

# Hoarding Policy

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## 1.0 SCOPE

### **Purpose**

- 1.1. This Policy sets out how we will respond to cases of hoarding and what customers are expected to do to ensure their own safety and well being:
  - To develop an understanding of why hoarding has occurred and to put an action plan in place to help customers manage their environment.
  - To have a flexible approach in developing and maintaining our customer relationship where hoarding is identified through action plans.
  - To promote and develop how we respond through safeguarding and multi agency working.
  - To work with partners to deliver specialist services for and with our customers who need it.
  - To support the maintenance of fire safety and minimise the vulnerabilities of inappropriate storage compromising the design of our buildings.
- 1.2. We will work with our partners to maximise the opportunity of support and resolution by referring customers to engage with:
  - Support pathways that address issues of self neglect.
  - Multi agency locality panel case reviews to ensure the right intervention is accessible for the customer.
  - Education on the items that can be stored on balconies
  - Information, advice and guidance through multi disciplinary teams. This will ensure our customer and their family members are supported throughout the agreed period of support or intervention put in place.
- 1.3. We will consider our responses to the impact of hoarding on a case by case basis and with full communication and consent for referrals with the customer in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 1.4. This Policy will be applied in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy, and the Fire Risk Assessment Policy. When applying the Safeguarding Policy we will use the 'Think Family' approach to safeguarding to ensure all household members are considered.

### **Legal and Regulatory Framework**

- 1.5. The Home Standard of the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) requires us to meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of tenants in their homes.

- 1.6. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard of the RSH requires us to treat tenants with fairness and respect and to demonstrate we understand the different needs of our tenants, including tenants with additional support needs.
- 1.7. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, based around five statutory principles that underpin the legal requirements of the act.
- 1.8. The Mental Health Act 1983 provides the Local Authority and/or statutory agencies powers to intervene where someone may be at risk due to their mental health illness or issues.
- 1.9. The Public Health Act 1936 as amended provides the Local Authority powers to force home owners, landlords and tenants to respond to remove, cleanse and/or destroy articles and/or premises that contravene the terms of the act relating to noxious matter, dirty or verminous premises/matter.
- 1.10. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides for Local Authorities to respond to public statutory nuisances which relates to a reduction in an amenity or environmental quality that may affect someone.
- 1.11. The Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 give registered providers civil tools, and statutory agencies powers to respond to the impact of unacceptable conduct or behaviour either on the person or the premises in which unacceptable behaviour is conducted.
- 1.12. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) applies to residential properties and provides a risk based evaluation tool to help us identify and protect against potential risks and hazards identified in our homes, initially introduced through the housing Act 2004.
- 1.13. The Housing Act 1988, Schedule 2 allows us to apply to court under ground 13 for acts of waste or negligence on the part of the customer, their relatives or anyone living in the household, subject to reasonableness.
- 1.14. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires us to reasonably manage our buildings/assets and to carry out fire risk assessments – this is specifically related to flatted accommodation.
- 1.15. We will work in partnership with Local Authorities in our areas of operation to respond to issues that may occur on our property and land, and work in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act (as amended by the Environmental Health Amendment Act 2018).

## **2.0 POLICY PRINCIPLES**

### **Definition of Hoarding**

- 2.1. Hoarding is not necessarily a lifestyle choice. It can be a disorder where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a way, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items may be of little or no monetary value. Hoarding can also be a symptom of another problem such as severe depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, or can be indicative of self neglect.

Hoarding is considered significant if:

- The amount of clutter interferes with every day living.
- The clutter is causing significant distress or negatively affecting the quality of life of the person or their family – for example, they become upset if someone tries to clear the clutter and their relationship suffers.

- 2.2. There are five diagnostic criteria for identifying a case of hoarding disorder:
- Persistent difficulty with discarding or parting with possessions regardless of their value.
  - A perceived need to save items, and being distressed when discarding them.
  - Accumulation of items/possessions that clutter/block living areas.
  - The hoarding causes clinical significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other areas of human functioning.
  - It is not because of another medical condition or mental disorder.
- 2.3. We may come across customers who display one or more of the criteria above. Should this be the apparent, an action plan will be developed and intervention and support referrals will be considered.

