

HOARDING PROTOCOL



*Safeguarding
is everybody's
business*



**Safeguarding
Adults**
NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE



HUMBERSIDE
Fire & Rescue Service

Humberside
Safeguarding
Adults Board

Version 2 (reviewed 2025)

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1. Introduction

1.1 When providing care and support or acting to safeguarding adults concerns there is a balance to be struck between care and treatment being provided and an adult's right to self-determination. This guidance provides a pathway for the involved agency working with adults who may be vulnerable and for whom hoarding has become an issue that needs to be addressed in the same way as other forms of 'self-neglect'.

1.2 Adults sometimes make decisions and lifestyle choices that others may perceive to be either unwise or not in their best interest, but adults still have the right to live as they choose without undue or disproportionate interference. On occasions however, external intervention is both legitimate and necessary to address the safety and wellbeing of them or others, including adults who lack the mental capacity to make their own best interest decisions.

1.3 This guidance aims to provide information on managing harm around hoarding issues only. Further information on other aspects of self-neglect can be found in Chapter 14 of Care Act guidance and through further reading as recommended at the end of this document.

2. Care Act and Self-Neglect through Hoarding

2.1 The Care Act and requirements within safeguarding processes for Making Safeguarding Personal prescribe some six guiding principles that should be applied when considering whether to act on concerns around *hoarding* where it constitutes self-neglect:

- i. **Empowerment:** Starting from the assumption that individuals are best placed to judge their own wellbeing and considering the individual's view, wishes, feelings and belief
- ii. **Prevention:** Working to protect people from abuse and neglect and prevent escalation of risk by providing support that reduces the need for intervention
- iii. **Proportionality:** Working in the least intrusive way so that any restrictions placed on an individual's rights or freedom, or any action taken that is against a person's will is kept to a minimum
- iv. **Protection:** Working to protect individuals from abuse and the impact and harm of neglect
- v. **Partnership:** Maximising the active participation of individuals in need, offering individual choice wherever possible and working with partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes
- vi. **Accountability:** Making sure that individuals are aware of what we are doing, who they are working with and what our responsibilities are

2.2 **Defining Hoarding as Self-Neglect:** The Department of Health defines self-neglect as "... a wide range of behaviours neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, **including behaviour such as hoarding**" (2014)

2.3 Unlike other sources of harm, hoarding is a behavior that can cause harm but has no 'perpetrator'. Abuse or harm by others cannot be excluded however as a possible cause of someone beginning to 'self-neglect', hence the Care Act 2014 and the Care Act guidance

requires that we have measures in place to address the causes and impact of self-neglect through hoarding.

2.4 Hoarding can be defined as collecting and failing to discard excessive quantities of goods or objects. Hoarding is not uncommon and, in most cases, not indicative of psychiatric illness. It can however become so severe as to cause psychological distress, physical impairment and a risk to health and safety. Hoarding is often covert and may affect only the individual hoarder. Excessive hoarding, however, can concern others, particularly when health & safety is compromised - either because of the nature of materials hoarded or the hoarded materials 'spilling over', sometimes affecting the wider environment or becoming a fire risk.

2.5 The reasons for hoarding as self-neglect are not fully understood but may be symptomatic of other underlying conditions. For example, adults with mobility problems may be physically unable to clear large amounts of clutter or may start 'hoarding' by leaving items close and within easy reach. People with learning disabilities or dementia may struggle to categorize or know how or when to dispose of things and may unwittingly acquire duplicate items they already have.

2.6 Mental health problems associated with hoarding include:

- Depression
- Psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

Hoarding is a condition on its own and often associated with self-neglect. Therefore, consideration should be given to identifying any evidence or concerns around mental health / cognition or impairment– actions to consider, a referral to mental health services - request an assessment of mental health or a review of any pre-existing diagnosis and treatment.

3. Principles of Practice

3.1 The following principles should underpin practice when addressing hoarding as self-neglect:

- i. Adults have a right to make lifestyle choices that to others can defy common sense; so, decisions and actions to intervene must always be justifiable, proportionate and reasonable
- ii. A measured partnership approach is always to be preferable so that the skills, powers and resources of difference organisations can be utilized, shared and have optimum impact although emergency responses will still require immediate contact with fire, police or ambulance service
- iii. Multi-agency meetings/panels to address concerns and include the adult at risk should be a starting point. Organisations need to take on roles to support adults at risk from self-neglect

- iv. Doing nothing or closing cases before action has been taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level and minimize harm and/or the likelihood of repeat occurrences is not an option; to do so places adults at increased risk of harm and professionals will have failed in their duties to assist adults to live independently, to safeguard adults and prevent harm.

