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Child Death Review Programme

Thematic review of deaths of children through fire

What we did:

- Reviewed literature
- Identified child deaths from the Child Death Review database
- Panel discussions

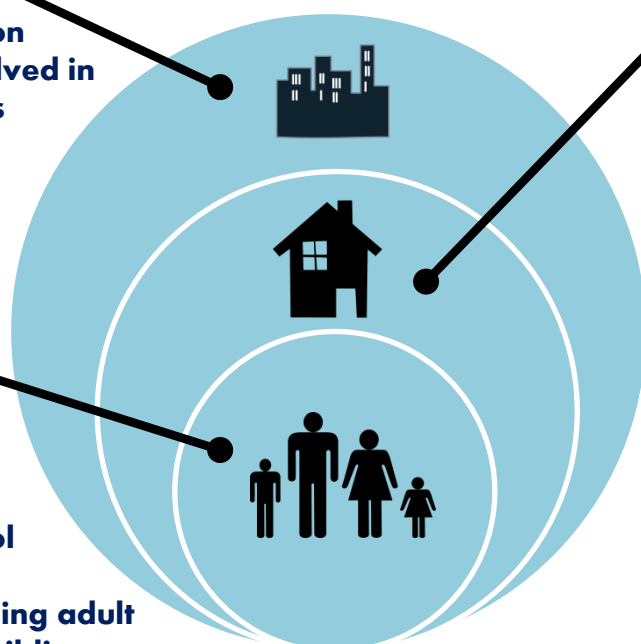
What we found: Risk factors

Wider safety issues

- Previous threats of arson
- Drugs and alcohol involved in deliberate setting of fires
- Fire play

Personal safety / individual characteristics

- Children < 5 years
- Cooking under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Lack of supervision
- Alcohol use by supervising adult
- Returning to burning building
- Smoking



Safety in the home / household characteristics

- No smoke alarm or alarm not working
- Lack of fire escape plan
- High number of residents < 15 years
- Low income households
- Involvement of social services with family

Further risk factors were identified in the literature and are detailed in the technical report

What we found: Effective interventions

- The presence of a smoke alarm is effective in reducing the incidence of fire-related deaths and injuries in children (for accidentally started fires)
- Enacting laws which require existing homes to have smoke alarms is effective in promoting use of the alarms
- Home safety education increases the proportion of people making home safety changes, such as deciding on a fire escape plan and installing a working smoke alarm

➔ Consistent and clear messages for the public:

- The importance of every home having a working smoke alarm
- The importance of knowing what to do in the event of a fire 'get out, stay out, call 999'
- The importance of having an escape plan and following home safety advice
- The risks of cooking under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- The appropriate supervision of children, e.g. every child needs a sober caregiver

➔ Ways to share these and existing prevention messages:

- These could be explored by the Child Death Review Programme (CDRP) liaising with Welsh Government and with Health Improvement colleagues in Public Health Wales to determine effective mechanisms for sharing information

➔ Existing prevention activities:

- CDRP team to explore the possibility of adding families with children <5 years to qualify for a free home safety check
- CDRP team to explore pathways for preventative actions where there is a threat of arson

➔ Legislation:

- CDRP team to initiate discussions on legislation relating to smoke alarms.

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