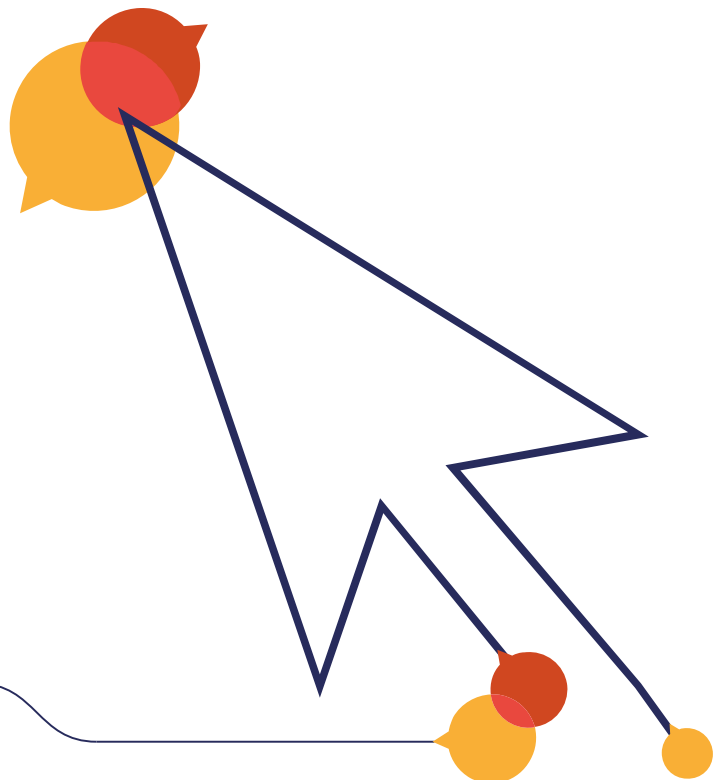
accidents don't have to happen

Home Safety Activity in Scotland

Research into the prevalence of
home accident prevention
initiatives

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Working to make homes safer





Executive Summary

Home safety and accident prevention are key issues for Scotland. This report focuses on local authority views and involvement in the topic.

Overall, the study provides important insight into a very mixed picture of home safety activity with clear barriers and a need for improvement.

Only 44 per cent of local authorities became involved in the research. The majority did undertake some home safety work in the financial year of 2017/18 but 15 per cent of the local authorities surveyed had undertaken no home safety/accident prevention work.

The prioritisation of home safety was mixed. Almost 7 in 10 local authorities included home safety in their Community Safety Strategy yet only 30 per cent included it in their Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Local authorities believed they needed to improve home safety in their areas but that they faced a number of barriers in doing so (most notably financial and resource issues).

Half of local authorities who responded believed that home safety needed to be improved nationally with 60 per cent believing a national target is needed.

Key recommendations from this research include:

- Home Safety Scotland should increase its membership to include all 32 local authorities in order to share best practice
- Home safety should be included in Local Outcome Improvement Plans
- National organisations and the Scottish Government should carefully consider the barriers to home safety activities and ways to overcome them
- The need for a national target should be researched.



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Introduction

Home safety and accident prevention are key issues for Scotland today. Although a number of key national organisations and local groups exist to help prevent home accidental injuries, it is less clear how local government tackles the issue.

Background

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents' (RoSPA) mission is to exchange life-enhancing skills and knowledge to reduce serious accidental injuries. RoSPA is committed to the improvement of safety in the workplace, at home, at leisure and on the roads and as such attends a number of forums and groups.

Home Safety Scotland is a group made up of representatives of organisations and provides a forum for professionals working in the field of home safety and community safety¹. Working in partnership with RoSPA and the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN), views of local government were surveyed in order to understand how home safety fits in the local government agenda.

Context

Emergency hospital admissions for unintentional injuries in Scotland have risen by 2 per cent over the past 10 yearsⁱ. In the home in 2016, there were 766 fatalities in Scotlandⁱⁱ. Home safety is a key issue for Scotland. It is estimated that home accidents cost the UK approximately £45.6billionⁱⁱⁱ per annum. Building Safer Communities Phase 2 recently launched, with the aim of reducing the number of victims of unintentional harm. Six thematic papers have been produced, one of which concentrates on the issue of home safety.

National Outcomes

The Scottish Government has set a number of National Outcomes which organisations and groups such as RoSPA, SCSN and Home Safety Scotland can contribute to. These include:

- We live longer and healthier lives
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger

¹ For further information on Home Safety Scotland and its members, please visit: www.homesafetyscotland.org.uk



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- Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.

