



# Hoarding Best Practice Framework and Guidance

## Version Control Sheet

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## Introduction

This framework and guidance are intended to be useful for adult social care, housing and other relevant agencies to work in partnership using an outcome focused, solution-based models to work with people who hoard and self-neglect. This framework and guidance have been developed by the Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) in partnership with Enabling Spaces CIC. Enabling Spaces CIC is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that has been created to work directly with individuals who are affected by Hoarding Disorder and in addition, Self-Neglect and Domestic Squalor.

Hoarding is highly complex and requires a person centred, collaborative and integrated approach. This framework and guidance aims to ensure that practitioners and front-line workers are equipped with methods of supporting people in a manner that is meaningful and co-ordinated. The framework and guidance aims to facilitate positive and sustainable outcomes for individuals, by involving them in the process at all stages. The framework and guidance provides approaches and methods of working that can be utilised and adapted by organisations to meet the needs of the individuals that they work with.

This framework and guidance have been developed from work undertaken by;

- County Durham Safeguarding Adults Board
- A Multi-agency network in Wolverhampton
- A Multi-agency framework for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

It should be considered in conjunction with the information contained within the West Midlands Adults Self-Neglect Best Practice Guidance (2018).

## The Care Act 2014, Self-neglect and Hoarding

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 in health, housing, welfare and employment services) must now take steps to prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support for all local people.

The Care Act 2014 (Statutory Guidance updated March 2016) included self-neglect as a category of harm and made it a responsibility of Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure they co-operate with all agencies in establishing systems and processes to work with people who self-neglect and to minimise risk and harm. The Care Act placed a duty of co-operation on the local authority, police and health services and raised expectations about the cooperation of other agencies.

The Statutory Guidance 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. In practice, this means that when an adult at risk has care and support needs, the situation may require a safeguarding enquiry. However, the initial intervention from Adult Social Care may be to offer an individual an assessment of their care and support needs; this may avoid the need to enter formal Safeguarding procedures.

## Hoarding Definition

Compulsive hoarding is a psychological condition. Its three distinguishable characteristics, as defined by Frost and Hartl (1996), are:

- The acquisition of, and failure to discard, a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value.
- Living spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed.
- Significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding.

Compulsive hoarding has historically been considered a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) because between 18 and 42% of people with OCD experience some compulsion to hoard. However, compulsive hoarding can also affect people who don't have OCD.

Hoarding is now considered a standalone mental health disorder and is included in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychological Disorders (DSM-5 2013), used by practitioners in the USA. However, many people are not diagnosed, and hoarding can also be a symptom of other medical disorders.

The revised edition of the International Classification of Diseases 2018, recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO 2018), and used by practitioners in the UK, now recognises Hoarding Disorder as a mental health disorder in its own right.

Hoarding Disorder is distinct from the act of collecting and is also different from people whose property is generally cluttered or messy. It is not simply a lifestyle choice. The main difference between a person that hoards, and a collector is that hoarders have strong emotional attachments to their objects which are well in excess of their real value.

Hoarding does not favour a particular gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, educational, occupational history, or tenure type.

Anything can be hoarded in many different areas including the property, garden, or communal areas. Items include, but are not limited to:

- Clothes
- Newspapers, magazine, or books
- Bills, receipts, or letters
- Food and/or containers
- Collectables such as toys, DVDs, or CDs
- Animals
- Human waste

## Main Types of Hoarding

Hoarding is generally broken down into four categories:

**Specialist Hoarding:** This person hoards one specific type of item, e.g., newspapers, mugs, handbags etc.

**Generalist Hoarding:** This person will hoard anything and everything and within this category, there are three types of saving patterns.

1. Instrumental – Believe it is useful
2. Sentimental – The item holds emotional value
3. Aesthetic – The item looks pretty and appealing

**Squalid Hoarding:** Squalor refers to the living conditions of a person's property, and is not defined as a psychological condition, unlike hoarding.

Definitions of Squalor are as follows

- The state of being extremely dirty and unpleasant, especially because of poverty or neglect (Oxford Dictionary 2018).
- Squalor: Filthiness, degradation from neglect; can be domestic (in the home) and/or personal (characterised by lack of personal hygiene) (Bratiotis et al. 2011).

- Squalor describes an unsanitary living environment that has arisen from extreme and/or prolonged neglect and poses substantial health and safety risks to people or animals residing in the affected premises, as well as the community.
- Severe domestic squalor is a term used to refer to homes/properties that:
  - Are extremely cluttered
  - Are unsanitary
  - Are becoming derelict or in a derelict state
  - Have amassed large amounts of some or all the following
    - Personal possessions
    - Rubbish
    - Excrement (human and/or animal)
    - Decomposing food

The above list creates a stagnant environment that affects the health and wellbeing of the occupant and those who live with them. This affects the occupant's activities of daily living such as cooking, bathing, and sleeping. These become difficult or impossible to complete. In cases of severe domestic squalor, neighbours can also be affected, due to the squalid property becoming a fire hazard, releasing a foul odour, or concealing insect infestation and vermin, (Department of Health Western Australia 2013).

**Animal Hoarding:** Animal Hoarding is a specific type of hoarding and may or may not be accompanied by the hoarding of other items. Individuals collect many animals for whom they are unable to provide adequate care. Animal hoarding is a complex behaviour, resulting from psychological and behavioural deficits that may impede on a person's ability to care for themselves and their animals. Whilst animal hoarding may begin as an act of compassion, eventually the needs of the animals are neglected, and compulsive care giving is pursued to fulfil the unmet needs of the person, despite this care being inadequate, (Department of Health Western Australia 2013).

