

April 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to this 31st edition of the fabtic quarterly newsletter.

This edition features the findings from a UK firesetting research study, dates for online firesetting foundation training, and the launch of an updated, much-loved children's fire safety book.

Firesetting Research Study

Firesetting by children and young people is a dangerous, often complex behaviour that requires two distinct types of specialist intervention; fire safety education, as delivered predominantly by fire and rescue services (FRSs), and psychosocial interventions provided most typically by clinicians.

Yet despite these differing approaches, no assessment tools are available to assist FRS practitioners in identifying the level of firesetting risk a child or young person presents.

Using a mixed-methods research design, a 2020 study carried out at the University of Cambridge explored how, given this absence, FRS practitioners identify those clients requiring psychosocial interventions.

Three themes were in evidence across the data generated by the study's online national survey, face-to-face interviews with senior managers from the National Fire Chiefs Council, a focus group with FRS frontline practitioners, and telephone interviews with FRS staff and managers with responsibility for working with children and young people who set fires.

The three themes identified were an inconsistency across UK FRSs in their firesetting provision and the identification of risk and need; an absence of staff self-legitimacy, largely attributable to a lack of supportive managerial relationships that nurture self-verification, and an invisibility of emotional labour amongst FRS firesetting practitioners who routinely work with abused and criminally exploited children.



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Whilst the current national picture for this work appears highly problematic, the 100% response rate to the survey and the representation of every country of the UK in the interview data allows the findings to be generalisable across all UK FRSs.

This provides FRS governing bodies with an opportunity to instigate the changes needed, as identified by their own staff. Namely, to commission the development of a firesetting risk assessment tool; all staff to receive expert training, and national written guidance that addresses gaps in practice first identified in a national evaluation of firesetting interventions over a decade ago (ODPM 2005).

To see a recording of the research study presented to the National Fire Chiefs Council in March 2021, please visit the FEwithJo YouTube channel

<https://youtu.be/BvQ-WgP31VY>

For a copy of the study and to sign-up for free research workshops, please email study author and researcher Joanna Foster on jfoster@fabtic.co.uk

ONLINE FOUNDATION TRAINING FOR STAFF WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS WHO SET FIRES

“This was a really thorough grounding for staff working with children who set fires and I would recommend it to all fire services”

“Joanna had lots of knowledge relating to the field and could relate questions back to theory, law or best practice as well as giving examples of how she has dealt with situations in the past”

After successfully adapting its popular firesetting foundation training to online delivery, fabtic's next online course will take place in June 2021. The five-day, CPD accredited course explores the latest juvenile firesetting research and trauma-informed practices to equip delegates with the practical tools required to work effectively with children and teenagers who set fires.

Previous delegates of the foundation training include personnel from fire and rescue services, youth justice, NHS, CAMHS, HMPPS, Prince's Trust, youth work, education, social care, police, secure units, academia and forensic psychology. Accruing 35 hours of CPD, the course content includes the latest juvenile firesetting research, principles of effective intervention, child development and how it relates to fire safety messages, trauma-informed responses, defensible decision-making, and how to protect the protectors. Practical and creative strategies are used throughout, ensuring those attending leave with hands-on activities to use in their client work, whether face-to-face or online.

Delivered by criminologist Joanna Foster who is also a frontline practitioner, supervisor, researcher and author of 'Children and Teenagers Who Set Fires: Why They Do It and How to Help', the online firesetting foundation training takes place on 7, 9, 11, 15 and 17 June 2021 from 0930 to 1630hrs daily.

The cost of the five-day course per delegate is £575+VAT, including a signed CPD certificate.

To book a place please call fabtic on 020 7249 0652 or email info@fabtic.co.uk

JEZ'S LUCKY DAY

Amongst all the contents included in the fabtic resource packs – designed specifically for frontline staff working with children and teenagers who set fires – the fire safety story book 'Jez's Lucky Day' remains a firm favourite. To meet demand, an updated version of the book is being launched on 1 June 2021.

Written by Michelle Oddy and Kate Strudwick, and illustrated by Jason Hodges, the story of a boy called Jez, the school hamster and a make-believe dragon resonates with children of all backgrounds. Maybe it's because of how they connect with Jez, who gets into trouble even though he never meant to set a fire. Or perhaps it's the antics of the hamster, who the children eagerly look for on every page. Possibly it's the timeless, universal magic of dragons and children's imaginations. Whatever the reasons, the book is a trusted resource amongst fire services across the UK and as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.

Endorsed by author Tamsin Winter, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, the updated book promises to teach a new generation of children to never play with fire.

Available in English and Welsh with accompanying teaching notes, the book is priced at £18 including P&P within GB. To order please email info@fabtic.co.uk