Objectives

The objective of this work was to identify the current position of local authorities across in Scotland in the delivery of home accident prevention. In particular, this work was interested in the following three priority areas:

- Older people
- Children under five
- Those living in areas of deprivation.

Method

A letter was sent to each local authority explaining the research and asking for a named contact to complete the survey. Anonymity was ensured so as not to single out any specific geographical area. Although the letter was sent to every local authority, some areas did not respond. These areas were then followed up by telephone and emailed for a contact. The survey stayed open from August 2017 to February 2018.

Analysis

The survey responses were analysed in a univariate way. Charts and graphs have been used to help illustrate the data in a clear and straightforward way. All open-ended questions were analysed thematically and categorised.



Findings

The following findings have been split into five categories:

- **Respondents** – this category considers the number of local authorities surveyed
- **Activities and Responsibility** – this category considers whether home safety activities were carried out and if so, under which department
- **Priorities** – this category focuses on whether or not home safety was included in Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Community Safety Strategies
- **Barriers and Improvements** – this category focuses on the barriers local authorities feel they face and the potential for improvement
- **National Approaches** – this category considers improvements nationally.

Respondents

All 32 Local Authorities received the letter detailing the research and were later contacted by telephone and/or email. By close of the survey, only 44 per cent of local authorities had responded to the research request; 18 local authorities chose not to participate (see Figure 1).

There was one fully incomplete response which was removed from the survey for analysis purposes. The following findings will therefore total n=13.

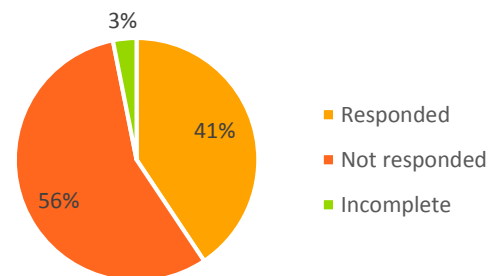


Figure 1: Local authority responses (n=14)

Activities and Responsibility

Clarity in understanding what, if any, activities were undertaken in the financial year of 2017/18 is key to understanding the importance of home safety in Scotland's local government areas. The findings showed that over 80 per cent of local authorities undertook activities in home safety for children under five. Just under 70 per cent worked in the area of older people's safety and roughly 55 per cent took part in activities related to home safety and areas of deprivation. Fifteen per cent of local authorities responded that they had undertaken no home safety activities in any key risk group in 2017/18.



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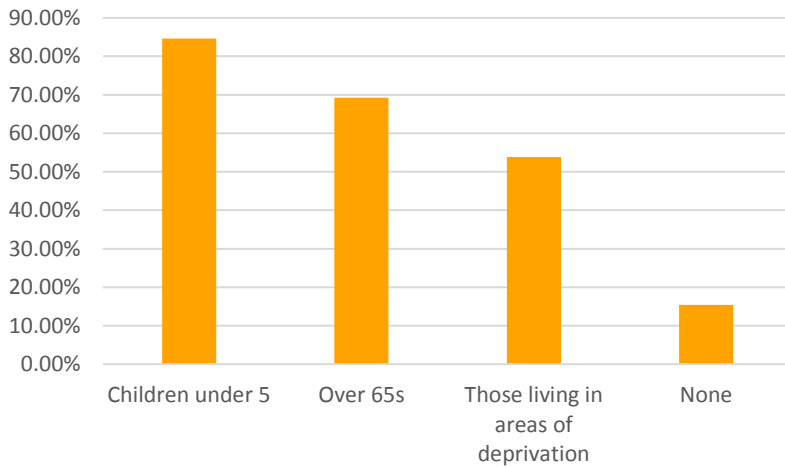


Figure 2: Home Safety Activities by type in 2017/18. (n=13)

The types of work undertaken within the key risk groups has been summarised in the table below:

Children under 5	Over 65s	Areas of deprivation
Home Safety Equipment Schemes	Falls Prevention Activities	Joint service visits
Awareness and Education days	Home Fire Safety Visits from SFRS	Home Safety Checks
Home Fire Safety Visits from SFRS	Home Safety Equipment Schemes	Home Fire Safety Visits from SFRS
Media Campaigns	Awareness and Education days	Education through Schools

Each local authority was asked which specific department has responsibility for undertaking home safety activities. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one department. Community Safety Partnerships took the most responsibility (39 per cent). A number of respondents choose the “other” category which included agencies such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Other responses included a mix of all agencies and also no department involvement (see Figure 3).