According to the Hoarding of Animal Research Consortium (HARC) animal hoarding has four characteristics:

- Having more than the typical number of companion animals
  - Failure to provide minimal standard of nutrition, sanitation, shelter, and veterinary care
  - Persistence in accumulating more animals
  - Denial or minimisation of problems for animals, people, and the living conditions
- (Tolin et al (Buried in Treasure) 2014)

## Characteristics of Hoarding

The following are commonly reported 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 to 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 capacious: 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 in order 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.

## Hoarding Key Facts

### General Information

- It is estimated that between 2 and 5% of the population hoard
- This equates to at least 1.2 million households across the UK
- It is estimated that only 5% of people who hoard come to the attention of statutory agencies
- Hoarding cases can cost up anywhere from £1000 to £60,000
- 20-30% of OCD sufferers are people who hoard (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health)
- Often, people who hoard can stop landlords from meeting their statutory duties i.e., Gas safety checks and other certification required for registered Social Landlords

### Statistics for Coventry

- Coventry is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest city in England and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the UK (Nov 2016)
- Coventry covers 38 square miles
- Coventry population is 353,200
- Research shows that 2-5% of the population in the UK are affected by hoarding behaviours, (Mataix-Cols)
- The statistics above indicate that 7,064-17,660 people within Coventry are affected by hoarding behaviours

## How to talk to someone who is Hoarding: Dos and Don'ts

### DON'T

- Use judgmental language. Like anyone else, individuals with hoarding will not be receptive to negative comments about the state of their home or their character (e.g., "What a mess!" "What kind of person lives like this?"). Imagine your own response if someone came into your home and spoke in this manner, especially if you already felt ashamed.
- Use words that devalue or negatively judge possessions. People who hoard are often aware that others do not view their possessions and homes as they do. They often

react strongly to words that reference their possessions negatively, like “rubbish” and “junk”.

- Let your non-verbal expression say what you’re thinking. Individuals with compulsive hoarding are likely to notice non-verbal messages that convey judgment, like frowns or grimaces.
- Make suggestions about the person’s belongings. Even well-intentioned suggestions about discarding items are usually not well received by those with hoarding behaviours.
- Try to persuade or argue with the person. Efforts to persuade individuals to make a change in their home or behaviour often have the opposite effect, the person actually talks themselves into keeping the items.
- Touch the person’s belongings without explicit permission. Those who hoard often have strong feelings and beliefs about their possessions and often find it upsetting when another person touches their things. Anyone visiting the home of someone with hoarding should only touch the person’s belongings if they have the person’s explicit permission.
- Try to address hoarding through a quick fix, such as an enforced physical deep clean and de-clutter has proven to be futile and is discouraged for the following reason: It will severely impact on the person living there, in most cases causing extreme anxiety and trauma, as its forced on the individual and without consent.

## DO

- Imagine yourself in the hoarding person’s shoes. How would you want others to talk to you to help you manage your anger, frustration, resentment, and embarrassment?
- Match the person’s language. Listen for the individual’s manner of referring to his/her possessions (e.g., “my things”, “my collections”) and use the same language (i.e. “your things”, “your collections”).
- Use encouraging language. In communicating with people who hoard about the consequences of hoarding, use language that reduces defensiveness and increases motivation to solve the problem (e.g., “I see that you have a pathway from your front door to your living room. That’s great that you’ve kept things out of the way so that you don’t slip or fall. I can see that you can walk through here pretty well by turning sideways. The thing is that somebody else that might need to come into your home, like a fire fighter or an emergency responder, would have a pretty difficult time getting through here. They have equipment they’re usually carrying and fire fighters have protective clothes that are bulky. It’s important to have a pathway that is wide enough so that they could get through to help you or anyone else who needed it. In fact, the safety law states that access and egress must be clear, so this is one important change that has to be made in your home”).
- Highlight strengths. All people have strengths, positive aspects of themselves, their behaviour, or even their homes. A visitor’s ability to notice these strengths helps forge a good relationship and paves the way for resolving the hoarding problem (e.g., “I see that you can easily access your bathroom sink and shower,” “What a beautiful painting!”, “I can see how much you care about your cat.”).
- Focus the initial discussion on getting to know the person, their safety and organisation of possessions and later work on discarding. Discussion of the fate of the person’s possessions will be necessary at some point, but it is preferable for this discussion to follow work on safety and organisation.

## Guidance for practitioners, some key questions

As well as using good observation skills, listed below are examples of some questions you may wish to sensitively 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 individuals with



hoarding tendencies will be embarrassed about their surroundings so try to ascertain information whilst being as sensitive as possible.

- 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 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?
- Do you have a working smoke alarm? Do you have any ailments or conditions that would prevent you hearing or responding to it?
- Is there hot water, lighting and heating in the property? Do these services work properly?
- Do you have any problems keeping your home warm?
- When did you last go out in the garden? Do you feel safe to go outside?
- Are you able to use the bathroom and toilet, ok? Have a wash, bath, shower etc.?
- Where do you sleep?
- Are there any obvious major repairs that need carrying out at the property?
- Are you happy for us to share your information with other professionals who may be able to help you?

## **Mental Capacity**

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. The Act has 5 statutory principles and these are the values which underpin the legal requirements of the act. They are:

- A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity
- A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practical steps have been taken without success
- A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision
- 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
- 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. With the exception of 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 person 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 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.

When assessing capacity, it is important to remember this is an assessment of whether the adult has capacity to access help for their hoarding – so, does the adult understand they have a problem with hoarding; is the adult able to weigh up the alternative options, e.g. being able to move around their accommodation unhindered, being able to sleep in their bed, take a bath, cook in their kitchen, sit down on a chair/sofa (this list is not exhaustive); can the adult retain the information given to them (e.g. if the accommodation is cleared, you would be able to move around your accommodation, etc.) can the adult communicate their decision? It is essential that any capacity assessment is clearly documented on case records. Someone who has difficulty with their executive capacity may have difficulty carrying out specific tasks even when they appear to understand the need for them.

