



Sefton
Safeguarding Adults
Partnership Board

CARE • PROTECT • RESPOND

Multi-Agency Hoarding Guidance



Information sheet

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out guidance to staff working with people who exhibit hoarding behaviours. It sets out a framework for multi-agency partners to work together, using an outcome focused, solution based model whilst meeting the requirements and duties of the Care Act 2014.

The Care Act 2014 recognises hoarding as one of the manifestations of self-neglect and requires all public bodies to safeguard people at risk. To deal with the risks effectively requires a collaborative and integrated approach between agencies.

2 Aims of this Guidance

The aims of this guidance document are to:

- Create a safer and healthier environment for the individual and others affected by the hoarding behaviour, e.g. family, neighbours, and communities.
- Develop a multi-agency pathway which will maximise the use of existing services and resources which may reduce the need for compulsory solutions.
- Ensure that when interventions are required, there is a process for planning solutions tailored to meet the needs of the individual and utilising a person-centred approach. Possible resolution should include professional support and monitoring, property repairs and permanent or temporary re-housing.
- Develop creative ways of engaging individuals in the process.
- Establish best practice and improve knowledge of legislation that relates to hoarding behaviour.

3 Types of Hoarding

There are typically three forms of hoarding:

- **Inanimate objects:** This is the most common. This could consist of one type of object or collection of a mixture of objects, such as old clothes, newspapers, food, containers or papers.
- **Animal hoarding:** this is the obsessive collecting of animals, often with an inability to provide minimal standards of care. The person may be unable to recognise that the animals could be at risk, because they feel they are rescuing them. Often the person who is hoarding animals may feel like they are the only ones capable of caring for the animals, so may not be willing to find alternative accommodation for them, yet at the same time be unable

to care for them. The environmental health conditions that having so many animals may create can amount to animal cruelty and be punishable by law. The homes of people who hoard animals may be characterised by an accumulation of animal faeces and infestation by insects.

- **Data Hoarding:** This is a relatively new phenomenon. It could present with the storage of data collection equipment such as computers, electronic storage devices or paper. A need to store copies of emails, and other information in an electronic format.

4 General Characteristics of Hoarding

- **Fear and anxiety:** compulsive hoarding may have started as a learnt behaviour or following a significant event such as bereavement. The person who is hoarding believes buying or saving things will relieve the anxiety and fear they feel. The hoarding effectively becomes their comfort blanket.
- Any attempt to discard the hoarded items can induce feelings varying from mild anxiety to a full panic attack with sweats and palpitations.
- **Long term behaviour pattern:** possibly developed over many years or decades of 'buy and drop'. Collecting and saving with an inability to throw away items without experiencing fear and anxiety.
- **Excessive attachment to possessions:** people who hoard may hold an inappropriate emotional attachment to items.
- **Indecisiveness:** people who hoard may struggle with the decision to discard items that are no longer necessary, including rubbish.
- **Unrelenting standards:** people who hoard will often find faults with others; requiring others perform to excellence while struggling to organise themselves and complete daily living tasks.
- **Socially isolated:** people who hoard will typically alienate family and friends and may be embarrassed to have visitors. They may refuse home visits from professionals, in favour of office-based appointments.
- **Large number of pets:** people who hoard may have many animals that can be a source of complaints by neighbours. They may be a self-confessed 'rescuer of strays'.
- **Mentally competent:** people who hoard are typically able to make decisions that are not related to hoarding.
- **Extreme Clutter:** hoarding behaviour may be in a few or all rooms and prevent them from being used for their intended purpose.

- Churning: hoarding behaviour can involve moving items from one part of the property to another, without ever discarding them.
- Self-care: a person who hoards may appear unkempt and dishevelled, due to lack of bathroom or washing facilities in their home. However, some people who hoard will use public facilities to maintain their personal hygiene and appearance.
- Poor insight: a person who hoards will typically see nothing wrong with their behaviours and the impact it has on them and others.
- Avoidance: a person will avoid many tasks, avoid people, avoid scenarios that may make them feel extremely anxious. However, many people may be well- presented to the outside world, appearing to cope with other aspects of their life quite well, and giving no indications of what is going on behind closed doors.