4. Mental Capacity

4.1 Unless it is known otherwise, all adults are presumed to have capacity. Even with capacity however, some adults still lack understanding or insight into how their actions or omissions impact on themselves or others. When an adult's behaviours raise doubt about their capacity, an assessment compliant with the Mental Capacity Act (MCA 2005) must be conducted. If it is then found that an adult lacks capacity, any action taken by others must be in the person's best interests and take account of the adult's wishes and feelings.

'Self-Neglect and Adult Safeguarding: Findings from Research' (Braye et al., 2011) notes the negative impact of Mental Capacity on perception of risk and action as the ability to process information and understand consequences of decisions becomes impaired. In self-neglect, where capacity for decision making is lacking, intervention should aim at reduction of risk via a Best Interest Decision.

4.2 Capacity assessments undertaken for hoarding behaviors must be time-specific relevant to the planned interventions or action. Assessments should be timely, accurately recorded, and best interest decisions made formally with the relevant professionals and relevant adults who have an interest in the person's welfare. The MCA provides a lawful framework in which to eliminate risk, provided that actions taken do not deprive a person of his or her liberty.

4.3 In complex cases, there can be a referral to the Court of Protection to authorize best interest decisions. Referrals to the Court of Protection must be in consultation with safeguarding services, legal advice, and the MCA lead for [the relevant LA or involved agency] as appropriate.

5. Responses to concerns about Self Neglect and Hoarding

5.1 Most cases of self-neglect through hoarding are managed by one involved agency or via a multi-agency support plan. Where single agencies or non-statutory agencies providing services suspect there is a critical safeguarding concern, a referral to the local safeguarding team for assessment to ensure both risk and wellbeing are considered.

Engaging the adult at risk

5.2 Regardless of the process or organisational pathway followed for someone at risk from self-neglect due to hoarding, the starting point is to adopt a person-centered practice to achieve a positive outcome. Consider the unique experience of the individual and balanced with our professional duties, our ethical framework, and our safeguarding responsibilities.

5.3 When engaging with the adult at risk all professionals should consider whether:

- They have the necessary information in a format they can understand
- The adult understands the options available and consequences of their choices
- They understand the reasons for mistrust, disengagement, refusal, and their choices
- There is time to build a rapport over a period and develop a trusting relationship
- There are family members, advocates, and other professionals able to support engagement with the adult at risk
- There is an attorney or legally appointed representative, who, if so, they *must be* consulted
- The plan for agreed actions or outcomes for a person who has fluctuating capacity was in place during a time in which they had capacity for that decision
- The adult should receive support to engage and to attend meetings wherever possible

5.4 The family member or carer of an adult at risk should be engaged where the adult at risk has asked for that person or provided consent. Identifying who should be involved should be part of planning and decision making. Professionals should confirm who is willing and able to provide support and ensure that relevant duties under the Care Act for carers' assessments have been complied with.

Single Agency Management of Low-Risk outside of Safeguarding

5.5 Hoarding can sometimes be managed without referral to safeguarding adult procedures. Such cases could potentially be addressed via less formal routes such as engagement with the adult, supporting a person to address their personal concerns e.g. about letting go of treasured possessions or improving social skills and engagement with community activities, or access to health care and counselling.

5.6 Professional judgement is key to deciding whether a case should be escalated and/or whether there are any factors or issues that if changed, would increase concerns and raise a 'low risk' case to a higher threshold. Professionals managing cases at a single agency level therefore need to continually review risk levels to determine what would warrant a referral into safeguarding adults. Professional judgement is needed to consider the level of risk, how risk is being managed, the adult's mental capacity and anyone else (including children) who may be affected.

6. Referrals under safeguarding adult's policy

6.1 Safeguarding referrals should detail concerns regarding the welfare of the adult(s): the condition of the property and the impact on their mental health and wellbeing, or others in the vicinity of the property.

6.2 Concerns with respect to children, and the potential for harm or neglect, should be referred to the respective Local Authority children's services.

6.3 Once underway, Safeguarding adult's enquiries should provide the framework in which to:

- Identify the adult's wishes, views and beliefs and what outcome they wish to achieve
- Consider and if needed assess an adult's capacity and make best interest decisions
- Share appropriate multi-agency information to assess risk and formulate a risk management plan
- Establish what may be contributing or causing the behaviours and ways to address them or take preventative measures to reduce risk and reoccurrence
- Identify risks to others and how these may be addressed

6.4 Concerns raised for the welfare of animals should be reported to local charities or animal welfare organisations.

6.5 Once hoarding is being managed within the safeguarding arena, decisions should be made as to who or which agency is best suited to undertake enquiries and engage with the adult at risk. The LA will retain responsibility for coordinating the response and assuring itself that risk has been managed and reduced appropriately before any case closure.