## Information Sharing

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) we all have the responsibility to ensure that personal information is processed lawfully and fairly. All people have a right to view any information held about them. Practitioners should consider this when they are recording information about that person. However, the GDPR should not be a barrier to sharing information and which should be shared with agencies where there is a significant risk to the individual, neighbours or workers visiting the property.

Examples:

- Safeguarding children or an adult at risk
- The property is in significant disrepair
- Health and safety issues
- Fire Service would need to know in the event of attending a fire at the property as the risk to Fire Fighters is significantly increased by hoarding

## 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 hoarding property can put a child at risk by affecting their development and, in some cases, leading to the neglect of a child, which is a safeguarding issue.

The needs of the child at risk must come first and any actions we take must reflect this. Where children live in the property, a Safeguarding Children alert should always be raised.

Please refer to the following link for guidance: [www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)

## Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding Adults means seeking to protect an adult's right to live a life free from harm and abuse as a result of deliberate intent, negligence, ignorance, or exploitation.

Adult safeguarding is everybody's business, and it is about people and organisations working together, 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. This includes having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding upon any action. Adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances, thus autonomy and the capacity to understand risks and safety have to be considered in a balanced approach.

The Care Act 2014 introduced three new indicators of abuse and neglect to Adult Safeguarding, the most relevant to this framework is self-neglect. This covers a wide range of

behaviours around personal health, hygiene, and environment and can include hoarding where there is evidence of such neglect. In practice, when an adult with care and support needs is at risk of neglect from their hoarding or is at risk from a household member who hoards, then a safeguarding enquiry may be required.

Safeguarding Adult processes described in the West Midlands Safeguarding Adults Policies and Procedures should be utilised:

[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/3604/west\\_midlands\\_adult\\_safeguarding\\_policies\\_and\\_procedures](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/3604/west_midlands_adult_safeguarding_policies_and_procedures)

Please refer to the following link for guidance: [www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguardingadults](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguardingadults)

## **Fire Safety**

Hoarding increases the risk of a fire occurring and makes it more difficult for people living within the property to exit safely. Fire can spread to neighbouring properties quicker, if the level of hoarding is severe or if flammable items such as LPG cylinders are being stored. It can also pose a high risk to fire fighters when attending the scene. Access, egress and progress into a building can become difficult and increased fire loading increases the severity of fire.

West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) provide a free service called a Safe & Well check. This is a person-centred home visit to identify the person's risks and vulnerabilities to fire. The personnel carrying out the visit will be operational fire fighters. They will provide support and guidance with the aim to reduce the risk and vulnerability to fire. This may include recommendations, resources, equipment, for example, fire retardant bedding for an individual who smokes in bed may be provided.

Cases of hoarding with a number of complexities would be escalated to a Complex Needs Persons Officer (CNO), a fire service member of staff specially trained to deal with complex cases such as hoarding.

To make a referral please contact the WMFS Home Safety Centre on 0800 389 5525 or email [contact.centre@wmfs.net](mailto:contact.centre@wmfs.net) or visit [www.wmfs.net](http://www.wmfs.net), quoting your partner reference number.

For general information regarding fire safety please see West Midlands Fire Service guidance for professionals and carers who work with adults with care and support needs: [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/23010/fire\\_safety\\_guidance\\_for\\_professionals\\_and\\_carers\\_who\\_work\\_with\\_adults\\_with\\_care\\_and\\_support\\_needs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/23010/fire_safety_guidance_for_professionals_and_carers_who_work_with_adults_with_care_and_support_needs)

## **Building Regulations and Controls**

Building Control have statutory powers to address structures that are either immediately or imminently dangerous under Sections 77/78 of the Building Act 1984. Whilst it is unlikely that hoarding will impact upon the structural stability of a property, in extreme cases it could result in a failure of a floor/ceiling. Where this has either arisen or is suspected Building Control are able to take appropriate remedial measures to remove the danger. However, the legislation requires that the property owner is provided opportunity to address matters themselves. Where this is not practical or the opportunity is refused, works can be undertaken in default to mitigate the danger and any charges assigned to the property as a land charge.

## **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. However, legal action should always be a last resort.

## **Public Health Act 1936**

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

The Local Authority (LA) will always try to 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 is not defined, but is usually “harmful, unwholesome”. No appeal is 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;

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

The 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 the owner or occupier of land or 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 so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
- (e) Any accumulation or deposit which is prejudicial to health or a nuisance; *and*
- (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.

## **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.

To contact an officer, please call/contact;

Environmental Health: 0800 807060/[environmentalinfo@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalinfo@coventry.gov.uk)

Environmental Services 02476832208/[ehcommercial@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:ehcommercial@coventry.gov.uk)

## **Housing**

There are serious reputational risks and legal consequences for all housing providers who fail to respond effectively when hoarding issues are identified. Examples of these risks from the housing perspective include gaining access and not being able to carry out gas safety checks and other statutory repairs; disrepair to the property; impacts on the wider community and neighbour complaints; risk of eviction. There may be times when the individual needs rehousing, for example the property has become uninhabitable or there are serious safeguarding concerns.

### **Housing Act 2004**

Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 sets out the minimum standards for housing through the operation of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Housing hazards such as Domestic Hygiene, Pests and Vermin, Excess Cold, Fire are all relevant to hoarding situations.

When assessing hazards, the Council must determine whether the defects present create a situation which is likely to result in harm to the health and safety of the occupier. Hoarding can lead to fire hazards from accumulated materials. Furthermore, the hoarding may also result in a lack of repair/maintenance of property leading to other health effects on the occupier such as lack of heating (excess cold) or washing/sanitary facilities.

The Council has powers to take enforcement action where there is any risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of a dwelling or house of multiple occupation (HMO), which arises from a deficiency in the dwelling or HMO. The Council can require access to residential premises in their district to assess if such a hazard exists.

