

Aberdeen woman saved by special bedding from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Officers conducting a free home fire safety visit had arranged for the resident to receive fire-retardant bedding.

A small fire in a bedroom would likely have claimed a woman's life had it not been for fire-retardant bedding provided by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

The incident at a property in the Tillydrone area of Aberdeen happened less than a fortnight after firefighters conducted a free home fire safety visit following a referral from a district nurse who was concerned for the resident's wellbeing.

Firefighters John Coutts and Ian Smith of the SFRS Community Action Team went to the home on Wednesday 11 February.

On learning the 62-year-old woman smoked in bed, they took steps to prevent a tragedy by arranging for her to be provided with fire-retardant bedding and for Aberdeen City Council's Telecare service to fit two community alarms in the property.

Less than two weeks later a carer looking after the needs of the occupier found an area of the duvet roughly six inches across was smouldering.

Station Manager Mike Cordiner, the commanding officer of the city's Central and Altens fire stations, said: "The life of this lady was saved through the diligence of these two firefighters.

"The smouldering duvet was safely extinguished without the carer or the lady being injured, but if the fire retardant bedding hadn't been in place then the fire would have caused considerable damage and the lady would most likely have perished.

"Our crews' work in their communities often goes unnoticed because it successfully prevents serious incidents from happening, so we usually don't know exactly where disasters have been averted.

"This incident is a clear example of a free home fire safety visit being a truly lifesaving service.

"It also highlights the importance of partner agencies referring their clients to us. In this case a district nurse thought about the person being potentially vulnerable to fire and rightly contacted us so we could provide the person with support.

"If each individual home fire safety visit we carry out reduces the risk by even a small amount, then collectively this will make a difference to the overall safety of our communities."

The popular programme is available in every community and sees firefighters help residents identify hazards and take simple steps to reduce the risk.

Always arranged at a time that's convenient for the householder, the visits take less than half an hour, reduce the chance of a fire happening and help people understand how to get to safety if a fire does start.

Reaching those who could be most in danger can be difficult so firefighters want the public to help put them in touch with those who may be at increased risk.

Among those who are particularly vulnerable to fire are people with physical or mental health conditions, who are old and live alone, or who have issues with the misuse of alcohol or drugs.

Anyone who thinks someone they know may be at risk is urged to discuss fire safety with them and refer them to SFRS.

To join Scotland's fight against fire and arrange a visit for you or someone you know, call SFRS on the freephone number **0800 073 1999** or text **'FIRE'** to **80800**, which is also free of charge.

