Safer Houses: Celebrating 20 Years of Fire Prevention in the Home

Issued by:
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Addressed to:
The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Please forward to:
Heads of Community Safety

Summary
Communities and Local Government (CLG) teamed up with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to celebrate 20 years of fire prevention in the home. A report entitled ‘Safer Houses’ was produced and launched at a Ministerial Reception at the House of Commons on Tuesday 25 November.

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1.0 Celebrating our success

1.1 The last twenty years has seen the number of domestic fire-related deaths in the UK halve and this number has been driven to its lowest level since the 1950s. **Provisional figures for 2007 show that the number of lives lost in accidental dwelling fires have decreased a further 18% on the 2006 figure to 190.** England has a strong record of fire prevention in the home and the ‘Safer Houses’ report acknowledges and celebrates this, highlighting the key steps that were made to reach these figures.

1.2 CLG and BERR jointly hosted a Ministerial reception on the Pavilion Terrace of the House of Commons on 25 November to launch the report. The reception was well attended by representatives from many fire and rescue services (FRSs), trading standards, and third sector organisations. In his address, Minister for Trade, Investment and Consumer Affairs, Gareth Thomas, spoke of the success of the groundbreaking fire safety regulations for furniture and furnishings. Fire Minister Sadiq Khan then thanked the FRS for their excellent work in engaging with communities with new and innovative approaches to fire prevention, as well as the huge number of home fire risk checks that have been undertaken. He spoke of his desire to see the partnership between CLG and the FRS continuing to thrive. The associated news release can be found at [http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1072432](http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1072432)

2.0 Ensuring Safer Houses

2.1 We took 1988 as a starting point, as it marked the introduction of the groundbreaking fire safety regulations for furniture and furnishings, and the beginning of a national media campaign to promote key fire safety messages, in particular smoke alarm ownership and maintenance messages. Since then we have come a very long way and seen a significant drop in the number of fire-related deaths in the home. Our efforts and successes over the past 20 years are now attracting interest from the governments of other countries. In particular, a recent report, commissioned by the US Government and discussed in a recent edition of Fire Chief magazine, advised that their fire chiefs and departments seriously consider following the English model for delivering fire safety strategies and programmes. The main focus of the ‘Safer Houses’ report is on the work Government has done by collaborating with fire and rescue services and other stakeholders in this area.

2.2 The ‘Safer Houses’ report can be found at [http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/saferhouses](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/saferhouses). We hope that you find it an informative and enjoyable read and that we can capitalise on our unique partnership to continue the downward trend in fire deaths.

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