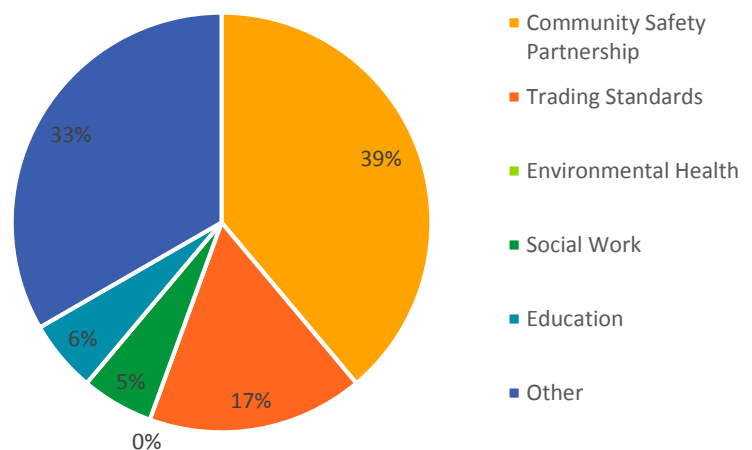


Figure 3: Responsibility for Home Safety (n = 13)



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Priorities

Information on the importance of home safety and how it fits within the local authority was uncovered. This was achieved through concentrating on the inclusion of home safety in Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP) and Community Safety Strategies. Roughly 40 per cent noted that home safety was not included in the local authority's LOIP. A further 30 per cent were unsure whether it was included or not.

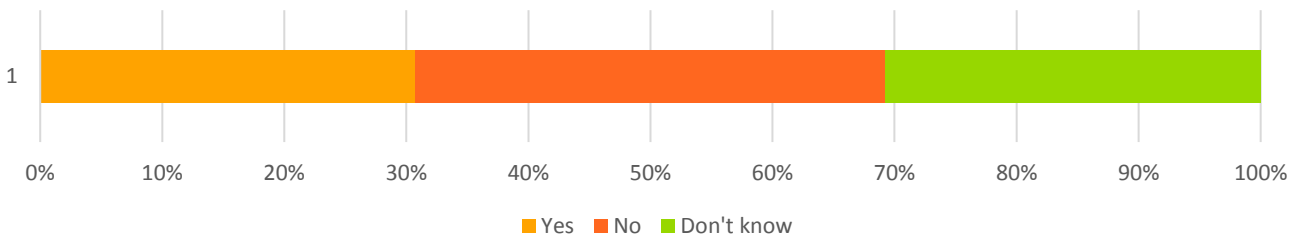


Figure 4: The inclusion of home safety in the LOIP (n=13)

The main reason for home safety not being included in the LOIP was that it was not considered to be a key priority for the area in question. Information was also gathered on whether home safety was included in Community Safety Strategies; 67 per cent of local authorities responded that home safety was included (see Figure 5). Reasons for home safety not being contained in the strategy included a Community Safety Strategy not being in existence, or home safety being covered in other areas such as child welfare strategies.

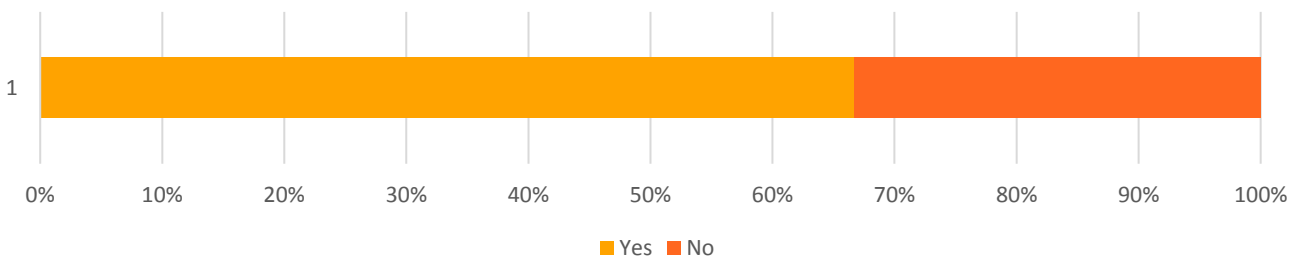


Figure 5: The inclusion of home safety in the Community Safety Strategy (n=12, NB 1 respondent did not answer)



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Barriers and Improvements

Understanding the barriers that local authorities face is extremely important to help move forward the home accident prevention agenda. A total of 67 per cent of local authorities believed that they faced barriers in dealing with home safety and accident prevention (see Figure 6).

