

# **Self-Neglect and Hoarding Strategy Practitioner Guide**

This practitioner guide accompanies the Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board's multi- agency strategy and guidance for working with people with self-neglect and hoarding behaviours.

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## 1. Introduction

This practitioner guide accompanies the full Norfolk Safeguarding Adult's Board (NSAB) Strategy and Guidance Document for self-neglect and hoarding developed in the context of duties set out in the Care Act 2014. It is intended as a toolkit for practitioners from a range of agencies to support management of cases where an adult is deemed to be at risk due to self-neglecting and/or hoarding behaviours.

The guide supports a multiagency approach focused on early intervention and prevention, making use of Early Help Hubs (EHH) as a forum for collaborative casework by practitioners.

For full guidance on information sharing, definitions and related legislation please refer to [Norfolk Safeguarding Adult's Board \(NSAB\) Strategy and Guidance Document for self-neglect and hoarding.](#)

## 2. A multi-agency approach

The NSAB strategy and guidance outlines that responding to individuals with self-neglect/hoarding behaviours must be a multi-agency priority and there is a presumption that:

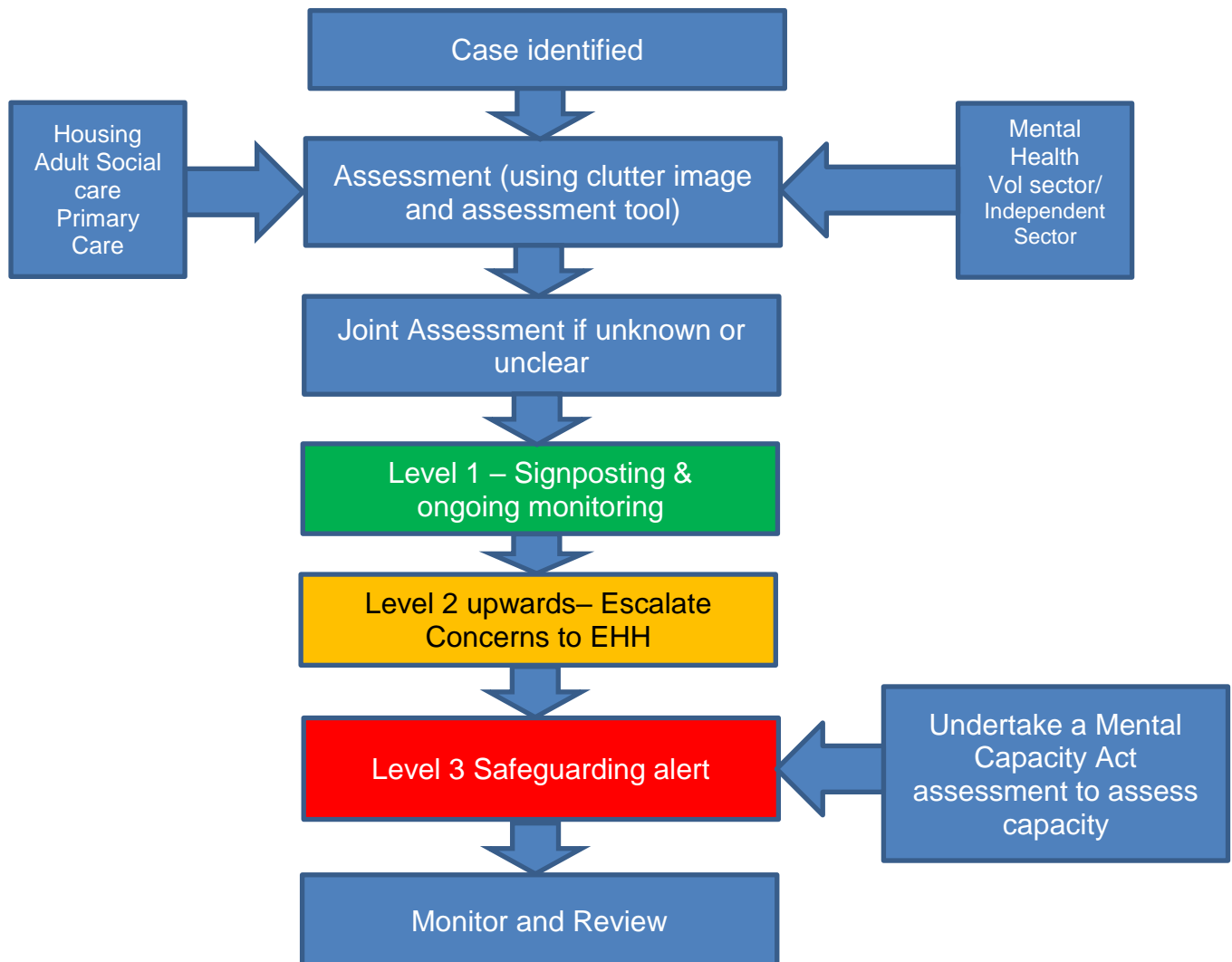
- All partner agencies will actively engage when this is requested by the lead agency as appropriate or required; and
- The agency holding the case, will take responsibility for initiating a multi-agency partnership working approach within the agreed framework of the full strategy and guidance (via the EHH).
- All partner agencies will maintain a robust data information system in regard to self-neglect and hoarding, with the aim that this should inform service delivery, justify decisions taken, identify trends and gaps, identify the need for resources and a tool to benchmark trends/practice across the county.
- The agency holding the case, will have actively explored opportunities to work with the individual and other partners prior to bring the case the EHH. However, this should not prevent a partner organisation from bringing a case at an early stage.
- That partner agencies will seek consent prior to bring the case for multiagency discussion.

