

FireAngel helps homeowner overcome temporary paralysis from a smoke alarm

Ensuring homeowners can be alerted to the danger of fire through the installation of a smoke alarm is a prime reason behind home fire safety checks carried out by local Fire and Rescue services. However if the homeowner has a disability which causes them to be temporarily paralysed once an alarm has been activated, the chance of escaping the danger is almost impossible.

Stockport's Sensory Loss team came across one such homeowner experiencing this problem with her existing smoke alarm. As a result of having the balance receptors in her ears removed, Mrs Brennan from Heald Green experiences interference in the way she receives sound into her ears. Any noise above normal conversation levels will render her temporarily immobile. Testing her smoke alarm with a normal alarm pitch level would therefore create such discomfort that adapting the product to overcome this problem was crucial.

FireAngel who currently supply Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service with smoke alarms for home fire safety checks were approached by the Sensory Loss team to help Mrs Brennan. FireAngel currently offer products within their Wi-Safe range that meet specific needs for both visually and hearing impaired homeowners such as the new flashing strobe and vibrating pad. However these items receive a wireless signal from a smoke alarm which still sounds when alerted to the presence of smoke or when in test mode so still needed some modification.

Ross Bates, FireAngel's Quality and Systems Manager determined that the only options to meet Mrs Brennan's specific requirements were to remove the sounders in the alarm completely or reduce the volume of the sounders. Removing the sounders completely was not viable as Mrs Brennan would have no way of knowing if the battery was low, hence reducing her ability to escape a potential fire. The sounders were therefore reduced to a level below normal conversational level and the alarm was reinstalled in Mrs Brennan's home.



Mrs Brennan with her new flashing strobe and vibrating pillow pad



Mrs Brennan with her adapted Wi-Safe smoke alarm installed in her hallway

FireAngel also supplied Mrs Brennan with two flashing strobes and a vibrating pillow pad that connect to the adapted smoke alarm. The strobe will alert Mrs Brennan to danger through a series of flashes while the vibrating pad which can be placed under a pillow when asleep, or under a cushion if awake will vibrate when the alarm has been activated.

'FireAngel have done a fantastic job in reducing the noise level of my smoke alarm. I can now test it once a week without the fear of it paralysing me temporarily and feel much more secure in the knowledge it will still alert me to a potential fire in my home. 'says Mrs Brennan.

Ross Bates says 'Despite our growing range of products there will always be rare circumstances where there is no suitable product available. If we can safely adapt an existing product to provide the best level of fire protection given the circumstances, then we are happy to make alterations to our products on these rare occasions. We are glad Mrs Brennan is happy with the Wi-Safe system and remains at a lower risk from the potential dangers of fire and smoke through having a working smoke alarm installed in her property. '

The products in the Wi-Safe range are interconnected and activated wirelessly so no costly or disruptive wiring is required in the home. The battery operated smoke alarms available within the range which initiate the warnings are also quick and easy to install, giving fire brigades more time to check the rest of the house for potential fire hazards and systems start from as little as £40.

FireAngel always ensures superb product quality, which is supported by technical and manufacturing excellence. Alarms are all independently tested and certified to the latest European standards and are currently available on the FireBuy national procurement framework.