Background

The Fife Cares Home Safety Scheme is a Fife Community Safety Partnership initiative that was developed between 2002 and 2005 and launched in 2006. It serves as part of the Partnership’s drive to reduce the number of accidents in the home involving children.

The Fife Cares Child Safety Service is an integral part of Fife Community Safety Partnership’s work to improve the safety of vulnerable residents and to deliver the community safety outcome ‘Fewer injuries and losses of life at home and on the roads’. By visiting individuals and families in their own homes, the service addresses specific needs and provides tailored advice and assistance.

The Partnership’s Fife Cares Child Safety Service offers families with children aged five and under a free home risk assessment. Assessments are undertaken by two Home Safety Advisers who visit families in their homes and conduct a room by room check for hazards. As appropriate safety advice and education is supported through the provision, and sometimes installation, of child safety equipment tailored to a family’s individual needs. There is no form filling, no waiting list and all the equipment is fitted free of charge.

Policy Background/ Driving Force

A recent report from the Scottish Child Safety Alliance has revealed that every year one in five children in Scotland attend accident and emergency departments as the result of an injury – that is approximately 200,000 visits per year. In addition, death rates from accidents among children in the lowest earning homes in Scotland are three times higher than those living in the wealthiest households.

In the Fife region the Community Safety Partnership is leading work to help reduce the likelihood of children being involved in an accident.

Evidence confirms that accidents are more likely to happen to children within the most deprived areas of Fife. For example in the period 2007/2008 the admission rate for children per 1000 in Fife’s data zones that are included in Scotland’s 15% most deprived areas was 10.65%, compared with 6.37% for other less deprived areas.

The work of Fife Cares is set within an agreed national context, as led by agencies such as Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and SAPC – whereby home injury prevention work is a key policy priority.

The Fife Cares Service in an integral part of the Partnerships work to reduce home accidents and to meet the community safety outcomes within the:

- Community Safety Strategy
- Fife Community Plan
- Single Outcome Agreement between Fife Partnership and The Scottish Government

The work of Fife Cares is supported nationally by ROSPA who over sees the work of Fife Cares via the Safer Homes Task Group. The programme has been
successfully transferred to several other regions in Scotland since its inception.

**Partners**
- Fife Community Safety Partnership
- Fife Council
- Fife Constabulary
- Fife Fire & Rescue Service
- National Health Service (NHS) Fife
- Voluntary Sectors (CVS Fife)

**Aims & Objectives**
- To educate and raise awareness regarding child home safety and security amongst vulnerable families through home risk assessments
- To ensure access to safety and security equipment, including where necessary installation.

**Evaluation**
Figures from NHS Fife indicate that the number of emergency hospital admissions involving children aged 16 and under following a home accident for the years 2006-2009 was 23% lower than the number for the three years preceding the launch of the programme. Reductions were even greater for children 5 and under, where a 29% reduction was found.

Service benefits are measured using a range of outcome measures, the number of people visited and feedback from clients and partner services. Figures for total visits achieved the Fife Cares Child Safety Service for the 2009/2010 fiscal year indicate that there were 256 child safety visits within the targeted data zones with the highest rates of accidents and 780 child safety visits outside of the targeted data zones.

For the fiscal year 2008/2009 Fife Cares conducted a customer survey and used the feedback collated to examine possible improvements to existing service delivery.

Overall, responses were positive with clients expressing satisfaction with the service, welcoming not only the equipment but also, importantly, the child safety advice. Informal feedback to Fife Cares is also positive, with many referrals being made following recommendations from family and friends.