Where there is evidence that there is imminent risk of serious harm to the health and safety of the occupier, the local authority has emergency power to serve a remedial action notice or

emergency prohibition notice prohibiting the use of the property. There are also powers to serve an Improvement Notice or Hazard Awareness Notice.

In cases where the risk is not imminent but is serious enough to result in a Category 1 hazard, the Council has a legal duty to take the most appropriate course of action. This could include the service of an Improvement Notice or Hazard Awareness Notices usually on the owner of premises requiring building defects being rectified to reduce the hazards.

There is a right of appeal to the First Tier Property Tribunal in the case of Improvement Notices served. No right of appeal exists for the service of a Hazard Awareness Notice.

There is no requirement that the property is owned by the local authority, nor is the capacity of the inhabitant relevant to the exercise of these powers. However, use of these powers in isolation will have limited effect on those who have persistent behaviours. The Housing Act powers cannot be used to remove hoarded items or address any health and safety problems that are the result of the owner's actions.

### **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**

Private landlords/housing associations and registered social landlords have an obligation to ensure that their properties are in a good state of repair. Where the tenant is responsible for the disrepair the landlord has a right of action, including ultimately seeking possession of the premises. The role of the landlord/housing association and powers afforded to them means that they have a key role in alerting the statutory authorities to particular cases and that consideration should always be given to their inclusion within multi-agency discussions.

### **Multi-agency response and usage of clutter scale**

It is recognised that hoarding is a complex condition and that a variety of agencies will come into contact with the same person. It is also recognised that not all people will receive support from statutory services such as Mental Health. Any professional working with individuals who may have or appear to have a hoarding condition should ensure they use the clutter image rating tool kit to decide what steps to take.

Please use the clutter image ratings to assess what the level of the individual's hoarding problem ([Appendix 1](#));

#### **Images 1-3 indicate Level 1 Potential Low Risk**

- All doors, stairways and windows accessible
- No evidence of pests
- Clutter obstructs some functions of key living area, looks untidy
- Safe maintained sanitation conditions

#### **Images 4-6 indicate Level 2 Potential Medium Risk**

- Blocking of doors, some windows, possibly major exit
- Light infestation of pests (e.g., bed bugs, lice, fleas, rats)
- Clutter obstructing functions of key living space, stairs, entrances, hallways etc.
- Evidence of non-maintained sanitation conditions (e.g., food preparation surfaces heavily soiled, lots of dirty dishes, obvious odours which irritate etc.)
- Evidence of burns to the carpet, clothing etc.

#### **Images 7-9 indicate Level 3 Potential High Risk**

- Whole rooms inaccessible, exits blocked, windows not able to be opened. Utilities cut off (e.g., no heating, gas capped)

- Heavy infestation of pests (rats seen, heard, reported by neighbours, cockroaches' fleas etc.)
- Key living spaces not available for use, person living in one room
- Evidence of urine/excrement in room, rotting food, very insanitary conditions
- Evidence of previous fire or burns in the carpet, clothing etc.

Then refer to clutter assessment tool and actions associated with each level ([Appendix 2](#)) to guide the appropriate action, you could take. Record all actions undertaken in agency's recording system, detailing conversations with other professionals, actions taken and action yet to be taken.

## Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service

A specialist Occupational Therapy led service, providing holistic assessments, interventions, and practical and psychological support to individuals who compulsively hoard.

**Enabling Spaces CIC** is a community interest company (CIC) that has been established to work directly with individuals who are affected by Hoarding Disorder with associated self-neglect and domestic squalor.

Enabling Spaces CIC has partnered with Coventry City Council and Coventry & Rugby CCG, as part of the Early Prevention, Health and Well-being program to deliver specialist hoarding therapy services for Coventry.

Contact details:

**Website** - [www.enablingspacescic.co.uk](http://www.enablingspacescic.co.uk)

**Email** - [covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk](mailto:covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 01926 935055

**Head Office** – Rural Innovation Centre, Avenue H, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG

**Clearance with Care Ltd** - Hoarding clearance and deep clean service

**Telephone:** 01926 935055

Email: [info@clearancewithcareltd.co.uk](mailto:info@clearancewithcareltd.co.uk)

See the Hoarding Therapy Service Criteria and Pathway ([Appendix 3](#)) and Referral Form ([Appendix 4](#)).

## References and Supporting Information

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Theravive 07-11-2018 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders vol.5 [online] Available at: [https://www.theravive.com/therapedia/hoarding-disorder-dsm--5-300.3-\(f42\)](https://www.theravive.com/therapedia/hoarding-disorder-dsm--5-300.3-(f42)) [Accessed 07 Nov. 2018].

Frost, R. and Gross, R. (1993). The hoarding of possessions. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, [online] 31(4), pp.367-381. Available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967\(93\)90094-B](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967(93)90094-B) [Accessed 07 Nov. 2018].

Frost and Hartl (1996),  
Frost, R., & Hartl, T. (1996). A cognitive-behavioral model of compulsive hoarding. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 34, 341-350.

Government of Western Australia Department of Health Public health and Clinical Services (2013) – *Hoarding and Severe Domestic Squalor – Toolkit for Local Government*. Department of Health.

Steketee, G., Frost, R. O., Wincze, J., Greene, K., & Douglass, H. (2000). Group and individual treatment of compulsive hoarding: A pilot study. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 28, 259-268.

Tolin, D.F, Frost, R.O, and Steketee, G. (2014) *Buried in Treasures: Help for compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding* New York: Oxford university Press Inc.

