



## Locking Devices on Fire Exits

In April 2009 a tragic incident occurred at a care home in Cheshire resulting in the death of a resident. This unfortunate event occurred as a result of the elderly resident using an upper floor fire exit to leave the premises without staff knowing and then falling down the external staircase.

In light of this incident West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (WYF&RS) has produced this advice note to confirm that the fire risk assessments and health and safety risk assessments should be reviewed to ensure they are integrated where required and measures are in place to prevent a similar incident occurring in other care homes and other premises.

The primary function of fire exit doors is to ensure that escape is possible from the premises and that they can be easily and immediately opened by any person required to use them in an emergency. Whilst this requirement is paramount, WYF&RS recognises the hazards posed to certain residents who may be at risk if they pass through the fire exit doors when no emergency situation exists.

A number of options are available to provide for exit control and security whilst complying with the Fire Safety Order but each premises is different and therefore the solution will be specific to the hazards associated with your premises and its occupants. The chosen solution must integrate with your evacuation procedures.

Some options which you may wish to consider are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list and you are advised to consult a competent professional person regarding any of these options should you choose to consider the installation in your premises. It is essential that you carry out a comprehensive risk assessment prior to selection and fitting.

- Electro magnetic locks connected to the fire alarm
- Thumb turn latches
- Redlam bolts
- Additional staff
- Additional internal alarmed doors
- Time delay devices with activation [tamper] alarm