5 Hoarding and Mental Health

Hoarding can be a symptom of an underlying mental disorder. Hoarding is classified under the International Classification of Disorders system as a mental or behavioural disorder (ICD 10). Hoarding Disorder is distinct from the act of ‘collecting’ or keeping your home in a generally cluttered or messy state.

The main difference between a person who has hoarding behaviour and a collector is that people who hoard have strong emotional attachments to their items, and these attachments are well in excess of the real value of the items. Anything may be hoarded by the person at their home – inside or outside the property. Hoarding has no relation to gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, educational or occupational history, or tenure type.

6 Mental Capacity

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides a statutory framework for people who lack the capacity to make decisions by themselves. The Act has five statutory principles, and these are legal requirements of the Act:

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps have been taken without success.
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he/she makes an unwise decision.

4. An act done, or decision made, under this act for, or on behalf of, a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made in his or her best interests.
5. Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

When a person's hoarding behaviour poses a serious risk to their health and safety, professional intervention will be required. Except for statutory requirements, the intervention or action proposed must be with the individual's consent. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (The right to respect for private and family life) - is engaged. Interference with a person's life must be lawful, necessary and pursue a legitimate aim.

In extreme cases, taking statutory principle 3 (above) into account, the very nature of the environment may lead the professional to question whether the adult has capacity to consent to the proposed action or intervention and trigger a capacity assessment. All interventions must be undertaken in accordance with the 5 statutory principles and using the 'two stage' Test of Capacity (see MCA Code of Practice 4.11 – 4.25).

The MCA Code of Practice states that one of the reasons why people may question a person's capacity to make a specific decision is that "the person's behaviour or circumstances cause doubt as to whether they have capacity to make a decision" (MCA Code of Practice, 4.35). Extreme hoarding behaviour may therefore in the specific circumstances of the case, prompt an assessment of capacity.

If it is decided that action needs to be taken without the consent of the adult, a full exploration of the legal options should be explored (See Appendix A), identifying the risks and benefits of each option. Given the complex and diverse nature of self-neglect and hoarding, response by a range of organisations are likely to be more effective than a single agency response.

7 Information Sharing

For agencies to work collaboratively and effectively to reduce the risks of hoarding behaviour, information will need to be shared.

Practitioners must always seek the consent of the adult at the heart of the concern before taking action or sharing information. However, there may be circumstances when consent cannot be obtained because the adult lacks the capacity to give it but in the best interests of the individual or others at risk of harm require action. In such cases Mental Capacity Act guidance should be followed.

In some cases, where an adult refuses consent, information can still lawfully be shared if it is in the public interest to do so. This may include protecting someone from serious harm or preventing crime and disorder. The key factors in deciding whether or not to share confidential information are:

- Necessity – sharing is likely to make an effective contribution to preventing the risk, and;
- Proportionality – the public interest in sharing outweighs the interest in maintaining confidentiality.

If there is any doubt about whether to share information, advice should be obtained from your organisation's Governance Lead. Things to consider are:

- Adequate recording ---if the consent of the adult was obtained and if not why not?
- What information was shared and with whom, how the request was received and recorded, and how the decision was made to share the information.
- If third party information is involved if consent was obtained and if not which exemptions applied.
- All agencies involved must follow the appropriate statutes and guidance.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, organisations have the responsibility to ensure that personal information is processed lawfully and fairly. All adults have a right to view any information held about them. Practitioners should consider this when they are recording information about the adult.

Depending on the results of these assessments then do the following:

For CIR score 1-3:

- Provide advice to the person about risks and safety, ask for fire safety advice from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Encourage the person to self-refer to agencies (list to be provided) for assistance (Appendix 3)
- Ideally complete an action plan based on the results of the CIR, risk and hoarding insight characteristics assessments.