The aim is to prevent serious injury or even death of individuals who appear to be self-neglecting and/or hoarding by ensuring that:

- Individuals are empowered as far as possible, to understand the implications of their actions and/or behaviours on themselves and others
- There is a shared, multi-agency understanding and recognition of the issues including those involved in working with individuals who self-neglect and/or are deemed as hoarders
- There is effective and proactive multi-agency working, which challenges practice and ensures that concerns/ risks receive appropriate prioritisation
- That all interventions to work with an individual who has self-neglecting and/or hoarding behaviours are based on the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)
- That all agencies and organisations uphold their duties of care
- There is a proportionate response to the level of risk to self and others.

### 3. Clutter Image Rating Tool (CIRT) flowchart

The flowchart 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:

Level 1 Images 2- 3
Level 2 Images 4- 6
Level 3 Images 7- 9

Then refer to the Clutter Assessment Guidelines which sets out 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

4. 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
---	---	---



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

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
---	---	---



## 5. Assessment Tool Guidelines

See Appendix 1 for guidance on questions which could be used during an assessment

<b>1. Property structure services and garden area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the access to all entrances and exits for the property. (Note impact on any communal entrances &amp; exits). Include access to roof space.</li> <li>• Can the occupant escape from all rooms in the event of a fire or other emergency?</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Does the property have a working smoke alarm?</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Are the services connected?</li> <li>• Assess the garden; size, access and condition.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Household Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Select the appropriate rating on the clutter scale.</li> <li>• Please estimate the % of floor space covered by clutter</li> <li>• Please estimate the height of the clutter in each room</li> </ul>
<b>3. Health and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the level of sanitation in the property.</li> <li>• Are the floors clean and are readily cleansed?</li> <li>• Are the work surfaces clean?</li> <li>• Are you aware of any odours in the property?</li> <li>• Is there rotting food?</li> <li>• Does the resident use candles, portable electric or gas heaters?</li> <li>• Did you witness a higher than expected number of flies and other insects?</li> <li>• Are household members struggling with personal care?</li> <li>• Is there random or chaotic writing on the walls on the property?</li> <li>• Are there unreasonable amounts of medication collected? (Prescribed or over the counter?)</li> <li>• Is there evidence of illegal drug use?</li> <li>• Is the resident aware of any fire risk associated to the clutter in the property?</li> <li>• Is there faecal matter, urine or other body fluids visible within the property?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Safeguard of Children &amp; Family members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do any rooms rate 7 or above on the clutter rating scale?</li> <li>• Does the household contain young people or children?</li> </ul>
<b>5. Animals and Pests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any pets at the property?</li> <li>• Are the pets well cared for; are you concerned about their health?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of any infestation? e.g. bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas, rats, mice, etc.</li> <li>• Are animals being hoarded at the property? If so, are they healthy and being well looked after.</li> <li>• Are outside areas seen by the resident as a wildlife area?</li> <li>• Does the resident leave food out in the garden to feed foxes etc.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Personal health and safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following your assessment do you recommend the use of Personal protective equipment (PPE) at future visits? Please detail.</li> <li>• Following your assessment do you recommend the resident is visited in pairs or with the Police?</li> </ul>

## 6. Guidance for Practitioners (from all agencies)

### Hoarding Insight characteristics

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 3<sup>rd</sup> party is to blame for the condition of the property. For example a burglary has taken place, squatters or other household members

## 7. Practitioners Hoarding Assessment

The assessment tool below will be completed by a practitioner of the agency holding the case in order to decide whether this case needs to be brought to the Early Help Hub (EHH), or if this can be managed 'in-house' with the support of partners.

