

First Domestic Sprinkler System in Gateshead (Tyne & Wear)

Following on from the innovative approach of Newcastle City Council's installation of a Domestic Sprinkler System, to improve the safety of a vulnerable family earlier this year, Station Officer Grahame Dodd of Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service explains how Gateshead Council have shown the same foresight and concern to protect some of their residents.

At the beginning of the year the Community Safety Department of Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service were alerted to the fact that a young person with a history of firesetting behavior was living in a Community Children's Home in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

Station Officer Grahame Dodd made contact with the Manager of the Home and carried out a Risk Assessment he says "Although a hard wired Smoke Alarm System was already installed, because of the number of young people residing there, the size of the property and the travel time/distance from the nearest Fire Station (up to 15minutes) I advised the Manager to consider installing a Domestic Sprinkler System".

After consultation between the Manager of the Home, Gateshead Council and Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service several quotes, to complete the work, were obtained and a local sprinkler company were commissioned to start work on the 28th July 2004 while the children were on holiday.

The system was designed in accordance with BS DD251: 2000 & The Loss Prevention Council BS 5306 1990 Rules section TB14.

Concealed Flush Residential sprinkler heads with only a neat white disc in all rooms including bathrooms and toilets. All CPVC thermal sprinkler pipework was concealed.

Control equipment comprising Stop Valve, Check Valve and Flow switch was housed in a neat lockable cabinet. A Further cabinet contained two check valves to prevent back flow and electrically actuated stop valve. A bypass arrangement was used around the stop valve to charge pipework with water. The Town's Mains provided the water supply to the control equipment.

A 4-zone fire alarm panel was supplied with sounders to indicate damage to sprinkler heads. To meet with British Standards, a LPS 1048 Certificate of Conformity was issued upon completion of the contract.

Conclusion

It is hoped that if Home Risk Assessments in other Children's Homes highlight problems of a similar nature this successful project can be replicated throughout Tyne & Wear. Station Officer Grahame Dodd said: "Through Partnership working the Children's Home and Gateshead Council have invested in the best all round Fire Safety package available and I congratulate them on their foresight and concern to protect their residents".