

KEY FACTS

AGE SAFE SCOTLAND: ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN AN AGEING POPULATION

Scotland's Ageing Population

- People over 65 will comprise 25% of the population by 2037.
- Over the next 25 years, it's estimated those aged between 65-74 will increase by 37%, while those aged 75+ will increase by 86%.

At Greater Risk

- Currently, older people (60 plus) make up 18% of the Scottish population but they account for 37% of the casualties and fatalities involving electricity.

The Cost of Electrical Accidents

- Injuries caused by an electrical fault cost Scottish tax-payers around £8.9M each year, with a more than a third (£3M) spent on older adults – who comprise 18% of Scotland's population.
- To put this in perspective, the average cost of a hospital admission for someone over 65 is comparable to the weekly cost of 28 people living in a care home.

Living with Dementia

- In 2014, there were 89,879 people in Scotland living with dementia. It is estimated that over the next 25 years, this figure will almost double.
- Research by The Alzheimers Society stated that 83% of carers and people living with dementia said living in their own homes was "very important".

Living in Older Homes

- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard, which includes reference to electrical safety requirements, was introduced in 2004 and applies to social housing. Electrical Safety First led the fight for regular electrical safety checks in the private rented sector (PRS) to be included in the Scottish Housing Act. However, such standards do not apply to owner-occupied housing.
- Older people tend to be owner-occupiers (72%), with homes built before 1982 that often lack the five recommended electrical safety features:
 - All PVC wiring
 - An RCD or residual current device (which rapidly cuts the current to reduce the risk of an electric shock).
 - A modern fusebox
 - Miniature circuit breakers
- Approximately 78% of older people's homes are in disrepair, with 58% requiring critical repair, 35% needing extensive repairs and 8% in need of urgent repair.

Report's Recommendations

Electrical Safety First's Report has made the following recommendations to the Scottish Government:

- Free, five yearly electrical safety checks for all households with one person of pensionable age.
- Mandatory, five-yearly electrical safety checks in the social rented and care sectors.
- Additional funding for Care and Repair Agencies to rectify electrical hazards in older people's homes.
- Electrical safety checklists should be distributed by local authorities and others who are in regular contact with older people (e.g. GPs, etc.).
- A national framework for agencies working with older clients, so that referrals regarding electrical safety in the home can be dealt with effectively.
- Older people in the PRS should be able to raise electrical safety issues with their landlord without fear of eviction.
- Residual current devices (RCDs) should be fitted to all PRS homes.
- Government grants should be established to develop assistive technology products to help older people use electricity safely at home.
- Government to make a commitment to reducing the number of accidental domestic fires involving those over 65.
- Improved reporting of fires to better inform safety strategies – particularly details of the type of housing tenure and the age of those involved in such accidents.

For a copy of the report, please visit

www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/agesafeScotland

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