Date of home assessment							
Clients Name							
Clients 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 currently in place							
Clients attitude towards hoarding							
<b>Please indicate if present at the property</b>							
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 Strategy 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	
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					

## 8. Guidance questions which could be used during an assessment

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 in to 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 ok? 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? (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?

## 9. Guidance: Making Safeguarding Personal

### What is it Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)?

The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) programme has been running since 2010. The Care Act 2014 guidance required adult safeguarding practice to:

- Be person led
- Be outcome focused
- Enhance choice and control
- Improve quality of life, wellbeing and safety
- Aim towards resolution or recovery

MSP puts people more in control of their own safeguarding and generates a more person-centred set of outcomes. The key focus is to develop a real understanding of what the person wishes to achieve, recording their desired outcomes and seeing how well these have been met.

### Aims

MSP is intended to make safeguarding more person-centred, develop more meaningful engagement of people in safeguarding and improve outcomes. It gives staff permission to spend time with people, asking them what they want by way of outcomes at the beginning and throughout the safeguarding process.

### How is this achieved?

MSP requires the person at the centre of a section42 enquiry, to be consulted about what they would like to happen as a result of the enquiry and to have their views taken into consideration;

Outcomes that people may wish to achieve as a result of a s42 enquiry include:

- For the abuse to stop and to feel safer
- To have help to protect themselves in the future
- To have help to feel more confident
- For the abuser to stay away from them
- To be involved in what happens next
- For people involved in their case to do what they say they will
- For the Police to prosecute
- To access any support available
- To make more friends

The person's desired outcome may not always be achievable (for example if they wish for the Police to prosecute, but there is no evidence that a crime has been committed). In these circumstances,

the person's view should still be recorded, but practitioners need to talk to them about why their desired outcome may not be achievable.

At the end of the s42 enquiry, talk to the person about how they feel about the outcome of the s42 enquiry and record their response on CareFirst in the safeguarding adults assessment form. Conversations about what the person wants to happen, should take place throughout a s42 enquiry, where possible

### **Independent Advocacy**

People who lack capacity or have substantial difficulty being involved in the s42 enquiry, who do not have an 'appropriate individual' to support them, should be referred for Independent Advocacy to support them to be able to express their views.

## 10. Hoarding Self-Assessment

Date of home assessment				
Clients Name				
Clients 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
<b>Feelings (0 = not at all 10 = very much)</b>				
How safe do you feel in your home?				
Do you feel distressed when you imagine discarding items that you feel might have a use?				
Do you often desire an item even if you already have an item that performs that function?				
Do you desire an item even if you do not have sufficient available space to accommodate that item?				
Do you often feel a need to save an item because it might have a use?				
<b>Thoughts (0 = not at all 10 = very much)</b>				
Do you generate lots of ideas when thinking about the use of items?				

Do you focus on the non-essential detail of items?	
Are you worried about mice/rats/pests?	
<b>Behaviours (0 = not at all 10 = very much)</b>	
Do you have difficulty discarding possessions regardless of value?	
Do you have difficulty organising all of your possessions?	
Do you often rely on visual cues to remember things?	
Do you have problems deciding what to do with an item?	
<b>Please indicate the extent to which clutter interferes with your ability to do each of the following activities-</b>	
Prepare food	
Use your fridge	
Eat at a table	
Move around without obstruction	
Exit your home quickly	
Use the toilet	
Use the shower/ bath	
Use kitchen appliances	
Sleep in your bed	
Sit on your sofa/ chair	
Clean the house	
Find important things	
<b>Your circumstances</b>	
Do you experience mental ill health?	
Do you experience physical ill health?	
Are you able to pay for services to clean/ clear your homes?	
Have you ever had an accident/ slipped /tripped or fallen in your home?	
Do you ever use a candle/ naked flame in the home?	



Has a fire ever started by accident?	
How do you get hot water, heating and lighting in your home?	
Do your utilities work properly?	
Are they due to be tested?	
Are there items/ obstructions which make it difficult to exit your home quickly? (overgrown garden/ items outside)	
Do you believe there is a problem with your home?	
If yes, what do you think would help you?	
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	