



# Firesetting Intervention Scheme

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LONDON FIRE BRIGADE



London Fire Brigade's Firesetting Intervention Scheme (FIS) has a specialist team of caseworkers who are trained to work with children and young people from early years up to 18 who demonstrate any type of firesetting or fire-play behaviour. This is always done with the permission of the parent or guardian.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHEME DO?

The scheme offers one-to-one fire safety education and advice to the child and their parents or carers. The first visit takes place in the home with further sessions usually at the child's school or other suitable location. FIS caseworkers will engage with the child and their parent(s) or carer(s) to gather information about the firesetting behaviour and to build a trusting, supportive relationship.

The team do not use shock tactics, as education and an understanding approach has been proven to be more effective at changing firesetting behaviour. Each session is tailored to suit the child's individual needs and abilities. The number of visits will vary but on average there are a minimum of three.

## WHO CAN MAKE A REFERRAL TO THE SCHEME?

- Parents/carers
- Schools
- Police
- Social services departments
- Youth Justice Service
- Other professionals

## ADVICE TO PARENTS AND CARERS

We recommend the following advice if there are concerns about a child or young person playing with or setting fire:

- Explain to children that fire can hurt and kill and they should stay away from fire of any kind. Tell them it is only safe for adults to use matches or lighters.
- Never leave children alone in the house or in a room where there is a burning candle, open fire or cooker on, even for short periods of time.
- Keep all types of lighters, and matches, out of sight and out of reach of children (use a lockable box where possible).

- Make a home fire safety plan with your family and practise it.
- Keep outbuildings, garden sheds and garages locked to prevent access to flammable items.
- Carry out regular checks for signs of firesetting, such as burn marks on carpets, beds, burnt items or paper in sinks or waste bins.
- If a fire happens, warn others, get out, stay out. Call 999 and ask for the fire brigade.

## IMPROVING HOME FIRE SAFETY



Smoke and heat alarms provide an early warning – and time to escape – that really does save lives.

Smoke alarms should be fitted everywhere except for rooms where there may be an excess of smoke or steam, such as a kitchen. Heat alarms can detect fires in kitchens where smoke alarms should not be placed.

Test smoke alarms regularly and change batteries when required.

London Fire Brigade offer a free home fire safety visit for people at the highest risk of experiencing a fire in the home. It provides advice on how to make the home safe from fire and, where appropriate, fit a smoke alarm.

Check your fire risk today – we'll get you the right help. **Scan this QR code** or call us on **0800 028 4428**.





## WHY DO CHILDREN SET FIRES?

Children play with fire for reasons ranging from curiosity to using fire-setting to express feelings of anger or emotional distress.

Without help and guidance, fire-setting behaviour can increase and lead to more serious consequences including serious injury, damage to homes, schools, other property, and death. Early intervention is key to changing this behaviour.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS PLAYING WITH FIRE?

- Follow the advice in this leaflet to reduce the chance of fires being set.
- It is not uncommon for children as young as two to show an interest in fire or mimic the behaviour of adults. Many children are fascinated by fire, such as the glow of a candle or watching an adult light up a cigarette. Consider how your own actions may be influencing the behaviour of a child.

## FIND OUT MORE

Contact London Fire Brigade's Fire-setting Intervention Scheme for support and guidance, or to make a referral.

T: 020 8555 1200 x30842 or  
E: [firesetting@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:firesetting@london-fire.gov.uk)  
or scan this QR code:



This behaviour should never be ignored to make sure it does not continue into adulthood.