For CIR score 4-9:

- Instigate a multi-agency meeting with the relevant agencies present. The main agencies and the types of action they may take are listed in Appendix 4 Relevant Agencies and Responses.
- Complete an action plan based on the results of the CIR, risk and hoarding insight characteristics assessments. The action plan, and when it will be reviewed, will be agreed at the multi-agency meeting and a next meeting date will be arranged

8 Fire Safety

Hoarding increases the risk of fire and makes it more difficult for people living within the property to evacuate safely. Fire can also spread to neighbouring properties if the level of hoarding is severe or if flammable items such as gas containers are being stored. It also poses a high risk to fire fighters when attending the scene.

The sharing of information is extremely important for operational firefighter crew safety. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is required to be compliant with the Fire Services Act, 2004, Regulation 7.2d to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in their area. The multi-agency approach to share information about hoarding enables compliance with the Act and also strengthens the operational risk assessment when dealing with incidents and fires where hoarding is present.

9 Housing Support

Sefton Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords play an important role in supporting people who hoard. Tenancy Support Officers can help build up a relationship with tenants to provide support to people who are in need to reduce risk of loss of tenancy and subsequent homelessness. Tenancy Support Officers along with partner agencies often work relentlessly with tenants to support them to reduce hoarding.

10 Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding Children refers to protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of their health or development and ensuring that they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Growing up in a property where an adult is demonstrating hoarding behaviours can put a child at risk by affecting their development and, on occasion, result in neglect of a child, which requires escalation to the necessary authorities as a safeguarding issue.

The needs of the child at risk must be a priority and actions of professionals must always reflect this. Where children live in the property, concerns must be escalated without delay.

11 Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding Adults means protecting an adult with care and support needs rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to reduce and attempt to prevent, both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults can have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Hoarding may become a reason to make safeguarding enquiries when:

- the level of hoard poses a serious health risk to the person, the person they live with or neighbours.
- there is a high risk of fire or infestations by insects or animals.
- hoarding is connected with other concerns of self-neglect, such a neglect of physical health, lack of adequate nutrition.
- hoarding may be linked to serious cognitive decline and lack of capacity to self-care and care for the environment.
- hoarding is threatening a person's tenancy, and they are at risk of being made.
- homeless through closure orders or possession orders.

If in doubt, discuss your concerns with your Line Manager or safeguarding lead officer.

It is estimated that half of people who hoard do not recognize their hoarding behaviour as being problematic and many individuals are therefore unwilling to accept help.

Approach the situation with empathy and understanding. Hoarding is often linked to deep-rooted emotional issues, so it's crucial to be patient and non-judgmental. Instead of criticizing or pressuring the individual, try having open conversations about their feelings regarding their possessions and the impact it has on their daily life.

Often, there is an assumption of simply clearing the hoarded items will provide a long term solution when in fact it can have the opposite desired effect. Such action is likely to be extremely upsetting for them and will almost certainly exacerbate any mental ill health and add to their stress. The way forward is by providing sensitive support and working with the person to make positive changes.

Every hoarding situation will be **different**, although there may be similarities.

Practitioners need to consider the particular circumstances and individual views of the person with hoarding behaviour, to develop a personalised and supportive approach to resolving the situation. Such an approach is most likely to achieve a positive outcome.

12 Assessment and Reporting Hoarding

The practitioner identifying the hoarding concern needs to visit the person and do the following:

1. Assess the level of clutter - using the Clutter Image Rating (CIR) tool (see Appendix B)
2. Assess the risks using the Guidance Tool Guidance and complete Practitioner's Hoarding Assessment (see Appendix C & D)
3. Assess the Hoarding Insight Characteristics of the person with hoarding behaviour (see Appendix E)

The organisation who identifies the concerns about an adult hoarding should consider their role in supporting the individual and what immediate action is required. Using the Clutter Image Ratings, knowledge of the case and professional judgement should help you to gauge the seriousness of the hoarding and actions to be considered by the agency that has identified the concerns.

