

Self-Neglect and Hoarding Event 3

Tuesday 22 Nov session 2

7-minute briefing on “What do Landlords require to maintain a tenancy”?

Kevin Gee, Tenancy Support & Safeguarding Manager, Broadland Housing Assoc.

1: Landlord’s responsibilities include...

- keeping the home safe, secure and in good condition
- carrying out repairs
 - provision of an emergency repair line
- provide a clear and accessible complaints procedure

2: Tenant’s responsibilities include...

- paying the rent, utility bills, council tax and water rates*
- keeping their home and garden reasonably clean and tidy
- keeping the interior in good repair and reporting any repairs required
- carrying out minor jobs such as replacing smoke alarm batteries and light bulbs
- fixing or paying for any damage caused by themselves or their visitors
- ensuring that visitors are well behaved
- allowing landlord access to carry out necessary repairs and their legal obligations

**Some exemptions apply*

3: When as a Social Housing Provider access to the home is required...

As a Social Landlord we can access properties for several reasons (see below), whilst carrying out these tasks it provides us with an invaluable insight as to what maybe occurring within the home or for those residing in it, enabling us to enlist necessary support and/or raise concerns to the appropriate agencies etc.

Empowering one's own teams (or contractors used) to report any concerns is something we at Broadland work very hard with our Operatives on.

- Gas checks (if applicable) – annually*
- Electrical Tests – every 5-years*
- Health & Safety Carbon monoxide tests – covered when a gas check is carried out plus if one is activated*
- Stock condition surveys – every 5-years

** Also conducted prior to a re-let*

Finally, but not least when...

- Welfare and Safeguarding concerns are raised...

4: Safe and Habitable Homes...

Budgeting restraints, the impact of cost-of-living crisis as well as challenges on the time that Hoarding, and its impact costs the Association has resulted in us adapting our approach to “managing” such cases.

- no longer committed to assisting tenants to fully clear or declutter the home
- focus on managing risk and ensuring that the home environment is both Safe and Habitable*.

**NSAB Multi agency Self-neglect and hoarding strategy and practitioner guide*

5: Minimising Risk...

Minimising risks from a Health & Safety perspective...

- for the tenant(s) and other inhabitants - we look at having clear pathways enabling safe access by emergency services and the like

Plus...

- possible fire risk – building up of household waste, fly tipping etc.,
- environmental health hazards – i.e., overgrown gardens - anything that could harbour vermin etc.,

6: Communicating effectively, sympathetically and with empathy...

- First and foremost, we should remember that it is someone's home the language we use, and our approach can have a detrimental effect to what outcomes can be achieved.
- When talking to tenants BHA seek to avoid using words that can carry a stigma like Hoarder, Clutter etc., *(as time progresses hopefully more appropriate words can be found, which are universally adopted.)*
- When referring to the clutter rating scale remember even "professionals" do not always agree as to where a room may sit on the scale.
- Equally, not to forget the impact of social media and how tv programmes like "Hoarder SOS" and "Britain's Biggest Hoarders" impact individuals. These can trivialise a situation and doesn't necessarily have any bearings or understanding as to possible root causes of a person's behaviour.
- Not all cases are the same and that each one must be dealt with accordingly to the individuals' needs and circumstances.

7: Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)...

The 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.

In our conversations we need to...

- Actively listen
- Discuss the perceived risks
- Seek to understanding how they may already feel safe and secure in their current environment
- Involve the person that is being safeguarded into the approach(s) due to be taken and the planning of next steps

In summary we seek to adopt a person centred and outcomes focussed approach where we support the right of the individual to be treated with empathy, respect, and dignity, and to be in control of, and as far as possible, to lead an independent life; and where appropriate to involve the family in the planning of support mechanism.

Feedback from breakout room discussions:

- There isn't a one size fits all resolution
- Communication is the key
- Different perspectives and demands of agencies can be a problem

- Learn about the person and then use the language that they will understand
- Finding the underlying cause and correct approach for that person
- Mental Health need to be more involved to help with the original issues than the practical hoarding
- Enabling the person rather than doing things for the tenant

- Manage expectations, both landlords and the tenants
- We need to ensure tenants know that our main objective is to keep them and others safe

- Coordination of all involved seems very difficult
- HUBs for these cases was a suggestion
- Perhaps a national framework for housing associations to deal with clients with various specialist needs

- Long term commitment to supporting someone is paramount, this is very difficult unless there is long term financial commitment, which is difficult with short term budgets