

SECTION 41 MEMBER BRIEFING

MAY 2017

Please find below information from your
Section 41 Member representative on South
Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority



Successful fire service scheme refers 50 people for sight loss support

The fire service has referred more than 50 people for life changing eyesight support under a successful partnership with charities for the blind.

The referrals have been made thanks to 'Optimeyes'- a two year partnership between South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR) and Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).



Community Fire Safety Officer, Andy Hall

The scheme has trained dozens of fire service staff in delivering a simple, five minute sight screening tool to assess sight problems. The assessment is now built into the fire service's established programme of home safety visits.

More than 7,000 people have been given sight loss information by the fire service in South Yorkshire and offered a specially developed screening tool if required, with at least 55 people referred to local charity Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind (SRSB) for further interventions.

One of those helped by the scheme was a Sheffield woman who was referred for support after suffering a blaze in her home.

Dawn Caney, aged 60, was referred for specialist sight loss support after fire service staff noticed cataracts may have contributed to the incident.

Dawn has now spoken to a hospital consultant about undergoing surgery on her cataracts, is visited by a physiotherapist to help her walking and referred to a care agency who help her with day-to-day tasks.

Dawn said: "I noticed that my eyes were getting bad about three years ago when things started to look blurred and I got a lot of headaches. I used to go out to the local shops every day but it got too difficult for me to manage the steps down from my first floor flat, I just couldn't see the rubbish. I was frightened of slipping, so I stopped going out, except to the rubbish chute. I was also frightened because I didn't know why I couldn't see clearly anymore. I thought it was because I smoked and that was what was causing everything to be blurred. Now I know it's also because I have got cataracts so that's a bit of a relief in some ways.

"I had an incident at my flat and the fire service came out. They sent a home safety officer out to visit me after that to check that my flat was well protected with smoke alarms and that I knew how to avoid the risks of having another incident. The home safety officer noticed that I couldn't see clearly and referred me to Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind who I had heard of, but didn't know how to get in touch with. I also didn't know that they helped people like me who weren't

“Since then my life has changed a lot, all for the better. A Community Advice Officer from SRSB came to my flat and has arranged appointments and support for me. I’ve been able to tell her all my problems and she always listens and asks me what I want and what I prefer. She gives me time to think about things first so I don’t feel pressured into making decisions. It feels like I have some say in my life again.

“My support worker is helping me to trust people again and I now get out of my flat at least once a week. I would say there have been lots of positive changes in my life since February thanks to being referred to SRSB by the South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue.”

Although the two year Optimeyes project has come to an end, fire staff will continue to refer people with sight loss issues to Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind providing a lasting benefit for local people.

SYFR Area Manager Steve Helps, said: “This is all about making every contact we have with local people count. We believe the fire service can play a much wider role in terms of tackling some of the big health challenges our country faces in the future. This scheme is the perfect illustration of that aspiration, where the fire service’s contact with some of the most vulnerable people in society is being used to do more than just prevent house fires.

For more information on sight loss visit www.rnib.org.uk

Hotelier given eight month jail sentence for breach of fire safety laws

The former owner of a Sheffield hotel has been jailed for eight months after breaching fire safety laws.

Amandeep Sandhu, of Turlands Close, Coventry was sentenced at Sheffield Crown Court on Monday (8 May) after pleading guilty to five charges contrary to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The case was brought following a fire safety inspection of the Cutlers Hotel, George Street, Sheffield by South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue (SYFR) on 12 September 2014 when breaches of the Order were discovered.

Due to the lack of a working fire alarm, a Prohibition Notice was served and the 45-room hotel was closed to guests. During a second inspection three days later further fire safety law breaches were discovered.

Charges brought against Mr Sandhu included:

- A failure to have a suitable fire risk assessment.
- A failure to ensure the premises was equipped with appropriate fire detectors and alarms

- A failure to provide adequate emergency lighting
 - A failure to provide adequate training to staff
- Mr Sandhu was sentenced to eight months in prison for each of the breaches, with the sentences to be served concurrently.