Discuss your concerns with the individual and with their consent and where appropriate make a referral to:

Level 1 Minimal risk

- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for a home fire safety check.
- GP --in case the adult is suffering with depression or a physical condition that is affecting how they care for themselves and their home.
- If the adult has care support needs that is having a significant effect on their wellbeing refer to Sefton Council for an assessment of their needs.

Level 2 Moderate risk

- Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant.
- Refer to Environmental Health if resident is a freeholder.
- Raise a request to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a home Safety Check with a consideration for monitored smoke alarms/ assistive technology.
- Provide details of garden services.

- If the adult has care and supports needs that is having a significant effect on their wellbeing refer to adult social care for a care and 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 necessary statutory agencies.

Level 3 High/Critical Risk

- Raise safeguarding concern within 24 hours if there are care and support needs.
- If the individual does not meet the safeguarding thresholds for a referral, consider contacting Sefton Council regarding possible care and support needs assessment.
- Raise a request to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service within 24 hours to provide a home safety check.
- Refer to Environmental Health.

12.1 Example Questions to include in an Assessment

Listed below are examples of questions you may wish to ask where you are concerned about someone's safety in their own home, where you suspect a risk of self-neglect and/or hoarding. Most adults with a hoarding problem will be embarrassed about their surroundings so try to ascertain information whilst being as sensitive as possible.

- How do you get in to and leave your property?
- Do you feel safe living here?
- Have you ever had an accident, slipped, tripped up or fallen? How did it happen?
- How do you move safely around your home? (Where floor is uneven or covered or there are exposed wires, damp, rot or other hazards)
- Has a fire ever started by accident? Is the property at risk from fire?
- How do you have hot water, lighting and heating in the property? Do these services work properly? Have services ever been tested?
- Do you ever use candles or an open flame to heat and light here or do you 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, 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? Would it be possible that they are nesting anywhere within your house?
- Can you prepare food, cook and wash up in your kitchen?
- Do you use your fridge? Can I have 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 ok? Are you able to have a wash, bath? Shower?
- Can you show me where you sleep and let me see your upstairs rooms? Are the stairs safe to walk up?
- 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? Do you have 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 throwing things away or do you have difficulty discarding (or recycling, selling, giving away) things that you think other people would get rid of?

12.2 A Multi-Agency Response to Hoarding

It is recognised that hoarding is a complex condition, and it is evident that a short-term case management with people who hoard to a critical level is unlikely to be effective.

Practitioners need to develop trust with the adult for the person to acknowledge there is an issue with their hoarding and associated risks.

A multi-agency approach may be needed to explore options for encouraging engagement. Various agencies may have information about the adult and some may have established a relationship with them. You could consider convening a MARAM meeting to share information and reach multi agency decisions about how to best support the person. The meeting should consider the level and aspects of risk and ways in which agencies can contribute to support the person to manage the risk presented by the hoarding behaviours.(Please refer to the MARAM guidance to be found on www.seftonsab.org.uk)

12.3 Responses to Hoarding may include:

- If the person has capacity to make decisions about seeking help, then a referral, with their agreement, for psychological therapy or CBT could be considered.
- Working with the person over time to support them in reducing their hoarding. It may require a targeted work plan to gradually reduce the hoard and providing support to the person to encourage them to do this.
- If the person lives in rented accommodation, there may be need for support in liaison with the landlord if there is threat of eviction.
- The person may need support in liaising with Environmental or Pest Control Departments.
- With their agreement referral to the Fire Service for a Preventative Fire Risk Assessment.
- If the person lacks capacity regarding managing their environment, then they may need ongoing support with self-care and managing their domestic routine.
- Careful assessment of capacity and a needs assessment are therefore important to establish how best and on what basis to intervene.
- When a person has capacity then it is important to work with them and to understand their wishes and feelings. If the person lacks capacity to make relevant decisions best interest decision making may be necessary whilst still considering the person's wishes as far as these can be ascertained.