### **Intervention and Support**

- 2.4. We will identify customers who may be hoarding, by using the Clutter Image Rating Scale see Appendix 1.
- 2.5. Where customers display behaviours that pose a risk or have detrimental impact on not only themselves but others around them, we will in most cases take a graded approach to intervention. We will use the Clutter Image Rating Scale to assess the degree of hoarding, in order to provide a measured response to the issue dependant upon its severity.
- 2.6. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis and responses will be appropriate to the circumstances of the person involved. Sometimes it may be necessary to take steps out of sequence. We aim to ensure that the referral pathways are followed, managed and monitored.

### **Partnership working**

- 2.7. We will work with our external contractors and partners and be actively involved with multi agency groups such as Walsall's Self Neglect referral group.

- 2.8. We will work with internal and external teams and partners to ensure our approach is robustly implemented to ensure risk is reduced, opportunity for our customers to improve their living environment is increased, and the relevant agencies increase capacity for the customer to remain independent, resilient and safe in their own home.
- 2.9. Where there is evidence of self neglect, a referral will be made through the Safeguarding Policy.

### **Training**

- 2.10. The Clutter Image Rating Scale is the national tool used to assess levels of hoarding; we will use it as a tool to raise awareness across all customer facing teams of the role and responsibility of colleagues who work with customers that compulsively hoard. This will ensure effective interventions, resolutions and prevention planning is managed and maintained in accordance with this and the Safeguarding Policy.

## **3.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

- 3.1. We will monitor the number of hoarding cases we manage, and the associated costs in each financial year.

## **4.0 TRAINING AND DISSEMINATION**

- 4.1. Training will be delivered to front facing colleagues, in particular:
  - Tenancy Services;
  - Community Safety;
  - and Independent Living.

A communications and training plan is to be developed by the incoming Tenancy Services Manager.

## **5.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW**

- 5.1. This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Housing and the Head of Health and Well Being and reviewed every three years by the Customer Services Committee.

## **6.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- 6.1. Documents, policies and procedures associated with this policy are:
  - Tenancy Agreements
  - The Mental Capacity Act 2005
  - The Housing Act 1985, 1988 and 1996
  - Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - The Animal Welfare Act 2006

- The Public health Act 1936
- Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- Fire Risk Assessment Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- The Clutter Image Rating Scale
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

<b>Document author</b>	Nicola Webb/Rob Hughes
<b>Document owner</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Legal advice</b>	Not required. The body of the policy covers actions leading to legal action, at which point any breach of the tenancy agreement would apply, along with other existing policies and procedures, such as the No Access procedure.
<b>Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent Living Team</li> <li>- Head of Health and Well Being</li> <li>- Tenancy Services</li> <li>- Director of Housing</li> <li>- Housing Services Manager</li> </ul>
<b>Approved by</b>	GEXEC
<b>Review Date</b>	September 2023
<b>Corporate Plan aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver high quality homes and services to our customers</li> <li>• Promote health and prosperity where we can make a difference</li> </ul>
<b>Equality analysis</b>	None, no data available.
<b>Key changes made</b>	New Policy.

# Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this tool is to gauge the impact of hoarding on the person with the hoarding behaviour.

## Clutter Image Rating Scale: Part 1 of 3 – Kitchen

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



1



2



3



4



5



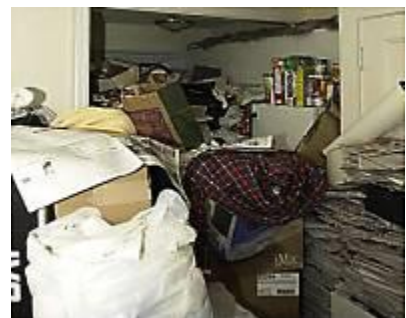
6



7



8



9