Steve Helps, Head of Prevention & Protection, said: “We always try to work positively with businesses to comply with fire safety regulation, but this case is a stark reminder of the consequences of failing to comply with those laws. Had a fire broken out in these premises then there can be little doubt that lives would have been lost. The sentence handed down by the judge should serve as a warning to any business of how seriously breaches of fire safety law are taken.”

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales. A responsible person must carry out a fire risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan.

SYFR works closely with businesses to ensure they comply with the regulations and inspectors are available to offer practical advice and assistance in this area. For more information on the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and keeping premises safe from fire [visit the Business Safety section of our website.](#)

Fire service picks up LGBT employer gong at South Yorkshire awards



L-r: SYFR Community Safety staff Alison Dyson, Kelly Jenkins, Trevor Bernard and Nicola Hobbs pictured with the award

The fire service has picked up an award recognising its contribution in supporting LGBT+ issues in South Yorkshire.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue was named 'employer of the year' at the inaugural South Yorkshire LGBT+ Awards in Sheffield.

The award recognised a company or employer which provides an environment that's supportive and inclusive of all members of its workforce and takes specific measures and actions to ensure staff are working within an equality and diversity focused environment.

The fire service beat off competition from 17 other employers to win the award, which was voted for by the public.

As well as providing a supportive environment for its workforce, the fire service also supports local LGBT+ pride events, including Sheffield Pride, Pride of Rotherham and Sheffield Pinknic.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Martin Blunden, said: "This is a real honour and whilst we will always aspire to do more in this area, the award reflects the progress fire services like ours are making towards LGBT equality, which means we are better placed to respond to the issues faced by our employees and the LGBT community. Firefighters, support staff and volunteers come from all walks of life. For LGBT employees, knowing that the organisation and colleagues will support them to be themselves means they can focus on their job which is to make people safer."

Alison Dyson, who volunteers in the community safety team and attended the event, said: "I am very pleased that the fire service got the award for several reasons. Members of the public voted for us as an employer, which suggests we are doing something right. I feel comfortable here and just one of the team. There can always be room for improvement in any organisation, but from my point of view I think we are heading in the right direction in supporting all of South Yorkshire's communities."

**Authority funding scheme's
third bidding round to open
later this year**



Applications will open later this year for the third round of the Stronger Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) fund.

The fund is a South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority scheme which reinvests money into local communities to support our work to prevent emergencies. The money has been set aside from the Authority's reserves.

More than 40 projects won funding during two previous open bidding rounds, [which you can read about here](#)

SSCR Fund Information Event

To help potential applicants prepare for the bidding process, an information event will be held on **4 August 2017** at the Fire Service Training & Development Centre on Beaver Hill Road, Handsworth, Sheffield.

Speakers at the event will include successful applicants from the second open bidding round, including:

- Crisis Skylight South Yorkshire
- Barnsley NHS Trust Specialist Midwives
- SpeakUp Self – Advocacy

Delegates will also be advised on the application process, the funding criteria they must meet and the proposed tools for evaluating the successful projects.

Round 3 Timeline

- Fund open for applications 1 September
- Closing date for applications 12 noon 30 September
- SYFR task and finish groups meet 2 to 14 October to assess applications
- Assessment Board meets w/c 23 October to make recommendations
- Recommendations for approval for funded projects to Fire Authority on 27 November
- Approved projects notified w/c 27 November
- Projects launch 1 January 2018

For more information please contact the SSCR co-ordinator, Toni Tranter on ttranter@syfire.gov.uk



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All Fire Authority meetings are open to the public and are broadcast live on the internet. Visit www.southyorks.gov.uk. You can also view previous meetings.

Whilst viewing the meeting you can contribute comments and debate proceedings with other viewers via CoverItLive or Twitter.

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