The lead agency involved with the adult may consider calling a multi-agency meeting to discuss a plan for intervention (MARAM).

The agencies best placed to support people who self-neglect may be one or a combination of:

- Mental Health Services accessed via the GP
- Voluntary Services to provide advocacy and practical support
- Housing Tenancy Support Officers

- Environmental Services
- Fire Service
- Social work safeguarding enquiries, needs assessment and care planning, ongoing support and intervention
- Advocacy Services

12.4 Working with adults who hoard and are at risk of harm

Practitioners should not automatically accept an initial refusal to engage with services as an unwise decision where it involves an adult at risk of harm due to hoarding. Contact should be maintained to build up trust and undertake an assessment of capacity over several visits. Sometimes an adult may present well initially but further assessment of their capacity may reveal that the person has no insight into the risk of harm to themselves or others.

When faced with constant refusal where the adult is at risk of serious harm the practitioner should consider calling a MARAM meeting and consider inviting the following agencies:

- Legal Services
- GP or named GP for safeguarding adults if adult not registered with a GP
- Mental Health Professional or if not known to services Mersey Care NHS safeguarding lead.
- Registered Social Landlord if relevant.
- Fire Services
- Environment Health
- Family Member
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocate/Care Act Advocate

The purpose of the meeting is to assess the risk to the adult, decide if any further action is required, establish roles and responsibilities, decide with agency should take the lead and develop an effective plan to manage the presenting risks.

All information must be recorded in the adult's case notes.

12.5 Adult with Capacity Refusing to Engage with Services

If it is deemed that the person has capacity to decide not to engage and does not have a mental disorder that requires assessment or treatment and the adult continues to refuse

services, the practitioner should complete a risk assessment and agree who is best placed to monitor the individual, via use of the MARAM process and periodically offer support for an agreed period of time.

Appendix A. Legal Intervention and Enforcement Measures Care Act 2014

The Care Act, 2014 builds on recent reviews and reforms, replacing numerous previous laws, to provide a coherent approach to adult social care in England. Local authorities (and their partners, housing, welfare and employment services) are obliged in law to take steps to prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support for all local people.

Section 42 Care Act

The Care Act 2014 sets a clear framework for how local authorities should protect adults at risk of abuse or neglect. The Act places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes that an adult:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or the neglect or the risk of it.

Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance

The Care Act statutory guidance Chapter 14.17 states that self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour - neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It should be noted that self-neglect may not prompt a section 42 enquiry. An assessment should be made on a case-by-case basis. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

Mental Capacity Act 2005

If the person has been assessed as lacking capacity in relation to matter relating to their welfare the Court of Protection has the power to make an order under Section 16(2) of the Mental Capacity Act, which makes the decision on the person's behalf to allow access to an adult lacking capacity. The court can also appoint a deputy to make welfare decisions for that person.

Mental Health Act 2007

Section 135 of the Act can be used where there is a requirement to search for and remove patients, with involvement from the police. There are two types of warrants: If an approved mental health practitioner

(AMHP) can evidence that there is reasonable cause to a justice of the peace, that a person is believed to be suffering from a mental health disorder detention under s135(1) could be used.

If an AMHP can provide information to a justice of the peace that a person is suffering from a mental disorder and has been, or being ill-treated, neglected or kept otherwise than under proper control or is unable to care for himself and is living alone a warrant authorising a police officer to enter, if need be by force, any place specified in the warrant and if necessary remove him to a place of safety. There would then be application under Part 11 of the Act in respect of arranging treatment and care. The permitted period of detention is 24 hours, though the registered medical practitioner responsible for the examination may extend this by 12 hours to enable the assessment to be completed (s135(5), s136B).

This section was amended by the Police and Crime Act 2017.

Environmental Health Powers

Environmental Health has certain powers which can be used in hoarding cases. Some are mentioned below. There is also a link to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health which notes the growing list of statutory powers available to address hoarding and by means of a case study and the results of a survey, reviews the incidence and diversity of cases coming to the attention of environmental health authorities in the hope that, eventually, that may lead to better ways to resolve them.

