

Safeguard your nearest and dearest from the risk of fire

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is appealing to residents to make sure their homes, and those of people close to them, are safeguarded.

Neighbours, friends and loved-ones may need your help to protect themselves from the outbreak of fire. Perhaps you have an elderly parent, or know someone who lives alone, or with young children, who could benefit from safety advice. Maybe your own children are now grown-up, starting a family of their own and need some tips on fire prevention.

KFRS Community Safety Manager Stuart Skilton said: "We can offer people practical help to reduce the risk of fire. Maybe they need a smoke alarm fitted, advice on escape routes and what to do if a fire starts in their home. Or perhaps they need some more extra guidance to keep safe. Where needed, we offer free home fire safety visits. In addition, our dedicated team can provide a range of specialist equipment, such as fireproof bedding and smoke alarms for the hard of hearing, to help protect more vulnerable residents."

He added: "Just three breaths of toxic smoke from a fire can be life-threatening, but we offer free safety advice and services to help minimise the risk of being harmed. By encouraging those you care about to get in touch, you will be playing a huge part in preventing a fire and may even save a life."

Tips on staying safe from fire:

- ◆ **Make sure you fit, and regularly test, a smoke alarm. It is the single most important piece of safety equipment in any home.**
- ◆ If you plan on using an open fire, make sure your chimney has been recently swept as build-ups of soot and ash can cause chimney fires.
- ◆ When going to bed, make absolutely certain that any open fire is either out, or pushed back into the grate and a guard used to prevent sparks setting light to carpets or furniture.
- ◆ Interior doors should always be closed when going to bed as they can dramatically reduce the spread of fire.
- ◆ Portable heaters should be dust-free and kept well away from anything that could catch fire.
- ◆ Candles should always be placed on a non flammable surface, be away from soft furnishing like curtains and never be left unattended. It is far safer to consider using torches instead of candles.
- ◆ Before using an electric blanket, make sure it is under 10 years old, check it is working order and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

For further information or to learn more about the free advice and services on offer to residents contact KFRS on 0800 923 7000 or visit www.3breaths.info.