

Chief Fire Officer's endorsement as sprinklers installed in Swindon Residential Care Home

On the 22nd July 2005, a newly refurbished Care Home in Swindon was opened.

Whitbourne House, which provides care for 40 residents, features a residential sprinkler system, which was retrofitted as part of the refurbishment of the care home.

The sprinkler system was installed after early discussions between Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Social Services, Building Control and Community Safety Officers of Wiltshire Fire Brigade on how best to keep the residents safe from the effects of fire. The Authorities continued to work in partnership throughout the project.

The system was designed and installed by Wormald to British Standard DD250. Retrofitting any type of building service can present some challenges in design and installation due to the characteristics of the existing building's structure. In this case the installation went very much to plan with few problems, which shows that using current materials and methods that retrofitting a building with residential sprinklers is very much a viable option.

Assistant Director of Social Services for SBC, Graham Pearson, stated that he was delighted that sprinklers have been a feature of the refurbishment and that he is extremely keen to offer the residents the best possible protection from fire after the recent fires in care homes in Strathclyde and Wales which had tragically demonstrated how vulnerable the elderly are from its effects.

SBC have three other homes scheduled for refurbishment and it is hoped that they too, will be fitted with sprinklers.

"During the grand Opening of Whitbourne House, Wiltshire Fire Brigade's Chief Fire Officer Andy Goves, said

"Wiltshire Fire Brigade is delighted that Swindon Borough Council took the decision to install sprinklers in this home and in others planned for refurbishment. In doing so, they have invested in the ultimate protection from fire for those in their care.

Swindon Borough Council is one of the very first Local Authorities to afford their residents such protection and is setting an example that it is hoped other Local Authorities and providers of residential care will follow."