Public Health Act 1936

Section 79: Power to require removal of noxious matter by occupier of premises.

The Local Authority (LA) will always try and work with a householder to identify a solution to a hoarded property, however in cases where the resident is not willing to co-operate the LA can serve

notice on the owner or occupier to “remove accumulations of noxious matter”.

Noxious not defined, but usually is “harmful, unwholesome”. No appeal available. If not complied with in 24 hours, The LA can do works in default and recover expenses.

Section 83: Cleansing of filthy or verminous premises where any premises, tent, van, shed, ship or boat is either;

- filthy or unwholesome so as to be prejudicial to health; or
- verminous (relating to rats, mice, other pests including insects, their eggs and larvae)

LA serves notice requiring clearance of materials and objects that are filthy, cleansing of surfaces, carpets etc. within 24 hours or more. If not complied with, Environmental Health can carry out works in default and charge. No appeal against notice but an appeal can be made against the cost and reasonableness of the works on the notice. Section 84: Cleansing or destruction of filthy or verminous articles

Any article that is so filthy as to need cleansing or destruction to prevent injury to persons in the premises, or is verminous, the LA can serve notice and remove, cleanse, purify, disinfect or destroy any such article at their expense.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

Section 4: Power of LA to require action to prevent or treat Rats and Mice Notice may be served on owner or occupier of land/ premises where rats and/ or mice are or may be present due to the conditions at the time. The notice may be served on the owner or occupier and provide a reasonable period of time to carry out reasonable works to treat for rats and/or mice, remove materials that may feed or harbour them and carry out structural works.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 80: Dealing with Statutory Nuisances (SNs)

SNs are defined in section 79 of the Act and include any act or omission at premises that prevents the normal activities and use of another premises, including the following:

Section 79 (1) (a) any premises in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

(c) fumes or gases emitted from [private dwellings] premises to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

(e) any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

(f) any animal kept in such a place or manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

The LA serves an Abatement Notice made under section 80 to abate the nuisance if it exists at the time or to prevent its occurrence or recurrence. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215: Power to require proper maintenance of land.

(1) If it appears to the local planning authority that the amenity of a part of their area, or of an adjoining area, is adversely affected by the condition of land in their area, they may serve on the owner and occupier of the land a notice under this section.

(2) The notice shall require such steps for remedying the condition of the land as may be specified in the notice to be taken within such period as may be so specified.

(3) Subject to the following provisions of this Chapter, the notice shall take effect at the end of such period as may be specified in the notice.

(4) That period shall not be less than 28 days after the service of the notice.

For further guidance and information please refer to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers Professional Practice Note: Hoarding and How to Approach it

Appendix B. Clutter Image Rating Tool Guidance

Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – BEDROOM

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – LOUNGE

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – KITCHEN

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter

1

2

3



4

5

6



7

8

9

Appendix C. Assessment Tool Guidance

<p>1. Property structure, services & garden area</p>	<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. • Does the property have a smoke alarm? • Visual assessment (non-professional) 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.
<p>2. Household functions</p>	<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 or does the level of clutter within the room prevent it. • 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.
<p>3. Public health and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the level of sanitation in the property. • What are the floors like? • What are the work surfaces like? • Are you aware of any odours in the property? • Is there rotting food? • Does the adult use candles? • Did you witness a higher-than-expected number of flies? • 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 the adult aware of any fire risk associated to the clutter in the property?
<p>4. Safeguarding children & family members</p>	<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? • Does the household contact elderly or disabled adults?
<p>5. Animals and pests</p>	<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, rats, mice, etc. • Are animals being hoarded at the property? • Are outside areas seen by the adult as a wildlife area? • Does the adult leave food out in the garden to feed foxes etc.? • Are animals cared for in preference to other household members?
<p>6. Personal protective equipment (PPE)</p>	<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 adult is visited in pairs? Please detail.

