

Practice Exemplar – Partnership Approach to Supporting Oxygen Users (Renfrewshire)

Name and Timescales

The Joint Partnership Approach to Supporting Oxygen Users initiative commenced in September 2017. A partnership was established for a 6 month pilot period whilst partner interaction and understanding was developed. On conclusion of a successful pilot period, the initiative was formally embedded between partners and is ongoing in Renfrewshire.

Summary

The initiative operates throughout Renfrewshire and is led by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), closely supported by Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board (GGCHB) Rehabilitation and Enablement Services and the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

Through the development of an appropriate and effective Information Sharing Protocol (ISP), the initiative supports the home fire safety of individuals dependent on the use of oxygen at home. The partnership ensures the delivery of a structured and meaningful service, from initial provision and usage of oxygen to the delivery of appropriate and actioned fire risk assessments. The initiative takes into consideration and works to fulfil the safety needs of a specific community group, who it is recognised can be experience increased social isolation, physical frailty and vulnerability within their homes.

Need for Initiative

Local SFRS identified significant challenges in the collation and maintenance of accurate records for individuals supported by oxygen therapy within the home. Without knowing the details of all those individuals who had oxygen at home, the overview that Fire Service Command and Control had in terms of the fire risks associated with the presence of volatile oxygen containers was limited. This restricted information impacted on the ability of local SFRS to offer wellbeing support (for example Home Fire Safety visits) to identified oxygen users and their wider family network. It also impacted on the provision of 'real time' deployment of fire crews and the risk assessments they make for homes where oxygen is present.

The scale of the issue only became clear after lengthy negotiation and the establishment of a formal ISP with GGCHB Rehabilitation and Enablement Services. At that point, SFRS only had a record of 10% of people using oxygen services at home within Renfrewshire. The initiative allowed for SFRS records to be updated and then reviewed on a monthly basis to maintain real time, accurate information to be stored.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the initiative was to achieve a closer working protocol with primary partners to deliver structured and sustainable links that support local community safety and wellbeing.

The objectives of the initiative are:

- Improve local outcomes by working in a collaborative and flexible way.
- Achieve good governance and social responsibility through the delivery of an agreed Information Sharing Protocol between partners, ensuring clear structure and transparency to the process.
- Improve domestic fire safety by reducing accidental fires and fire related injuries, focussing engagement on specific group at risk.
- Reduce the risk of unintentional harm and injury relating to oxygen users and the presence of highly volatile oxygen containers in the home.

Delivery

Delivery of the initiative began with the agreement of GGCHB Rehabilitation and Enablement team to provide their entire list of oxygen users to SFRS. This had been previously discussed and authorised by each specific service user prior to being released, ensuring community approval and individual buy in to the process as well as compliance with data protection regulations. This provided SFRS with an opportunity for direct engagement with the community and a route for follow up contact. All Rehabilitation and Enablement staff were then given fire awareness training with a specific discussion around home oxygen usage risks. An information guide focussing on the early identification of risk was issued to all operational partners, including SFRS personnel.

Successes and Challenges

Successes:

- All 130 individuals who had oxygen at home requested and were provided a home fire safety visit. Appropriate management of fire service personnel was required to ensure a prompt and effective response to these requests within an agreed timescale.
- The development of a strong and resilient partnership. Monthly meetings take place with partners to review and update records of oxygen users and ensure the initiative remains relevant and responsive to the community's needs.
- Greater accuracy of SFRS Command and Control records of oxygen users. This supports the operational deployment of fire crews to make effective risk assessments and operational readiness.

Challenges:

- Breaking down perceived barriers to information sharing between partners. This was overcome by putting a learning process in place, including a formal information sharing protocol in line with GDPR and an agreement to commence a close working relationship.
- The provision of significant amount of data increased pressure on SFRS Command and Control staff to review and upload all information received. This was resolved by the careful management and deployment of available resources over a specific working period.

Impact/Change

The impact and effectiveness of the initiative is discussed at monthly partnership meetings, with a particular emphasis on reviewing the governance of shared data. This ensures that outcomes are structured, that action being taken is relevant and focussed, and that operational staff can be part of the evaluation process.

Reflections

Development of the initiative was initially viewed as problematic due to the perceived data sharing issues between partners, despite many service users in the community being supported by multiple service providers. The initiative highlighted the clear need for a more defined approach to information sharing within well-defined and legal parameters. Once the ISP was established, service providers acknowledged the importance of such partnerships in the provision of a more aligned and joined up service to vulnerable community groups.

Additional Information

Information Sharing Protocol Partners:

- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board Rehabilitation and Enablement Services
- Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership

Author and Contact Details

Mark Gallacher
Group Manager, Head of Prevention and Protection
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service,
01505 356626
mark.gallagher@firescotland.gov.uk