West Midlands Adults Self-Neglect Best Practice Guidance (2018):  
[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27510/wm\\_self\\_neglect\\_guidance](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/27510/wm_self_neglect_guidance)

West Midlands Fire Service guidance for professionals and carers who work with adults with care and support needs:  
[http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/23010/fire\\_safety\\_guidance\\_for\\_professionals\\_and\\_carers\\_who\\_work\\_with\\_adults\\_with\\_care\\_and\\_support\\_needs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/23010/fire_safety_guidance_for_professionals_and_carers_who_work_with_adults_with_care_and_support_needs)

World health Organisation 07-11-2018 [online] Available at: <http://www.who.int/health-topics/international-classification-of-diseases> [Accessed 07 Nov. 2018].

## **Review of the Framework and Guidance**

This Framework and Guidance will be reviewed two years following ratification or sooner if the necessity arises.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Clutter Image Ratings

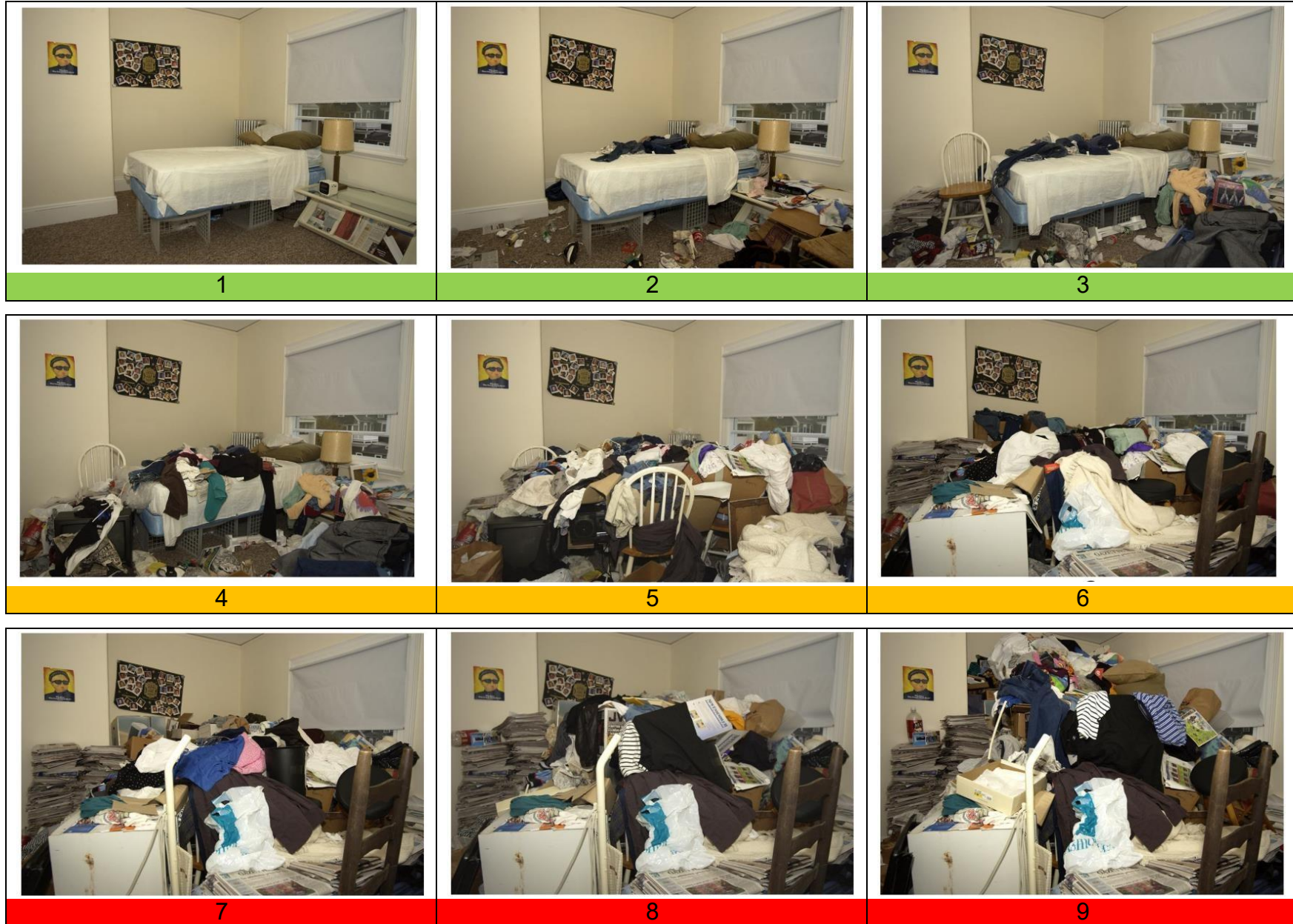
### Clutter Image Rating - Kitchen

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



## Clutter Image Rating – Bedroom

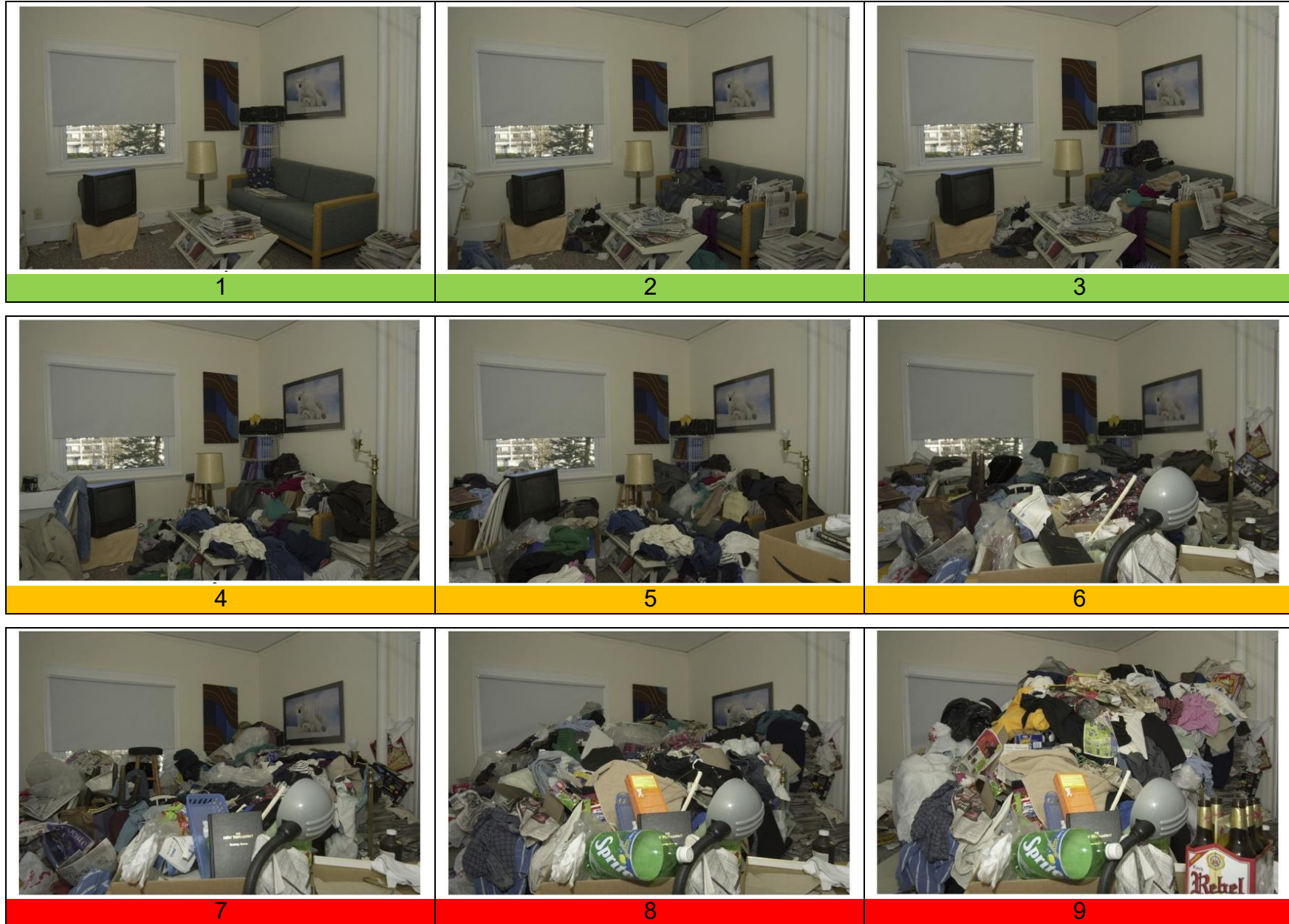
Please select the photo which most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.