Level 1 Actions

Level 1 Clutter image rating 1 - 3	Household environment is considered standard. 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 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to visit and install if criteria met. • 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. Public 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. Safeguarding 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.
6. Personal protective equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No PPE required. • No visit in pairs required.

Level 1: Multi-Agency Actions

Level 1	Multi-agency actions
Referring Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss concerns with the Individual. • Raise a request to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for a Home Safety Check and to provide fire safety advice. • Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment. • Refer to GP if appropriate
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action.
Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances. • Refer to GP if appropriate. • Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment if appropriate. • Provide details of support streams open to the resident via charities and self-help groups. • Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions. • Refer for tenancy support if appropriate. • Ensure that all utilities are maintained and serviceable
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Hoarding Assessment form. • Make appropriate referrals for support to other agencies. • Refer to social landlord if the client is their tenant or leaseholder.
Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service- Carry out a Home Safety Check if it fulfils Service criteria and share with statutory agencies. • Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service • Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies & feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits.
Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action unless advice requested.
Safeguarding of Adults and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.

Level 2 Actions

Level 2 Clutter Image Rating 4 – 6	Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues in the property.
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only major exit is blocked. • 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.
2. 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) score between 4 and 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
3. Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen and bathroom are difficult to utilise and access. • 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. • Has good fire safety awareness with little or no risk of ignition. • Resident trying to manage personal care but struggling. • No risk to the structure of the property.
4.Safeguarding children & family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding on clutter scale 4 -7. Consider a Safeguarding Assessment. • Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point. • Please note all additional concerns for householders.
6. Personal protective equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latex gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent. • Is PPE required?

Level 2: Multi-Agency Actions

Level 2	Actions In addition to actions listed below these cases need to be monitored regularly in the future due to RISK OF ESCALATION or REOCURRENCE
Referring Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant. • Refer to Environmental Health if resident is a freeholder. • Raise a request to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a home Safety Check with a consideration for monitored smoke alarms/ assistive technology. • Provide details of garden services. • Refer to Social Care for a care and 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 necessary statutory agencies
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an inspection of the property utilising the referral form. • At the time of inspection, Environmental Health Officer decides on appropriate course of action. • Consider serving notices under 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.
Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit resident to inspect the property & assess support needs. • Refer internally to assist in the restoration of services to the property where appropriate. • Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions. • Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents' responsibilities. • Ensure information sharing with all necessary statutory agencies.
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an assessment of the property utilising the referral form. • Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service: Carry out a Home Safety Check, share risk information with statutory agencies and consider assistive technology. • Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service: Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies & feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits via the referral form.
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. • Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals
Safeguarding of Adults and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to Sefton Council.

Level 3 Actions

Level 3 Clutter image rating 7 - 9	Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach 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 and residents. Residents are often unaware of the implication of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to the property due to extreme clutter. • Extreme clutter may be seen at windows. • Extreme clutter may be seen 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 • Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp. • Interior doors missing or blocked open. • Evidence of indoor items stored outside
2. 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 are 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. • Evidence of outdoor clutter being stored indoors. • No evidence of housekeeping being undertaken. • Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates. • Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable. • Property is at risk of notice being served by Environmental Health
3. Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human urine and 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

Level 3 Actions

<p>Level 3 Clutter image rating 7 - 9</p>	<p>Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach 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 and residents. Residents are often unaware of the implication of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses</p>
<p>4.Safeguarding children & family members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding on clutter scale 4 -7. Consider a Safeguarding Assessment. • Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point. • Please note all additional concerns for householders.
<p>5. Animals and Pests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property. • Resident may not able to control the animals at the property. • Animals' 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
<p>6. Personal protective equipment (PPE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latex gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent. • Visit in pairs required.