7. Brief Interventions under Section 42 Enquiries

7.1 Section 42 enquiries provide the opportunity to work with adults at risk to achieve the outcome they want, while addressing areas of risk through the safeguarding plan. Section 42 enquiries in relation to self-neglect through hoarding can include, but are not limited to:

- Any enquiry into abuse and neglect that may have contributed to or precipitated the self-neglecting behavior or hoarding
- Therapeutic responses, e.g., access to mental health, drug & alcohol services, bereavement counselling and cognitive behaviour therapies services
- Brief interventions, particularly those that work to enable changes in attitude or behavior and to oversee underlying issues

7.2 The Making Safeguarding Personal toolkit has a range of options available, and details can be found at the end of this guidance. In addition, Braye *et al.* (2005) suggested the following intervention options can be applied:

Theme	Examples
Being there	Maintaining contact; monitoring risk/capacity, spotting motivation
Practical input	Household equipment, repairs, benefits, 'life management'
Risk limitation	Safe drinking, fire safety, repairs
Health concerns	Doctors' appointments, hospital admissions
Care and support	Small beginnings to build trust
Cleaning / clearing	Proportionate to risk, with agreement, 'being with', attention to what follows
Networks	Family/ community, social connections, peer support
Therapeutic input	Replacing what is relinquished; psychotherapy/mental health services
Change of environment	Short term respite, a new start
Enforced action	Setting boundaries on risk to self & others

8. Adults Who Decline Intervention or Refuse Support

8.1 The most frequent concern raised by professionals when working with adults who may be self-neglecting through hoarding is the challenge of adults refusing to engage or accept services.

8.2 Understanding self-neglect through hoarding can be as a result of an adult's unique set of circumstances and experiences. There is no one model that explains hoarding and each case may be combination of physical, mental, social, personal, and environmental factors. It is therefore always preferable to get to know the individual and their history to understand their behaviour and why they are unable or reluctant to address the problem or engage with and trust services and professionals.

Actions that may promote engagement in self-neglect cases suggested by Braye *et al.* (2015) as:

Theme	Examples
Building rapport	Taking the time to get to know the person, refusing to be shocked
Moving from rapport to relationship	Avoiding kneejerk responses to self-neglect, talking through the interests, history and stories
Finding the right tone	Being honest while also being non-judgmental, separating the person from the behaviour
Going at the individual's pace	Moving slowly and not forcing things; continued involvement over time
Agreeing a plan	Making clear what is going to happen; a weekly visit might be the initial plan
Finding something that motivates the individual	Linking to interests (e.g. hoarding for environmental reasons, link into recycling initiatives)
Starting with practicalities	Providing small practical help at the outset may help build trust
Bartering	Linking practical help to another element of agreement – bargaining
Focusing on what can be agreed	Finding something to be the basis of the initial agreement, which can be built on later
Keeping company	Being available and spending time to build up trust
Straight talking	Being honest about potential consequences
Finding the right person	Working with someone who is well placed to get engagement
External levers	Recognising and working with the possibility of enforcement action

8.3 If an adult at risk refuses or declines an assessment, services or support, a risk assessment must be carried out to determine the level of seriousness of each identified risk. Any interventions must apply a 'Making Safeguarding Personal' or person-centred/enabling

approach that as far as is possible, promote the adult's understanding of the risk and the options available for managing risk.

8.4 Appropriate information should be shared with relevant professionals who have a role in contributing to the plan to manage or monitor risk.

8.5 Where others are at risk, it may be necessary to take some actions without the consent of the individual displaying the hoarding behaviour. Where this may be the case legal advice should be sought when appropriate.

8.6 It is essential that all involved agencies keep accurate records to reflect decision making, actions and level of engagement.

9. Proposal for a High-Risk Panel (HRP) / Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM), Operational Risk Management Meeting (ORMM) or equivalent.

9.1 HRPs, MARM, ORMM or equivalent, will be referred to as '*panel meetings*', these are multi-agency panels to discuss, identify and document serious current risks in complex cases and provide a framework for adults experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect who *have capacity* but who continue to make unwise and unsafe choices. Where an adult has mental capacity to understand both the problem and the consequences of refusing help, a referral to a panel could be made to look at alternative potential solutions or jointly agree the risks.

9.2 The purpose of a panel meeting is to evaluate risk, formulate plans, identify which agencies will be responsible for intervention and review action plans to evaluate effectiveness and monitor change and outcomes.

