

Pathfinder Project Practice Exemplar

Name and Timescales
The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service / NG Homes Pathfinder Project commenced in October 2015 and continues to operate.
Summary
Scottish Fire and Rescue (SFRS) along with NG Homes developed a pathfinder project to support a range of joint working and interventions with the North Glasgow community. SFRS seconded an officer, with a specific remit to work on interventions with older people in areas such as, fire safety, falls and other areas of risk within housing. The purpose and main focus of the liaison role was to work in a partner organisation to improve and continue to develop best practice in moving forward.
Need for Initiative
NG Homes were invited to participate due to their track record in housing and regeneration and strong partnership working; aligning with areas set out by the Christie Commission to protect those most at risk from fire in their homes. North Glasgow is an area recognised as one of high disadvantage, with Possilpark being one of the most deprived areas in Scotland, (SIMD 2016). With an ageing population, which will only increase in the next 20 years, risk is increased when age is combined with other factors, such as living alone and living in poverty. Physical and mental health issues also contribute to that increase in risk. 44% of NG Homes tenants are over 55, with 14% of them being over 75 and socially isolated. Both organisations were looking to explore innovative ways to link and embed risk awareness and education at a community level, to mitigate risk by involving individuals in vital safety messages. With the composition of households including older people living alone or in retirement homes (138 units), families living in isolation and people from different cultures, the overall need was to work with partners to deliver a prevention agenda that supports individuals at key stages of their life and find ways to engage with tenants to deliver vital safety messages to provide reassurance, increased awareness and education.
Aims and Objectives
The aim of the pathfinder project was to identify and protect those most at risk from fire in their homes. The primary focus was to identify and establish early interventions and preventative community safety opportunities amongst older people planning processes and developing projects, which would raise awareness of personal and home safety. The pathfinder project would also facilitate closer partnership working between the two organisations which would: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve safety for tenants;• train housing professionals on how to identify and mitigate safety risks;• identify specific areas of risk and acknowledge these areas to improve the lives of individuals at risk of harm and injury. Both organisations contribute towards the protection of those at risk from injury and harm within the home. Home fire safety and housing visits, provide excellent opportunities to identify those at risk and through an assessment of such risk, refer individuals to partner organisations for additional support. This would help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce fire casualties, fire deaths and accidental dwelling house fires;• Reduce risk to individuals and local communities;

- Increase peoples knowledge about home and fire safety;
- Reduce unintentional physical and psychological harm that could have been predicted and prevented;
- Work with a range of partners to deliver lasting benefits to local communities and to have a positive influence across the housing sector;
- Provide communities with safe, secure and affordable homes;
- Provide relevant community engagement activities across age groups and cultures.

Delivery

The pathfinder project was developed primarily in collaboration with the local community and centred around identifying existing and new opportunities within the local area to raise awareness and understanding of key risk factors and provide education and practical steps to enable people to make positive changes. It is now about continuous improvement and helping to develop best practice in moving forward. The appointment of a dedicated secondee from SFRS was a central element in delivering the project, and ensured the reach of the Housing Association was combined with providing the right support at the right time.'

During the project 9 key initiatives were identified and progressed:

1. **A referral system for Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's)** that all housing officers could access was developed. Liaising with SFRS's Prevention and Protection Directorate, this was achieved quickly, so that referring vulnerable tenants was embedded in the organisation, with all housing officers able to refer. This resulted in increased awareness amongst housing officers, and other staff, such as, concierges.
2. **Multi Storey Flat (MSF) programme.** A joint Health and Safety site inspection was facilitated with SFRS outlining how quarterly inspections are carried out. Best practice was discussed and new reporting procedures were established. After the Grenfell fire, reassurance meetings were organised by NG Homes Executive Team, which also included SFRS, for tenants.' These meetings resulted in attending housing officer surgeries on an ad hoc basis, which was an excellent opportunity to engage locally, impart advice and information, listen to tenants and to signpost to other partners. The Smoke and Heat programme followed, whereby 2 smoke alarms and a heat alarm were fitted in properties and tenants were subsequently advised that SFRS would visit to conduct a HFSV offering advice and information to help tenants make a fire action plan. This has significantly increased the number of visits, which is still ongoing.
3. **Risk Recognition (RR) Training.** 65 housing Officers, staff and tenants attended and participated in the training. This would allow them to identify and spot signs of fire / falls risk amongst older people in their tenancies.
4. **CPR / OHCA national training programme.** Housing Association staff were encouraged to attend training over a 4 week period at a local fire station to update their skills and improve upon their understanding and ability to identify risk.. Training included British Heart Foundation (BHF) online materials; using BHF kits and City of Glasgow Training Defibrillators.
5. **Multicultural Partnership Programme.** 28% of residents come from ethnic minority backgrounds, making North Glasgow the most ethnically diverse area in the city. This diversity extends much further than ethnicity and covers ages, family types, faiths, languages, cultures and traditions. A tailored programme was developed to engage the older Chinese community, who are still learning English, it was decided to use English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to deliver fire, home and road safety messages, utilising Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Stay Safe Scotland DVD. An ESOL volunteer

utilised SFRS resources, to deliver various safety messages, using the teaching packs, the videos and the DVD. Additionally, a range of resources were translated into Chinese.

6. **Cooksafe.** Clients who are identified and participate are considered at serious risk from the dangers of fire and would benefit from input about safer cooking practices, as well as improving their knowledge about healthier eating. The programme, in partnership with Sparcs, is a model of excellent partnership working with other public organisations targeting domestic house fires (kitchen fires) and also promotes home fire safety awareness. Its main aims are to target the more vulnerable members in our communities to provide practical cooking demonstrations, illustrate safer cooking practices, improve eating habits and provide advice and information on home and fire safety by SFRS staff. This programme was designed to promote healthy eating, to challenge people's perception of risk and make them safer within their homes, ultimately making them safer within their communities. Statistics showed that there had been a few incidents within the sheltered housing units, as well as incidents in the MSF's. The project has delivered 11 Cooksafes, reaching 265 older and vulnerable tenants, who now have an increased awareness of safe cooking and kitchen safety, through our cooking demonstrations.
7. **Community Networking Breakfast** SFRS attend every month with presentations given on a variety of topics, such as, HFSV's – referral processes; SFRS Recruitment; Firereach / Fireskills; CPR / defib training / Risk Recognition training
8. **RoSPA CO Monoxide pilot programme.** The Gas Distribution Networks' Carbon Monoxide Charity Fund Grant awarded RoSPA £2000.00 to run a small project to help raise awareness of Carbon Monoxide. The project was to focus on improving levels of awareness and understanding of the potential dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, as well as being signposted to other relevant organisations. . It was also to help lower the risk of unintentional injury, as well as providing the education to help empower residents to make the best decisions about the safety and health of themselves and their families.

The four areas identified were Possilpark, Springburn, Parkhouse and Balornock where 1400 owner occupiers were targeted to receive the awareness raising resource and useful information. Funding from NG Homes and SFRS ensured the delivery of the programme in partnership with RoSPA.

9. **Family Breakfast Clubs** a FREE family breakfast club programme has been developed in the Possilpark and Springburn areas. Funded through a partnership with NG Homes, SFRS and Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) it runs 5 days a week. The main aim is to get families sitting down together before going to school to enjoy a healthy breakfast and get some exercise. All families have had a HFSV, participated in Cooksafe and had CPR and defibrillator training.