Level 3: Multi-Agency Actions

Level 3	Actions
Referring Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise Safeguarding Alert within 24 hours if there are care and support needs. • If the individual does not meet the Safeguarding thresholds for a referral, consider contacting Social Care regarding possible care and support needs assessment. • Raise a request to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service within 24 hours to provide a Home Safety Check. • Refer to Environmental Health via the referral form.
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an inspection. • At time of inspection, EHO decides on appropriate course of action. • Consider serving notices under 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 hoarding meeting or VPP/PPP. • Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents responsibilities.
Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to “Hoarding Guidance Questions for practitioners”. • 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"> • Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service- Carry out a Home Safety: Check, share risk information with Statutory agencies and consider assistive technology. • Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service: Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies & feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits. • Attend any strategy meetings on request • 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. • 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

Appendix D. Practitioner's Hoarding Assessment

This assessment should be completed using the information you have gained using the Practitioner's Guidance Questions. Complete this review away from the client's property and in conjunction with the Multi-Agency Hoarding Guidance Assessment Tool.

Date of Home Assessment			
Client's Name			
Client's Date of Birth			
Address			
Client's Contact Details			
Type of Dwelling	Yes/ No	Tenant – Name & Address of Landlord	
Household Members	Name	Relationship	DOB
Pets – Indicate what pets and any concerns			
Agencies Currently Involved			
Non-Agency Support Currently in Place			
Client's Attitude Toward 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	
Concerns of Self-Neglect		Concerned for the Children at the property		Concerned for Other Adults at the Property			

Using the Clutter Image Scale Please Score Each of the Rooms Below

Bedroom 1		Bedroom 4		Separate Toilet	
Bedroom 2		Kitchen		Lounge	
Bedroom 3		Bathroom		Dining Room	

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? etc.)

Please refer to the Multi Agency Hoarding Guidance Tool, based on the information provided above, what level is your case graded?

Level 1 - Green	Level 2 - Orange	Level 3 - Red
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Name of the practitioner undertaking assessment	
Name of Organisation	
Contact Details	
Next Action to be Taken	
List Agencies Referred to with Dates & Contact Names	

Appendix E. Useful Contacts and References

Report a Safeguarding concern to Sefton Council	0345 140 0845 Website - http://www.sefton.gov.uk
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service- Request a home fire safety check	0800 731 5958 Website – www.merseyfire.gov.uk/safety-advice/home-fire-safety
SCIE - Useful Website	Website – https://www.scie.org.uk
The Association of Professional De-clutterers & Organisers (UK) - Professional network of those in the de-cluttering and organising industry	Website - http://www.apdo-uk.co.uk/about.php
Help for Hoarders - Provides information, support and advice for hoarders and families, including online support forums	Website - www.helpforhoarders.co.uk
Hoarding UK - Provides information, support for hoarders and agencies, including local support groups	Website - www.hoardinguk.org
Hoarding Support Group – Network of peer groups based in NW England	Website – www.hoardershelpinghoarders.co.uk
The National Housing Federation – Voice of Housing Associations	Website - http://www.housing.org.uk
The Kings Fund – independent charitable organisation working to improve healthcare	Website - https://www.kingsfund.org.uk
Anxiety Care Uk – Working with people towards recovery	07552 877219 Website- anxietycare.org.uk
Children of Hoarders - Awareness, understanding and support for children of hoarders	Website - www.childrenofhoarders.com
Counselling Directory – List of Counsellors and Therapists	Website - http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/compulsive-hoarding.html
Clouds End Live Well Liverpool City Region – Advice and Support for people with a hoarding disorder. We work with people suffering from hoarding disorder in their homes but also with social services	Website – www.cloudsend.org.uk

Appendix E. Useful Contacts and References

Compulsive hoarding & OCD - up to date information on research, diagnosis, measurement, treatment, support and the latest views	Website - www.complusive-hoarding.org
OCD - UK – supporting children and adults affected by obsessive compulsive disorders	Website - www.ocduk.org/hoarding
FLYLADY – Tips, tools and support to help declutter, organize and maintain the home	Website - www.flylady.net
Mind	www.mind.org.uk