9.3 Panel meetings should only be convened in circumstances whereby the adult **has** mental capacity to make unwise decisions and choices about their life. However, their decision-making leaves them or others at significant risk.

9.4 The Panel meeting should be used only in exceptional circumstances, **not** as a regular alternative to replace existing processes or substitute for engagement and partnership working with the adult at risk.

9.5 Panel meeting processes should be used only where there are significant concerns from partners or the community and there is documented evidence that all other attempts at safeguarding or preventative interventions have failed.

10. Legal Options and Processes

10.1 Legal measures can be initiated by single agencies or via safeguarding adult services. In cases where adults lack capacity to make decisions or the adult has capacity, but the level of risk is high, legal measures can be considered under the safeguarding adults' procedures. Legal steps can be used to compel an adult to remove risk, permit services access and in

some instances to remove the adult from the risk. It should be remembered that legal intervention should be a 'last resort' and a balance struck between an individual's rights and the safety of others who may be adversely affected by the adult's hoarding behaviours.

10.2 In brief the legal options may include:

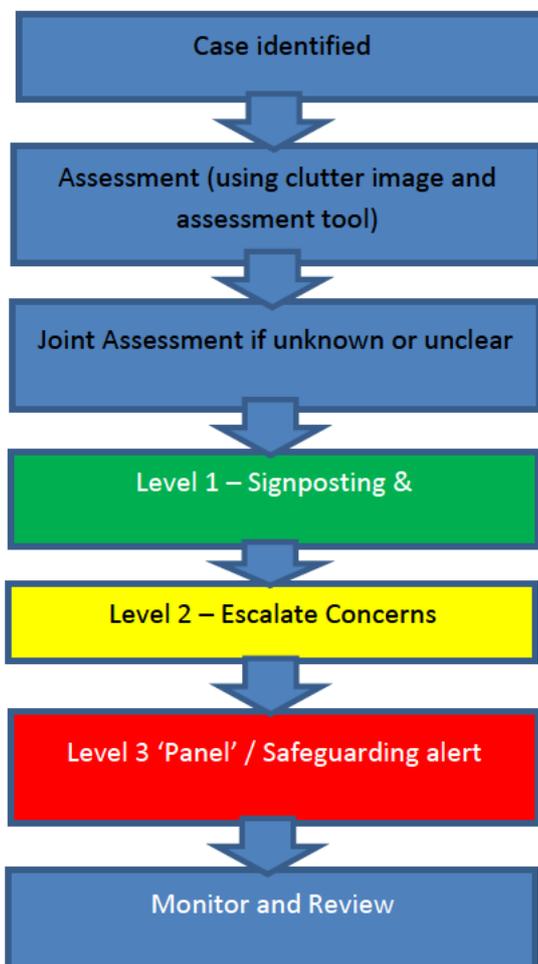
- Public Health Act 1936, Section 79: Power to require removal of noxious matter by occupier of premises
- Public Health Act 1936, Section 83: Cleansing of filthy or verminous premises
- Public Health Act 1936, Section 84: Cleansing or destruction of filthy or verminous articles
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, Section 4: Power of LA to require action to prevent or treat rats and mice
- Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 80: Dealing with statutory nuisances
- Mental Health Act 1983, Section 2 & 3: for health and safety and protection of others
- Mental Health Act 1983, Section 135: removal of person to place of safety for assessment to take place

10.3 There are additional powers through housing, such as the Town and Country Planning Act and the Housing Act 2004, in which orders for repairs or enforcement action for hazards exist in any building or land posing a risk.

10.4 It is important to recognise when we can/may act (and have the power to do so) and where we shall/must act (and have a duty to do so). First steps should always be to try to gain the consent of the person affected, to engage with them and work with them to promote their acceptance of the services and support that is necessary to meet their needs.

11. Process for Clutter Image Rating Tool (CIRT)

The flow chart below sets out the process for use of the Clutter Image Rating Tool. If in doubt, please ask your team leader / manager for assistance.



Please use the clutter image rating to assess what level the adult's hoarding problem is at:

Images 1- 3 Level 1

Images 4- 6 Level 2

Images 7- 9 Level 3

Then refer to the clutter assessment tool to guide which details the appropriate action you should take. Record all actions undertaken in the agency's recording system, detailing conversations with other professionals, actions taken and action yet to be taken.

