

"A smoke alarm saved my life!"

MR and Mrs McElroy from Orford in Warrington fully appreciate the importance of having working smoke alarms after a fire broke out in their kitchen earlier this year.

Mr McElroy was upstairs at the time and his wife was watching television downstairs. During her favourite soap, one of their smoke alarms went off and when Mrs McElroy went in to the kitchen

to investigate, she found thick smoke billowing from her 22-year-old washing machine.

After the initial shock of the smoke, Mrs McElroy immediately switched off the power to the washing machine and frantically shouted to her husband upstairs who immediately alerted the fire service.

On arrival at the property on Grasmere Avenue, the fire service found that the

washing machine had developed an electrical fault and immediately took it outside in to the garden.

Ironically, Mr and Mrs McElroy had only just had new smoke alarms fitted in their house, a couple of months before the incident.

"The Fire Service arrived very quickly and luckily there was no damage to my kitchen from the smoke but it was a very frightening experience," said Mrs McElroy.

She added: "I had had my washing machine for 22 years and had only ever spent £90 on it. Now I had to go out and buy a new one which was a nightmare as I'm not very good at using gadgets so my washing kept taking over two hours – luckily I've now found the short wash."

Mark Coleman, Station Manager from Warrington Fire Station, said: "Luckily, this turned out to be a



● Mr & Mrs McElroy with Warrington Station Manager Mark Coleman.

relatively minor incident but could have easily been much more serious. I hope that by highlighting this particular fire, we will reiterate the point that every household should have working smoke alarms and that they should be tested regularly as they save lives."

Thankfully Mrs McElroy is familiar with her new washing machine now - but on a serious note, she no longer leaves it switched on overnight or when there is no-one at home. Other members of the family have also had home safety assessments carried out by the Service.

Escapes as a result of advice and guidance from the Service

April 2006

- A 35-year-old and her three children escaped from a fire caused by a grill pan in Ellesmere Port.
- A 51-year-old female, a 48-year-old female, a 24-year-old female and an 18-year-old male escaped a fire caused by an unattended pan in Crewe.

May 2006

- A 40-year-old female escaped from a fire caused by an unattended cooker in Widnes.
- A 35-year-old female escaped from a fire caused by unattended cooker in Winsford.
- A 32-year-old male escaped from a fire caused by unattended candles in Birchwood.
- A 93-year-old female escaped from a fire caused by a grill pan in Macclesfield.

June 2006

- A 23-year-old male escaped from a fire caused by an unattended pan in Ellesmere Port.



They still need protection in the bedroom!

FREE SMOKE ALARMS AND A HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Unfortunately older people statistically are more at risk in the home. We want to ensure they have the very best protection. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service will fit free smoke alarms and undertake a full Home Safety Assessment.

We want them to sleep soundly at night and reduce the risk of accidents in the home.

To protect someone you love, simply phone **0800 389 0053**



www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

Safety campaign for older people

IT is a fact that older people are statistically more at risk from fire in their home than any other age group - which is why the Service is launching a major campaign with key partner agencies later this year.

The controversial campaign, (above) which shows two older

people in bed, says 'They still need protection in the bedroom'. It aims to illustrate that older people need home safety assessments and free smoke alarms fitted in their homes in order to reduce the risks.

More information about the campaign will follow shortly.

Advocates make life safer for vulnerable

SINCE joining the Service earlier this year, a team of dedicated 'Community Safety Advocates' have helped make a real difference for some of the most vulnerable people across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

The 11 staff, who are based across the county in areas like Chester, Crewe, Macclesfield, Warrington, Widnes and Winsford have carried out over 2,000 free home safety assessments (HSAs) in less than 10 months. These have

involved giving advice and guidance to occupants and fitting free smoke alarms.

The advocates have also worked very closely with local community groups like Social Services and Age Concern to identify those people most at risk and organise local campaigns to raise fire safety awareness.

Each advocate has been fully trained in areas like basic fire training to help them understand about the dangers of fire in order to give better advice to the community.

"Fitting smoke alarms and carrying out home safety assessments are the key to reducing the number of fire deaths and injuries in Cheshire," said Geoff Shephard, the Service's Community Safety Area Manager.

"I am delighted with the dedication and enthusiasm that the advocates have given to the home safety assessment campaign and look forward to working with them in order to offer every home in the County a home safety assessment and free smoke alarm by 2010."



● Advocates Julie Cooper (left) and Ann McElroy carrying out one of the Home Safety Assessments.