

Six people rescued from common stair in West Pilton



Six people were rescued by firefighters called to a fire in a common stair in West Pilton Rise yesterday morning.

16 firefighters from Crewe Toll, Tollcross and McDonald Road fire stations were mobilised to the fire. Four firefighters wearing breathing apparatus extinguished the fire using a high pressure hosereel.

Two were taken to hospital for a precautionary check suffering from smoke inhalation

Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Scotland also attended this incident. Police Scotland set up a Casualty Care Centre in West Pilton Park.

Group Manager Steve Gourlay, the City of Edinburgh Prevention and Protection Manager, said: "We would urge people not to leave rubbish or bins in the common stairwells of tenement blocks. This can be very attractive to fire setters and increases the risk of a fire. Discarded items of furniture and rubbish can produce large amounts of toxic smoke and also impede access for emergency responders. In Edinburgh, roughly 100 deliberate property fires occur every year with many of these involving combustibles in stairwells and the casualties and damage caused are preventable and we need to reduce them. This fire could have had far worse consequences and the impact for the families affected is likely to be significant. Any incident like this, where we have to rescue children and adults from windows, using ladders due to thick black smoke, always has the potential to have a tragic ending. Fortunately, on this occasion, those taken to hospital were for precautionary checks only but again this is not always the

case.

“You can reduce the risk of fire for yourself and your neighbours by keeping common stairs clear and free from obstruction and making sure main doors are kept locked. Steps should be taken to ensure the door entry/intercom system is working.

“Local firecrews, were revisiting the location yesterday afternoon to provide vital advice, reassurance and a home fire safety visit for those who need it. “I would like to stress the importance of having a working smoke alarm. Every household should have working smoke alarm and test them every week. We provide free home fire safety visits and fit smoke alarms where required. If you know someone who can benefit from our service, why not get them to give us a call? It is important that you know what to do if a fire does occur in the stairwell and how to keep safe. We can advise on this as part of the visit.

“If you or someone you know could benefit from a visit, please join Scotland’s fight against fire and request a visit by calling the SFRS freephone number 0800 0731 999, or by contacting their local fire station.”

A wide range of tips on how to keep yourself and your home safe from fire are available on the SFRS website: www.firescotland.gov.uk