12. Clutter Image Rating Scale - Bedroom

Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in the room



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

13. Clutter Image Rating Scale - Lounge

Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in the room



1

2

3



4

5

6



7

8

9

14. Clutter Image Rating Scale – Kitchen

Please select the photo that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in the room



1

2

3



4

5

6



7

8

9

15. Clutter/hygiene rating framework

Level 1 Clutter image rating 1-3	Household environment is considered reasonable. No specialised assistance is needed. If the resident would like some assistance with general housework or feels they are declining towards a higher clutter scale, appropriate referrals can be made subject to age and circumstances.
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All entrances and exits, stairways, roof space and windows accessible. • Smoke alarms fitted and functional or referrals made to Norfolk fire and rescue service to visit and install. • All services functional and maintained in good working order. • Garden is accessible, tidy and maintained
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No excessive clutter, all rooms can be safely used for their intended purpose. • All rooms are rated 0-3 on the Clutter Rating Scale • No additional unused household appliances appear in unusual locations around the property • Property is maintained within terms of any lease or tenancy agreements where appropriate. • Property is not at risk of action by Environmental Health.
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property is clean with no odours, (pet or other) • No rotting food • No concerning use of candles • No concern over flies • Residents managing personal care • No writing on the walls • Quantities of medication are within appropriate limits, in date and stored appropriately.
4.Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No concerns for household members.
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any pets at the property are well cared for • No pests or infestations at the property
1. Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No personal protective equipment (PPE) required • No visit in pairs required.
Level 1	Actions
1. Agency holding the case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss concerns with resident • Make a referral to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide fire safety advice • Refer for support assessment if appropriate. • Refer to GP if appropriate
2. Environmental Health	No Action
3. Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances • Refer to GP if appropriate • Refer for support assessment if appropriate. • Provide details of support streams open to the resident via charities and self-help groups. • Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions
4. Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Hoarding Assessment • Make appropriate referrals for support • Refer to social landlord if the client is their tenant or leaseholder
5. Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies & feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits.
6. Animal Welfare	No action unless advice requested
7. Safeguarding Adults	No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted.
8. MASH	No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted.

Level 2	Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues of the property.
Clutter image rating 4-6	
Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only major exit is blocked • Only one of the services is not fully functional • Concern that services are not well maintained • Smoke alarms are not installed or not functioning • Garden is not accessible due to clutter, or is not maintained • Evidence of indoor items stored outside • Evidence of light structural damage including damp • Interior doors missing or blocked open
Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutter is causing congestion in the living spaces and is impacting on the use of the rooms for their intended purpose. • Clutter is causing congestion between the rooms and entrances. • Room(s) scores between 4-5 on the clutter scale. • Inconsistent levels of housekeeping throughout the property • Some household appliances are not functioning properly and there may be additional units in unusual places. • Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable. • Evidence of outdoor items being stored inside
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen and bathroom are not kept clean • Offensive odour in the property • Resident is not maintaining safe cooking environment • Some concern with the quantity of medication, or its storage or expiry dates. • No rotting food • No concerning use of candles • Resident trying to manage personal care but struggling
Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding on clutter scale 4 - 7 doesn't automatically constitute a Safeguarding Alert. • Please note all additional concerns for householders • Properties with children or vulnerable residents with additional support needs may trigger a Safeguarding Alert under a different risk.
Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pets at the property are not well cared for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident is not unable to control the animals • Animal's living area is not maintained and smells • Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed • Sound of mice heard at the property. • Spider webs in house • Light insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, etc.) • Refer to RSPCA for advice and guidance.
Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent. • Personal protective equipment required.

Level 2	Actions
Agency holding the case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant • Refer to Environmental Health • Complete a referral to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide preventative fire safety advice • Provide details of garden services • Refer for support assessment • Referral to GP • Referral to debt advice, if appropriate • Refer to Animal welfare if there are animals at the property. • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution. • Consider escalation to a panel meeting • Manage actions and outcomes through effective recording
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Environmental Health with details of client, landlord (if relevant) referrer's details and overview of problems where appropriate • At time of inspection, Environmental Health Officer decides on appropriate course of action • Consider serving notices under Public Health Act 1936, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004 • Consider Works in Default if notices not complied with by occupier
Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit resident to inspect the property & assess support needs • Refer for housing related support. • Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions • Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents' responsibilities • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to "Hoarding Guidance - Questions to Ask" (Appendix 1) • Complete Practitioners Assessment Tool • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.

Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution. • Provide feedback to referring agency on completion of home visits.
Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property. • Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate- seek advice from the RSPCA. • Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals
Safeguarding Adults	No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted. If other concerns of abuse are of concern or have been reported, progression to safeguarding referral and investigation may be necessary.
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted

Level 3 Clutter image rating 7-9	Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach, via a Panel meeting, with the involvement from a wide range of professionals. This level of hoarding constitutes a Safeguarding alert due to the significant risk to health of the householders, surrounding properties, residents and others. Residents are often unaware of the implication of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses.
Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to the property due to extreme clutter • Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter seen at windows • Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter outside the property • Garden not accessible and extensively overgrown • Services not connected or not functioning properly • Smoke alarms not fitted or not functioning • Property lacks ventilation due to clutter • Interior doors missing or blocked open • Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp • There may be evidence of internal damp and / or mould. • Evidence of indoor items stored outside
Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutter is obstructing the living spaces and is preventing the use of the rooms for their intended purpose. • Room(s) scores 7 - 9 on the clutter image scale • Rooms not used for intended purposes or very limited • Beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation • Entrances, hallways and stairs blocked or difficult to pass • Toilets, sinks not functioning or not in use • Resident at risk due to living environment • Household appliances are not functioning or inaccessible • Resident has no safe cooking environment • Resident is using candles, electric or gas-powered heating appliances

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of outdoor clutter being stored indoors. • No evidence of housekeeping being undertaken • Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates • Concern for declining mental health • Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable • Property is at risk of notice being served by Environmental Health
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human urine and or excrement may be present • Excessive odour in the property, may also be evident from the outside • Rotting food may be present • Evidence may be seen of unclean, unused and or buried plates & dishes. • Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates • Inappropriate quantities or storage of medication. • Pungent odour can be smelt inside the property and possibly from outside. • Concern with the integrity of the electrics • Inappropriate use of electrical extension cords or evidence of unqualified work to the electrics. • Concern for declining mental health
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding on clutter scale 7-9 constitutes a Safeguarding concern. • Please note all additional concerns for householders
Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property • Resident may not be able to control the animals at the property • Animal's living area is not maintained and smells • Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed • Hoarding of animals at the property • Heavy insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.) • Visible rodent infestation • Refer to RSPCA
Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits where personal protective equipment (PPE) required: i.e. Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.

Level 3	Actions
Agency holding the case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise a Safeguarding concern within 24 hours • Refer to the Fire and Rescue Service within 24 hours to provide fire prevention advice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider escalation to a panel meeting • Action plan to manage/mitigate the risk • Accurate record keeping of all activities/meetings etc • Refer for support assessment • Referral to GP • Referral to debt advice, if appropriate • Refer to Animal welfare if there are animals at the property. • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Environmental Health with details of client, landlord (if relevant) referrer's details and overview of problems • At time of inspection, EHO decides on appropriate course of action • Consider serving notices under Public Health Act 1936, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004 • Consider Works in Default if notices not complied by occupier
Landlord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit resident to inspect the property & assess support needs • Attend multi agency HRP meeting • Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents' responsibilities • In collaboration with Environmental Health, if resident refuses to engage, legal proceedings can be made under the Housing Act 1988.
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to "Hoarding Guidance Questions for practitioners" See Appendix 1 • Complete Practitioners Assessment Tool, see Appendix 2 • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend multi-agency panel meeting on request • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution. • Provide feedback to case holding agency on completion of home visits.
Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the RSPCA for further advice and guidance. • Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property. • Remove animals to a safe environment • Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate • Take legal action for animal cruelty if appropriate • Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals
Safeguarding Adults	Safeguarding concerns should progress to enquiry for multi-agency approach and further investigation of any concerns of abuse. Escalation to a panel meeting should be considered

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Refer to MASH if children or young people present within 24 hours
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16. Guidance for Practitioners (from all agencies)

Hoarding Insight Characteristics

16.1 Use this guide as a baseline to describe the client's attitude towards their hoarding. Provide additional information in your referrals and reports to enable a tailored approach that is relevant to you client.

Good or fair insight:

The client recognises that hoarding – related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are problematic. The client recognises these behaviours in themselves.

Poor insight

The client is mostly convinced that hoarding – related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary. The Client might recognise a storage problem but has little self – recognition or acceptance of their own hoarding behaviour.

Absent (delusional) insight

The Client is convinced that hoarding- related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary. The Client is completely accepting of their living environment despite it being a hoard and possibly a risk to health.

Detached with assigned blame

The client has been away from their property for an extended period. The client has formed a detachment from the hoarded property and is now convinced a 3rd party is to blame for the condition of the property. For example, a burglary has taken place, squatters or other household members

17. Assessment Tool Guidelines

See Appendix 1 for guidance on questions which could be used during an assessment. See Appendix 2 for the Practitioners Hoarding Assessment Tool.