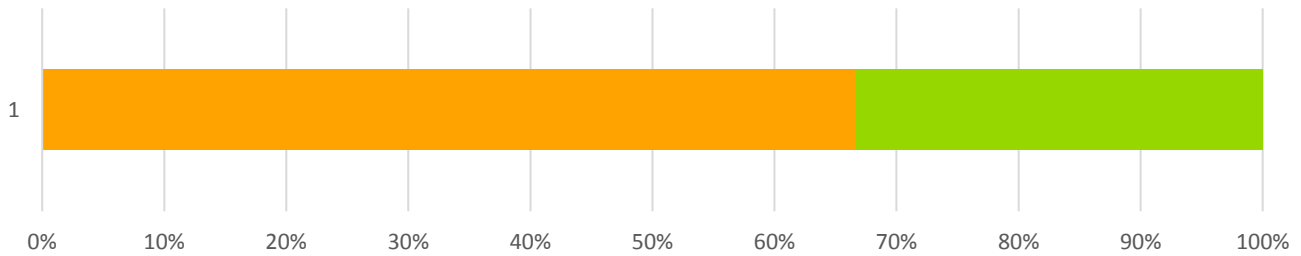


Figure 6: The presence of barriers in developing home accident prevention work (n=12, NB 1 respondent did not answer)

Local authorities were asked what these barriers included. A lack of funding and resources were cited as the most common barriers (see Figure 7). Other reasons included a lack of engagement with the community and a lack of strategic direction to shift to preventative activities.

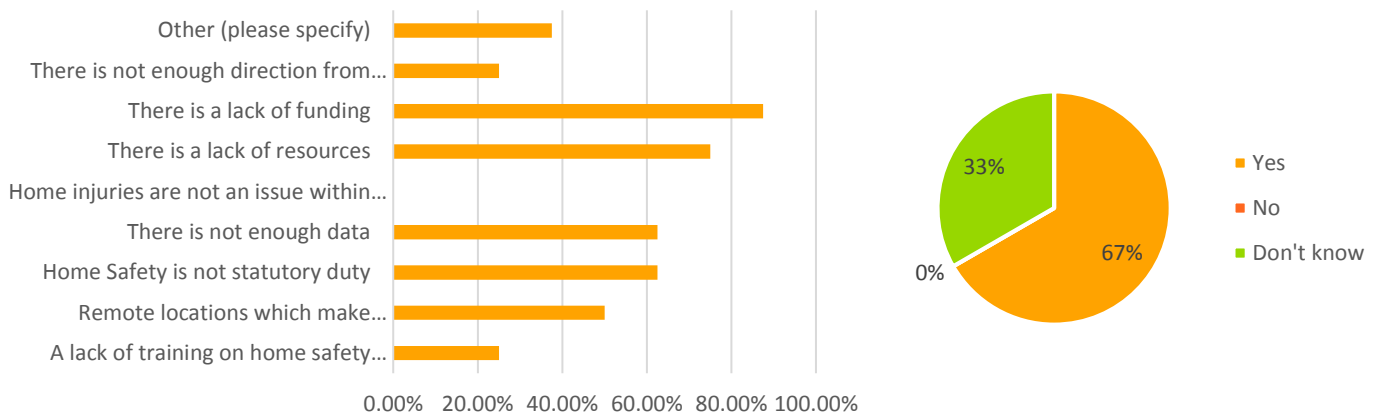


Figure 7: Barriers in home accident prevention work (n=8, NB 5 respondents did not answer)

Figure 8: The need for improvement in local areas (n=12, NB 1 respondent did not answer)

Despite these barriers, 67 per cent of local authorities felt that they needed to improve home safety and accident prevention within their areas.



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National Approaches

In addition to understanding home safety at a local government level, national approaches were considered. Local authorities were asked whether they thought home safety activities needed to be improved nationally across Scotland: 50 per cent agreed they did need to be improved, while another 50 per cent were uncertain (see Figure 9). Local authorities also provided insight into which agencies needed to provide more support. The top three agencies cited were: Building Safer Communities (Scottish Government), RoSPA and SCSN.

