

## Briefing Note: Unintentional Harm and Injury in Homes across Scotland

### Purpose

Inform members and stakeholders of the increasing risks of **unintentional harm and injury in homes across Scotland**, and highlight this for consideration as a priority for partners.

### Background

Every year, pre-pandemic, there were 6,000 deaths in the UK attributed to accidents in or around the home, and a further 2.7 million people requiring a hospital visit. In 2018, the UK government stated, accidents at home were a leading cause of the preventable deaths of children under five, and a major cause of ill-health and serious disability. In 2021, [a rapid literature review](#) – commissioned by SCSN – helped confirm the known risks of injury in the home, and the possible means to mitigate against them.

In August 2021, SCSN reconvened the Building Safer Communities (BSC) Executive Group; a periodic meeting of senior leadership from across Scotland's public services - police, public health, fire, government and others - to share thoughts, and develop coordinated and coherent thinking, to agree collective action for home safety, unintentional harm and injury.

The BSC Executive Group agree, since the pandemic began, that habits and behaviours have transformed our use of homes. Analysis by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals that *"online job adverts including terms related to "homeworking" have increased at a faster rate than total adverts, with homeworking adverts in May 2021 three times above their February 2020 average"* and *"of working adults currently homeworking, 85% want to use a 'hybrid' approach of both home and office working in future."* Up-to-date data – specific to Scotland – is currently unavailable, regarding unintentional harm and injury in our homes. However, it can be reasonably assumed that harm, injury is increasing and will be an area of growing concern for services and the public, now and in future. The collective experience and expertise of the BSC Executive Group, from across several key agencies, supports this supposition.

### Key Issues

- Need to raise awareness in communities, regarding accidents in homes and how to prevent them, particularly now more residents spend longer at home.
- Need to collaborate with partners to update and confirm the network of Home Safety Officers in each local authority; role, function, capacity, availability etc.
- Need to assess the impact of the changing environment and its effects; hotter summers and over-heating homes, wetter-winters and flooding in homes, over-crowding in some homes etc.

### Next Steps for Consideration of Partners

Support – organise local workshops, to raise awareness and help educate householders about accident risks and ways to mitigate. Look to partners like RoSPA and the [BSC Online Hub](#) for expertise and learning.

Scope – work collaboratively and share information, between Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and others, to build an accurate, up-to-date network of SPOCs (single point of contact) across Scotland.

Solve – consider developing local initiatives with local stakeholders to co-produce innovative solutions.

Scale – share findings and best practice with other CSPs, partners and the BSC Executive Group.