1. Property structure services and garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the access to all entrances and exits for the property. (Note impact on any communal entrances & exits). Include access to roof space. • Can the occupant escape from all rooms in the event of a fire or other emergency?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a clear plan of what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency and does everyone in the home know it? • Does the property have a working smoke alarm? • Carry out a cursory visual assessment of the condition of the services within the property e.g. plumbing, electrics, gas, air conditioning, heating; this will help inform your next course of action. • Are the services connected? • Assess the garden, size, access and condition.
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the current functionality of the rooms and the safety for their proposed use. e.g. can the kitchen be safely used for cooking, can the occupier(s) properly use the bathroom/WC or does the level of clutter within the room prevent their normal use. • Select the appropriate rating on the clutter scale. • Please estimate the % of floor space covered by clutter • Please estimate the height of the clutter in each room
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the level of sanitation in the property. • Are the floors clean and are readily cleansed? • Are the work surfaces clean? • Are you aware of any odours in the property? • Is there rotting food? • Does the resident use candles, portable electric or gas heaters? • Did you witness a higher-than-expected number of flies and other insects? • Are household members struggling with personal care? • Is there random or chaotic writing on the walls on the property? • Are there unreasonable amounts of medication collected? (Prescribed or over the counter?) • Is there evidence of illegal drug use? • Is the resident aware of any fire risk associated to the clutter in the property? • Is there faecal matter, urine or other body fluids visible within the property?
4. Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do any rooms rate 7 or above on the clutter rating scale? • Does the household contain young people or children?
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any pets at the property? • Are the pets well cared for; are you concerned about their health? • Is there evidence of any infestation? e.g. bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas, rats, mice, etc. • Are animals being hoarded at the property? If so, are they healthy and being well looked after? • Are outside areas seen by the resident as a wildlife area?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the resident leave food out in the garden to feed foxes etc.
6 Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following your assessment do you recommend the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at future visits? Please detail. • Following your assessment do you recommend the resident is visited in pairs or with the Police? Please detail.

18. The Panel

18.1 The Panel will bring together a range of agencies / services with whom the individual is or may have previously been involved to provide an opportunity for multi-agency working on cases of self-neglect and hoarding.

18.2 The membership of the panel will be made up of representatives of partner agencies.

18.3 The panels would be providing a multi-agency approach to effect positive change for vulnerable adults as part of the safeguarding adult prevention agenda.

18.4 Each agency who brings information to the panel will be responsible to ensuring that they have right to share that information with the other agencies represented. To assist in this, there ought to be a standard protocol, whereby it is agreed

- a) What, if any, records other agencies will make of information brought to the panel, for example only those agencies with an agreed action will retain a record; and
- b) Each agency will sign up to confidentiality of the panel; agree not to share information gained at the panel save in permitted circumstances.

19. Advocacy and support

19.1 It is essential to ensure all efforts are made to ensure the person suspected of self-neglecting and or hoarding is consulted with and included in discussions, with concerns raised directly with them at the earliest opportunity.

19.2 The individual concerned should be invited to participate in the Panel and offer the necessary support to do so by the case holding agency. If the person's choice is not to attend

the Panel, the case holding agency must feedback back any decision that is made to the person within a reasonable time period.

19.3 If there is concern that the person is in need of additional support to ensure they understand the concerns raised, the involvement of an appropriate advocate must be considered. Where the individual declines to participate or engage with agencies or provide access, information obtained from a range of other sources may facilitate access into the property, or to determining areas / levels of risk.

20. Employees

20.1 For employees dealing with cases of self-neglect and or hoarding this can be a stressful time. All agencies should have robust support mechanisms and policies in place, to ensure the health and safety of its employees. This should include practice supervision, peer support, lone working systems and where appropriate access to health and welfare advisory support services.

20.2 To enable employees to be effective in dealing with cases of self-neglect and hoarding, employees should also have access to a range of learning and development opportunities either offered by their own organisation, or by a multi-agency approach.

20.3 All organisations should raise the awareness and understanding of staff who work with people who self-neglect to offer flexible, person centred and creative approaches and are supported to nurture self-care.

21. References and further information

The Care Act 2014 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>

Gibbons et al (2006) Self-Neglect: A proposed new NANDA diagnosis, International Journal of Nursing Terminologies and Classifications, 17 (1), pp 10-18.

Help for Hoarders <http://www.helpforhoarders.co.uk>

SCIE (2011) Self-neglect and adult safeguarding: findings from research (Report 46) available from www.scie.org.uk

Braye, S., Orr, D. and Preston-Shoot, M. (2014). *Self-Neglect Policy & Practice: Building an Evidence Base for Adult Social Care*. London: SCIE:

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/69-self-neglect-policy-practice-building-an-evidence-base-for-adult-social-care/>

Braye, S., Orr, D. and Preston-Shoot, M. (2015). 'Learning lessons about self-neglect? An analysis of serious case reviews.' *Journal of Adult Protection*. 17, 1, 3-18.

