

**22 October 2008**

**'CARBON MONOXIDE - BE ALARMED!': 20 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS AT RISK**

**Kirstie Allsopp launches a new national campaign to warn the public about the dangers of Carbon Monoxide**

Kirstie Allsopp, star of TV's *Location Location Location*, is today launching a new national campaign to cut the numbers of deaths and injuries caused by Carbon Monoxide poisoning. The campaign is backed by victims' charities, professional organisations and energy companies.

New research, released today, has found that some 20 million households are putting themselves at risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning by not taking the necessary precautions. The research also found that nearly one person in thirty surveyed believed that they had suffered from Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

The campaign, 'Carbon Monoxide – Be Alarmed!', is aimed at encouraging people to ensure that they have an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm and that they have all their gas, oil and solid fuel burning appliances serviced annually by a registered and qualified engineer.

Kirstie Allsopp said:

"I visit hundreds of homes every year and I'm staggered by how few have Carbon Monoxide alarms. Carbon Monoxide is a killer or can leave you with permanent brain damage. It's easy to protect yourself: fit an audible alarm and get your boiler and other fuel-burning appliances checked at least once a year. These two simple steps could save your, and your family's, lives."

Joining Kirstie to launch the campaign is Stacey Rodgers, whose ten year old son Dominic died in 2004 after Carbon Monoxide from a faulty boiler and blocked flue at a neighbouring house seeped into his bedroom at their home in Huddersfield.

The campaign also aims to raise awareness of the symptoms of CO poisoning, which include nausea, dizziness, tiredness, headaches, loss of balance and forgetfulness. Currently only 6% of people describe themselves as 'very confident' that they would recognise the symptoms of CO poisoning.

Nigel Dumbrell, Chairman of the Carbon Monoxide Consumer Awareness Alliance (COCAA), which is organising the campaign, said:

"Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas that has no colour, taste or smell – it is impossible to check without an alarm. Even at levels that don't kill, Carbon Monoxide can cause lasting damage to your health. This is the first time such a broad alliance of organisations has come together to drive the message home that people need to protect themselves."

For more information about the campaign and how to stay safe visit  
[www.CO-BeAlarmed.co.uk](http://www.CO-BeAlarmed.co.uk)

## ENDS ##

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

For more information about the campaign contact the *Carbon Monoxide – Be Alarmed!* press office on **020 7492 0999** or email **press@CO-BeAlarmed.co.uk**

### **Interviews and case studies**

TV expert Kirstie Allsopp, victim Stacey Rodgers and COCAA chairman Nigel Dumbrell are available for interview through the campaign press office. A range of other case studies are also available.

### **Research**

All figures are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,333 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between the 24th September and the 3rd of October 2008. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

#### *Further top line research findings include:*

When was the last time you had your heating and cooking appliances checked by a registered / qualified installer / engineer?

- 50% in the last 12 months
- 13% more than 12 months ago but within the last 2 years
- 9% more than 2 years ago but within 5 years
- 5% more than 5 years ago
- 13% never
- 10% don't know

Do you have an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm?

- 38% yes
- 62% no

Precautions taken

- 22% both regular servicing of appliances and an audible alarm
- 28% regular servicing of appliances only
- 16% audible alarm only
- 34% neither

### **What needs to be done?**

As well as raising awareness of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide and the precautions people should take, this campaign is seeking support for four changes which will make a major difference:

- 1) In order to receive a gas safety certificate, landlords should have to provide tenants with a Carbon Monoxide alarm.
- 2) Every new home should be fitted with a wired-in Carbon Monoxide alarm.
- 3) The Government should nominate a Minister to take the lead, across Whitehall, on issues relating to Carbon Monoxide.
- 4) There should be more training and information to ensure that front-line healthcare professionals can recognise the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning and record accurate data around incidents and deaths.

## **COCAA**

The Carbon Monoxide Consumer Awareness Alliance was set up as a single co-ordinating body which aims to be the leading authority on Carbon Monoxide awareness. The Alliance consists of all the major energy retailers, representatives across all fuel types and victim support charities. It also works closely with the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Health & Safety Executive.