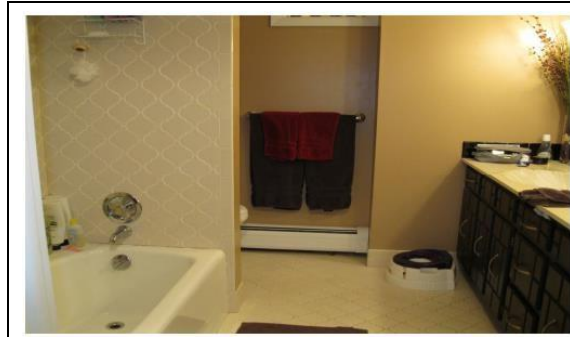
## Clutter Image Rating – Living Room

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

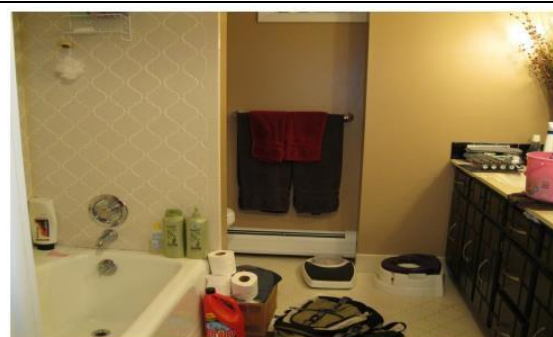


## Clutter Image Rating - Bathroom

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



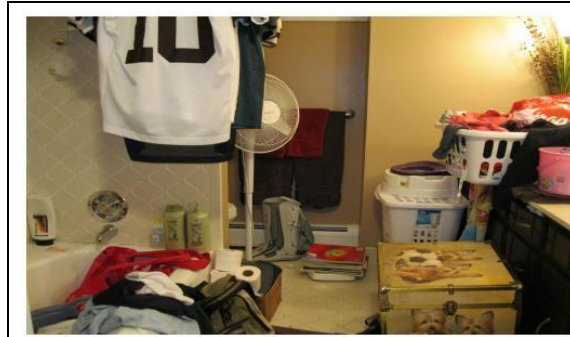
1



2



3



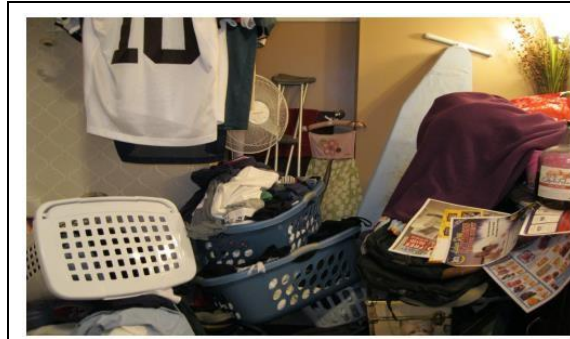
4



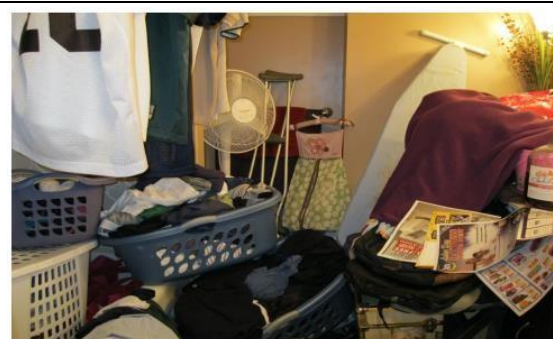
5



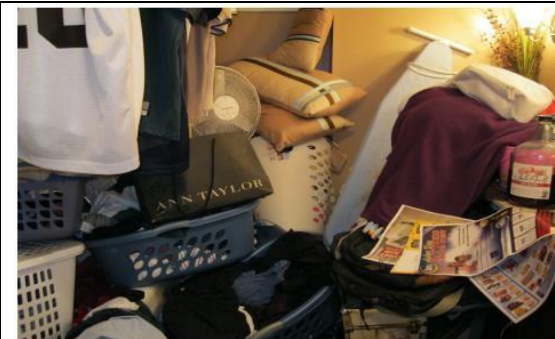
6



7



8



9



## Appendix 2 Clutter Assessment Tool and Actions

### Level 1

Level 1 Clutter Image Rating 1-3	<b>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.</b>
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All entrances and exits, stairways, roof space and windows accessible.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms fitted and functional or referrals made to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service to visit and install if criteria met.</li> <li>• All services functional and maintained in good working order.</li> <li>• Garden is accessible, tidy and maintained.</li> </ul>
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No excessive clutter, all rooms can be safely used for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• All rooms are rated 0-3 on the Clutter Rating Scale.</li> <li>• No additional unused household appliances appear in unusual locations around the property.</li> <li>• Property is maintained within terms of any lease or tenancy agreements where appropriate.</li> <li>• Property is not at risk of action by Environmental Health.</li> </ul>
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property is clean with no odours, (pet or other).</li> <li>• No rotting food.</li> <li>• No concerning use of candles.</li> <li>• No concern over flies.</li> <li>• Residents managing personal care.</li> <li>• No writing on the walls.</li> <li>• Quantities of medication are within appropriate limits, in date and stored appropriately.</li> </ul>
4. Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns for household members.</li> </ul>
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any pets at the property are well cared for.</li> <li>• No pests or infestations at the property.</li> </ul>
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PPE required.</li> <li>• No visit in pairs required.</li> </ul>

### Level 1 Multi-Agency Actions

Level 1	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss concerns with the individual.</li> <li>• Raise a request to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service for a Home Safety Check and to provide fire safety advice.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment.</li> <li>• Refer to GP if appropriate.</li> </ul>

<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances.</li> <li>• Refer to GP if appropriate.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide details of support streams open to the resident via charities and self-help groups.</li> <li>• Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions.</li> <li>• Refer for tenancy support if appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure that all utilities are maintained and serviceable.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Hoarding Referral form.</li> <li>• Make appropriate referrals for support to other agencies.</li> <li>• Refer to social landlord if the client is their tenant or leaseholder.</li> <li>• Consider mental capacity and best interests</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	<p>West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a Home Safety Check if it fulfils Service criteria and share with statutory agencies.</li> </ul> <p>West Midlands Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action unless advice requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding of Adults and Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Refer to children's services as appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Hoarding Therapy Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer support and advice.</li> <li>• Signpost to appropriate agencies.</li> <li>• Monitor client and liaise with referrer over three month period as needed.</li> <li>• Review.</li> <li>• Discharge Client when appropriate.</li> <li>• Signpost to other services (as appropriate).</li> </ul>

## **Level 2**

<b>Level 2 Clutter Image Rating 4-6</b>	<b>Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues in the property.</b>
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only major exit is blocked.</li> <li>• Concern that services are not well maintained.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms are not installed or not functioning.</li> <li>• Garden is not accessible due to clutter, or is not maintained.</li> <li>• Evidence of indoor items stored outside.</li> <li>• Evidence of light structural damage including damp.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior doors missing or blocked open.</li> </ul>
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter is causing congestion in the living spaces and is impacting on the use of the rooms for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• Clutter is causing congestion between the rooms and entrances.</li> <li>• Room(s) score between 4-7 on the clutter scale.</li> <li>• Inconsistent levels of housekeeping throughout the property.</li> <li>• Some household appliances are not functioning properly and there may be additional units in unusual places.</li> <li>• Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable.</li> <li>• Evidence of outdoor items being stored inside.</li> </ul>
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen and bathroom are difficult to utilise and access.</li> <li>• Offensive odour in the property.</li> <li>• Resident is not maintaining safe cooking environment.</li> <li>• Some concern with the quantity of medication, or its storage or expiry dates.</li> <li>• Has good fire safety awareness with little or no risk of ignition.</li> <li>• Resident trying to manage personal care but struggling.</li> <li>• No risk to the structure of the property.</li> </ul>
4. Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider a Safeguarding Assessment.</li> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Please note all additional concerns for householders.</li> </ul>
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property.</li> <li>• Resident may not able to control the animals at the property.</li> <li>• Animals' living area is not maintained and smells.</li> <li>• Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed.</li> <li>• Hoarding of animals at the property.</li> <li>• Heavy insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.).</li> <li>• Visible rodent infestation.</li> </ul>
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.</li> <li>• Is PPE required?</li> </ul>