Making Safeguarding Personal Toolkit on the Local Government Association (LGA) website
http://www.local.gov.uk/adult-social-care/-/journal_content/56/10180/6074789/ARTICLE



22. Acknowledgements

HumberSide Safeguarding Adults Boards would like to thank Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board for their kind contribution to this document by allowing use of their pathways.

23. Signatories

East Riding Safeguarding Adults Board

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Hull Safeguarding Adults Board

Name:

Date:

Signed:

North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Northeast Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Humber Fire and Rescue Service Safeguarding Named Lead

Name:

Date:

Signed:

Appendix 1 Assessment Guidance Questions

Listed below are examples of questions to ask where you are concerned about someone's safety in their own home, where you suspect a risk of self-neglect and hoarding? The information gained from these questions will inform a Hoarding Assessment and provide the information needed to alert other agencies. Most clients with a hoarding problem will be embarrassed about their surroundings so adapt the question to suit your assessment with the person.

- How do you get in and out of your property, do you feel safe living here?
- Have you ever had an accident, slipped, tripped up or fallen? How did it happen?
- How have you made your home safer to prevent this (above) from happening again?
- How do you move safely around your home (where the floor is uneven or covered, or there are exposed wires, damp, rot, or other hazards)
- Has a fire ever started by accident?
- How do you get hot water, lighting, heating in here? Do these services work properly? Have they ever been tested?
- Do you ever use candles or an open flame to heat and light here or cook with camping gas?
- How do you manage to keep yourself warm? Especially in winter?
- When did you last go out in your garden? Do you feel safe to go out there?
- Are you worried about other people getting into your garden to try and break-in? Has this ever happened?
- Are you worried about mice, rats or foxes, or other pests? Do you leave food out for them?
- Have you ever seen mice or rats in your home? Have they eaten any of your food? Or got upstairs and be nesting anywhere?
- Can you prepare food, cook and wash up in your kitchen?
- Do you use your fridge? Can I have a look in it? How do you keep things cold in the hot weather?
- How do you keep yourself clean? Can I see your bathroom? Are you able to use your bathroom and use the toilet? Are you able to wash, bathe or Shower?
- Can you show me where you sleep and let me see your upstairs rooms? Are the stairs safe to walk up? (if there are any)
- What do you do with your dirty washing?
- Where do you sleep? Are you able to change your bed linen regularly? When did you last change them?

- How do you keep yourself warm at night? Have you got extra coverings to put on your bed if you are cold?
- Are there any broken windows in your home? Any repairs that need to be done?
- Because of the number of possessions you have, do you find it difficult to use some of your rooms? If so which ones?
- Do you struggle with discarding things or to what extent do you have difficulty discarding (or recycling, selling, giving away) ordinary things that other people would get rid of?

Appendix 2 Practitioners Hoarding Assessment Tool

The assessment tool below will be completed by a practitioner of the involved agency holding the case to decide whether this case needs to be brought to the Panel, or if this can be managed 'in-house' with the support of partners.

Date of home assessment				
Clients Name				
Client's date of birth				
Address				
Client contact details				
Type of dwelling				
Owner occupier	Leaseholder	Tenant - Name and address of landlord		
Household Members		Name	Relationship	Date of birth
Pets - indicate what pets and any concerns				
Agencies currently involved - with contact details				
Non-agency support is currently in place				

Clients attitude towards hoarding							
Please indicate if present at the property							
Structural damage to property		Insect or rodent infestation		Large number of animals		Clutter outside	
Rotten food		Animal waste in house		Concerns over the cleanliness of the property		Visible human faeces	
Concern of self- neglect		Concerned for children at the property		Concerned for other adults at the property			
Using the Clutter Image Scale please score each of the room below							
Bedroom 1		Bedroom 4		Separate toilet			
Bedroom 2		Kitchen		Lounge			
Bedroom 3		Bathroom		Dining Room			
Please provide a description of the hoarding problem ;(presence of human or animal waste, rodents or insects, rotting food, are utilities operational, structural damage, problems with blocked exits, are there combustibles, is there a fire risk?							
Please refer to the multi-agency hoarding protocol and guidance document tool, based on the information provided above, what level is your case graded?							
Level 1 Green		Level 2 Orange			Level 3 RED- Take case to Panel		
Name of practitioner undertaking assessment							
Name of organisations							
Contact details							
Next actions to be taken							

List of agencies referred to with dates and contact names	
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