

Corporate Health, Safety, Emergency Management & Wellbeing Service

WARNING - Prepare

Issue Date: 26.02.18

Microwave Heat Pads / Wheat Bags

Information

As part of an investigation involving a bed fire (fortunately, no one was injured) within the community, it was established that some care staff are heating wheat bags or equivalents in microwaves for service users. On this occasion, it is unclear if the fire started via a heat pad or if it was due to an electrical heater positioned too close to the bedding.



However, we have concluded that care staff should **not** be heating devices in the microwave for clients. Wheat bags can overheat through use as they become dry during the continual heating process. Wheat bags / heat pads are not medically designed to alleviate any muscular pain and should not be positioned directly onto the skin. Wheat bags will also overheat when placed under bed covers.

On this occasion, the heat pad found was designed for animals and therefore not appropriate for the service user.

Target Audience

Head of Service
Home Care Managers including RCAS
Care Staff

Action to be taken

Undertake duties identified within care plans only. Additional requests **MUST** be discussed with your line manager. If agreed, clear procedures should be clearly communicated to all staff involved. Procedures will contain any instruction from manufacturer's guidance, if appropriate. This ensures that the process is safe and we are not putting our service users or ourselves into potentially harmful situations.

For further safety advice and guidance, please contact
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