
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	25 January 2022
Report By:	Interim Director Legal & Democratic Services	Report No:	LS/010/22
Contact Officer:	Diane Sweeney	Contact No:	01475 712147
Subject:	New Smoke and Heat Alarm Legislation – Request by Councillor C. McEleny		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a request received from Councillor C. McEleny in relation to new Scottish Government legislation requiring that all homes have smoke and heat alarms fitted.
- 1.2 The terms of Councillor C. McEleny's request are set out in appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the request by Councillor C. McEleny.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Committee notes that the Scottish Government have brought in new legislation that requires all homes to have new smoke alarms installed.

By February 2022 every home will need to have:

- 1 smoke alarm in the room you spend most of the day, usually your living room
- 1 smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- 1 heat alarm in the kitchen

All smoke and heat alarms should be mounted on the ceiling and be interlinked. Check the manufacturers' guidance on each alarm for instructions on where the alarm should be placed.

If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance, like a boiler, fire, heater or flue you must also have a carbon monoxide detector. This does not need to be linked to the fire alarms. Gas cookers and hobs do not need a carbon monoxide detector.

There are 2 types of interlinked fire alarms that meet the new rules:

- sealed battery alarms – which should be tamper-proof long-life (which can be up to 10 years) batteries. The cost for an interlinked system with sealed long-life battery alarms in a two storey house is around £220, if you fit the alarms yourself. However, for many elderly home owners this is not a simple cost and will mean another add on cost.
- mains-wired alarms - these are cheaper than tamper proof long-life battery alarms, but should be installed by a qualified electrician. The cost of which could be in the region of about £60 installation of each alarm. These should be replaced every 10 years. This would mean that although the unit cost is cheaper the installation cost could run into hundreds of pounds.

Committee welcomes the laudable aims of making every home in Inverclyde safe and Committee endorses the safety benefits of such a scheme.

However, Committee notes that there has been little public awareness of this new requirement. Committee further raises concerns of the affordability of this scheme for many households in Inverclyde due to the limited financial support that has been provided by the Scottish Government.

Committee notes that local tradespeople have confirmed that they have not been overwhelmed with mass installations of the new required alarms therefore it is likely that come February a very small percentage of Inverclyde home owners will be compliant with the new Scottish government requirements.

Committee requests that officers bring back a report on an estimation of how many households have installed new smoke alarms as required and uses that report as the basis to set out any further financial support schemes that will need to be put in place in order that the Scottish Government realise their policy intention.

Cllr Chris McEleny