Successes and Challenges

‘One of the main successes of the programme from ng homes point of view has been the selection of the Officer. It was clear from the beginning that the Officer, Fiona Herriot, had a wide range of experience at a strategic level having previously worked around community planning, locality planning and various thematic groups. Fiona also had a variety of experience working across other Glasgow housing organisations, as well as in the third sector.. The expertise and knowledge that she brought to the delivery of the project has been instrumental in its success’:**Margaret Fraser, Head of Regeneration, Ng Homes.**

Power of partnerships – being seconded and embedded within regeneration has been crucial in getting vital safety messages across. Being situated directly within the housing offices and being involved in high level strategic meetings with the Executive Team and with Housing/Investment has provided both an insight into the needs and, indeed gaps, that have or may have arisen. This has allowed for sharing of information to benefit both SFRS and NG Homes and, indeed to the local community. At the beginning of the pathfinder project there was the need to develop internal relationships with all staff and this was carried out in a planned manner thorough induction and training.

It also allowed the chance for us to look at some of the challenges, such as; how to better access multi cultural groups and high risk tenants. As the project developed we looked into these challenges to come up with positive solutions such as carrying out focus groups (with an in house translator) for the Chinese Community, identifying a quick response to engage with new tenants, and working with housing staff to identify people ‘at risk’ – for example, hoarding.

Another challenge was to introduce a variety of external partners and this has been achieved through delivering presentations to monthly Community Networking Breakfast programme, which has also included the Executive Team from BSC.

An extremely challenging time was post Grenfell, when Ng homes and SFRS had to react very quickly to build confidence of residents and board members in dealing with this issue. Many meetings with the executive team, reassurance meetings with tenants took place, as well as continuing those connections with senior members of Fire Service, local elected members and health and safety experts to develop the MSF Scrutiny group.

Impact/Change

- Over 600 + attending Cooksafes / CPR and Defibrillator Training / Risk Recognition training
- Increased uptake in HFSV’s and additional funding for Cooksafe events and CPR training.
- The audit within multi storey flats was accompanied by a large media campaign to keep this in focus.
- Clear messages on carbon monoxide poisoning / fire risks to local community.
- Safety messages have reached a wider audience due to the use of translators, such as the local Chinese, Syrian and African communities.

Feedback in the form of briefing notes for each project, shows that people have a better understanding of personal risk, in relation to home and fire safety and ways to mitigate this and have made changes in their homes to be safer. For example, they are more careful in terms of their cooking methods, carrying out regular checks on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and have a better understanding on how to deal with personal safety issues in general. This is reflected in the continuing conversations with tenants. Community members and volunteers work with staff to draw up risk assessments for individual activity and this embeds the issue of risk management. This informs NG Homes organisational risk register and Disaster Management Plan.

Reflections

The secondment was initially daunting, learning about another organisation and culture. Developing and delivering the planned initiative was integral to the success of the partnership and this followed on from a comprehensive 2 week induction within regeneration and housing.

Being based across various housing sites cemented working relationships with senior housing officers, housing officers and regeneration staff. Attending community events, meeting tenants and volunteers, ensured a trusting relationship was built and raised the profile of myself and SFRS. Looking at ways to improve and continue to develop best practice was crucial in identifying and establishing early interventions and preventative community safety opportunities.

Additional Information

SFRS and NG Homes are members of Alarm Risk UK

2018 – Winner of Community Award

2017 – Highly Commended Award under Communities category

2016 – Winner of Partnership Award

SFRS City of Glasgow

http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/1236777/glasgow_local_fire_and_rescue_plan_2018.pdf

SFRS Prevention and Protection Directorate

<https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/events/past-events/safe-as-houses-2018/older-people/cathy-barlow.pdf>

NG Homes's

https://nghomes.net/images/ng_homes_business_plan_-_2017-2020.pdf

Building Safer Communities - Phase 2 Strategic Assessment of Unintentional Harm

Link to report

Glasgow Community Plan

<https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=39367&p=0>

Glasgow Single Outcome Agreement 2013

<https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=19106&p=0>

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

Thriving Places

<https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/thrivingplaces>

<https://www.glasgowcpp.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=39190&p=0>

RoSPA

Download the 'Be Aware' Carbon Monoxide Campaign Evaluation Report.

<https://www.rospa.com/about/around-the-uk/scotland/be-aware-project/>

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