**Key Steps**

**2002-2005**
- A consultation around the issue of home safety with the existing programmes (Safe and Sound schemes, Home Start and the Fife Council Social Work and Council for Voluntary Services Fife) identified that action was needed to ensure the continuation of the service provided by these valued projects. All partners were fully supportive of a proposed initiative, which would mainstream provision within the Fife Cares Service.
- Specific targeting criteria were developed so that home visits and risk assessments would be offered to people who live in communities experiencing high levels of crime and accidents in the home and the most vulnerable. Criteria include:
  - A child is known to have had an injury within the home
  - The family is on a low income or experiencing financial difficulties
  - Family problems exist - e.g., marital breakdown, domestic violence.
  - Parent or child has special needs (emotional, social or disability)
  - House is overcrowded
  - House is in poor state of repair
  - Parents are unemployed or receiving benefits.
  - Multiple occupancy accommodation
- Other aspects of the new service included:
  - Educating and raise awareness regarding home safety and ensuring access to safety and security equipment.
  - Promoting the service to local staff from local partner agencies not only to increase awareness of the service but to also increase knowledge of safety and security issues and try and get everyone to think with home safety and security in mind
  - Providing a one-stop shop approach, so that while the initial visit focuses on home safety, if it apparent that the family or individual has other needs that appropriate linkages to other services will be seamlessly made.
- In conjunction with existing partners the existing Fire Cares Home Safety and Security service was further developed to incorporate child safety issues. This service delivery model aimed to minimise the bureaucratic burdens placed on local volunteers, by mainstreaming the service. Funding was sought from key partners, notably Fife Community Safety Partnership, Fife Council and NHS Fife.
2006 - present

- Launch of scheme and promotional efforts regarding the service that target all services across all sectors of Fife region. Fife Cares aims to learn about what other agencies do so they can offer the best advice to clients on any other issues that are highlighted.
- Examination of best way to work, with conclusion that joint working is more effective, more productive and a safer method of working
- Review of the lone working procedure, the child protection procedure and the child protection incident reporting form as they relate to the scheme
- Working with the Safer Homes Task Group Fife Cares works hard to make sure that home safety remains a priority within the community safety and community planning agenda
- Process evaluation and monitoring

**Lessons Learned**

**Barriers**

- Home safety is not necessarily viewed as a priority within partner agency service plans. Fife Cares therefore works hard via the Safer Homes Task Group to ensure continued partner support for the service.
- Some of the families visited cannot or will not prioritise the purchase of child safety equipment. In these cases the service installs equipment, while at the same time educating parents or carers and highlighting risks.
- Funding is an ongoing issue. Although the core service is funded, additional funding has to be found each year to ensure that the service can be targeted at the areas where it is most needed.
- The collection of data to measure service performance and impact is also important. To date, this has been limited to hospital admissions and accident and emergency data.

**Facilitators**

- The service is open to home owners or to families living in either council or privately owned rented properties.
- Ongoing commitment and financial support from partners is crucial. For example, NHS Fife and Fife Council’s Housing Service have maintained their funding for the service at a time when other budgets have been reduced.
- The Safer Homes Task Group is one of five strategic community safety groups in the region. The group oversees the work of Fife Cares and is responsible for delivering the Making Homes Safer and More Secure outcome within Fife’s community safety strategy. This link ensures that changes can be made to policy and working practices as required following feedback from the service.

**References, Additional Information**

1. Fife Direct (Fife Council website) [http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/)

**Contact**

Name: Samantha Pairman
Address: Fife Community Safety Partnership
First Floor, North Wing
Kingdom House
Pentland Park, Saltire Centre
Glenrothes
Scotland KY6 2AQ
Tel: +312(0)8451 55 55 55 Ext: 446140
Email: samantha.pairman@fife.gov.uk

**Advice to Countries/Transferability**

- When deciding where to place programme, look for situations where strategic direction and governance structures are a fit and monitoring systems and processes already exist in order to increase chances for sustainability.
- Modify the programme as needed to make it work within local and regional context.
- Start with a smaller pilot to identify what works and what needs improvement before expanding implementation of the programme.
- Implement processes to monitor and evaluate the programme, including customer surveys, in order to establish whether the programme processes are working as planned and whether there is an impact on child injuries.