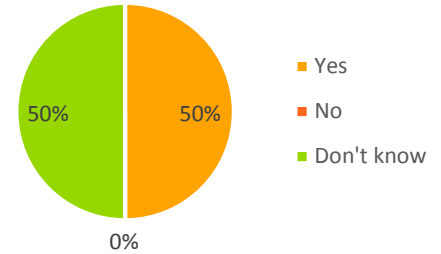


Figure 9: The need for improvement nationally (n=12, NB 1 respondent did not answer)

In terms of the support needed, local authorities noted the following suggestions:

- Increased finances
- Access to best practice advice
- Long term plans and goals
- Increased knowledge and advice from RoSPA
- Improved data collection through the creation of a specific database for accident prevention.

Local authorities were also asked whether there is a need for a national home accident reduction target for Scotland, similar to that of road safety and water safety, e.g. to reduce deaths by 40 per cent by 2020. Roughly 60 per cent of local authorities believed that a national target was needed, while a further 25 per cent were uncertain.

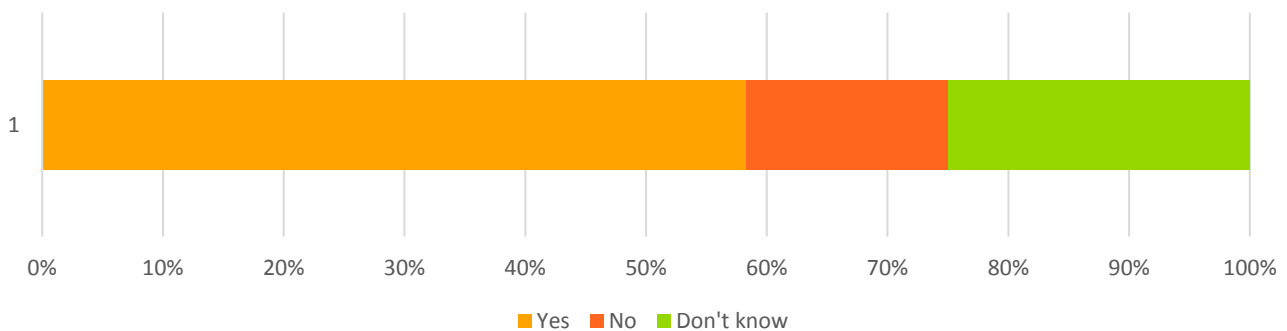


Figure 10: The need for a national home accident reduction target (n=12, NB 1 respondent did not answer)



Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

This report has looked at home safety activity in Scotland's local authorities. Caution however must be used with regards to the overall interpretation of this study. This is a result of having only 44 per cent of local authorities involved.

Overall, the study provides important insight into a very mixed picture of home safety with clear barriers and a need for improvement.

Firstly, only 44 per cent of local authorities became involved in the study.

Secondly, the majority of local authorities did undertake work in the last financial year in home safety activities – whether it be child safety, older people's safety or home safety and areas of deprivation. Fifteen per cent however undertook no work. In terms of the responsibility of this work, Community Safety Partnerships ranked the highest.

Thirdly, home safety is considered a key issue and priority in some local authority areas; 67 per cent of local authorities included it in their Community Safety Strategy. However approximately 30 per cent included it in their Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Fourthly, it is clear that local authorities feel that they face barriers in working in home safety and accident prevention. The most commonly-cited issue was a lack of funding and resources. Local authorities on the whole also felt that they needed to improve home safety activities, despite these barriers.

Lastly, this research has made clear the need for improvements and assistance nationally. Half of local authorities felt home safety needed to be improved nationally with Building Safer Communities, RoSPA and SCSN as the agencies that needed to provide more support. More knowledge, long term planning and funding was cited as the most essential. Importantly, 60 per cent of local authorities also felt that a national target was needed for home safety in Scotland.

Overall, these findings indicate that despite work within local authority areas on home safety, there is a lack of consistency and a number of barriers which need to be overcome.

Recommendations

Local authorities should collaborate more on their home safety work and share ideas and best practice. With the existence of a forum already created (Home Safety Scotland), there is a clear need for the group to promote itself and gain new members from each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.

Home safety needs to be promoted across Scotland nationally and locally. This could be achieved by the inclusion of home safety in Local Outcome Improvement Plans.



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National organisations and the Scottish Government need to carefully consider the barriers to home safety and accident prevention in order to help local authorities improve their work locally.

A national framework and/or target should be considered and researched for Scotland to help reduce home accidents.



References

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