## Level 2 Multi-Agency Actions

Level 2	<b>Actions</b> <b>In addition to actions listed below these cases need to be monitored regularly in the future due to RISK OF ESCALATION or REOCCURRENCE</b>
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant.</li> <li>• Refer to Environmental Health if resident is a freeholder.</li> <li>• Raise a request to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a home Safety Check with a consideration for monitored smoke alarms/ assistive technology.</li> <li>• Provide details of garden services.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment.</li> <li>• Referral to GP.</li> <li>• Referral to debt advice if appropriate.</li> <li>• Refer to animal welfare if there are animals at the property.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all necessary statutory agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an inspection of the property utilising the referral form.</li> <li>• At the time of inspection, Environmental Health Officer decides on appropriate course of action.</li> <li>• Consider serving notices under Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004.</li> <li>• Consider Works in Default if notices not complied by occupier.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit resident to inspect the property &amp; assess support needs.</li> <li>• Refer internally to assist in the restoration of services to the property where appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions.</li> <li>• Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents' responsibilities.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all necessary statutory agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an assessment of the property and complete Hoarding referral form.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.</li> <li>• Consider mental capacity and best interests</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	<p>West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a Home Safety Check, share risk information with statutory agencies and consider assistive technology.</li> </ul> <p>West Midlands Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits via the referral form.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property.</li> <li>• Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide advice/assistance with re-homing animals.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding of Adults and Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Refer to children's services as appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Hoarding Therapy Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrer to complete referral form.</li> <li>• Refer to other agencies for Mental Capacity and Best Interests assessments if appropriate.</li> <li>• Enabling Spaces will gather additional information, assess the person and the environment using appropriate hoarding and risk assessments.</li> <li>• Give advice and signpost to appropriate agencies.</li> <li>• Complete further assessments.</li> <li>• Formulate client centred plan with the client.</li> <li>• Implement ongoing three-month plan.</li> <li>• Monitor client and liaise with referrer throughout.</li> <li>• Multi-agency working if required.</li> <li>• Review and evaluate.</li> <li>• Aid transition to other appropriate services.</li> <li>• Evaluate and Discharge when complete.</li> </ul>

### Level 3

Level 3 Clutter Image Rating 7-9	<p><b>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.</b></p>
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to the property due to extreme clutter.</li> <li>• Extreme clutter may be seen at windows.</li> <li>• Extreme clutter may be seen outside the property.</li> <li>• Garden not accessible and extensively overgrown.</li> <li>• Services not connected or not functioning properly.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms not fitted or not functioning.</li> <li>• Property lacks ventilation due to clutter.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp.</li> <li>• Interior doors missing or blocked open.</li> <li>• Evidence of indoor items stored outside.</li> </ul>
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter is obstructing the living spaces and is preventing the use of the rooms for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• Room(s) scores 7 - 9 on the clutter image scale. Rooms are not used for intended purposes or very limited.</li> <li>• Beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation.</li> <li>• Entrances, hallways and stairs blocked or difficult to pass.</li> <li>• Toilets, sinks not functioning or not in use.</li> <li>• Resident at risk due to living environment.</li> <li>• Household appliances are not functioning or inaccessible.</li> <li>• Resident has no safe cooking environment.</li> <li>• Resident is using candles.</li> <li>• Evidence of outdoor clutter being stored indoors.</li> <li>• No evidence of housekeeping being undertaken.</li> <li>• Broken household items not discarded e.g., broken glass or plates.</li> <li>• Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable.</li> <li>• Property is at risk of notice being served by Environmental Health.</li> </ul>
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human urine and excrement may be present.</li> <li>• Excessive odour in the property may also be evident from the outside.</li> <li>• Rotting food may be present.</li> <li>• Evidence may be seen of unclean, unused and or buried plates &amp; dishes.</li> <li>• Broken household items not discarded e.g., broken glass or plates.</li> <li>• Inappropriate quantities or storage of medication.</li> <li>• Pungent odour can be smelt inside the property and possibly from outside.</li> <li>• Concern with the integrity of the electrics.</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of electrical extension cords or evidence of unqualified work to the electrics.</li> <li>• Concern for declining mental health.</li> </ul>
4. Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Please note all additional concerns for householders.</li> </ul>
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property.</li> <li>• Resident may not able to control the animals at the property.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals' living area is not maintained and smells.</li> <li>• Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed.</li> <li>• Hoarding of animals at the property.</li> <li>• Heavy insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.).</li> <li>• Visible rodent infestation.</li> </ul>
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.</li> <li>• Visit in pairs required.</li> </ul>

### Level 3 Multi-Agency Actions

Level 3	Actions
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise Safeguarding Alert within 24 hours if there are care and support needs.</li> <li>• If the individual does not meet the Safeguarding thresholds for a referral, consider contacting Social Care regarding possible care and support needs assessment.</li> <li>• Raise a request to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service within 24 hours to provide a Home Safety Check.</li> <li>• Refer to Environmental Health via the referral form.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an inspection.</li> <li>• At time of inspection, EHO decides on appropriate course of action.</li> <li>• Consider serving notices under Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004.</li> <li>• Consider Works in Default if notices not complied by occupier.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit resident to inspect the property &amp; assess support needs.</li> <li>• Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents' responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an assessment of the property and complete Hoarding referral form.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution</li> <li>• Consider mental capacity and best interests</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	<p>West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out a Home Safety Check, share risk information with statutory agencies and consider assistive technology.</li> </ul> <p>West Midlands Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of some visits via the referral form.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.</li> <li>• Provide feedback to referring agency on completion of home visits.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property.</li> <li>• Remove animals to a safe environment.</li> <li>• Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate.</li> <li>• Take legal action for animal cruelty if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide advice/assistance with re-homing animals.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding of Adults and Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Refer to children's services as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Hoarding Therapy Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete further assessments.</li> <li>• Refer to other agencies for Mental Capacity and Best Interests assessments if appropriate.</li> <li>• Multi-agency meeting – Working in partnership with referrer, liaise with fire service, environmental health, safeguarding etc. as appropriate.</li> <li>• Formulate client centred plan with the client.</li> <li>• Implement plan.</li> <li>• Monitor client and liaise with referrer throughout.</li> <li>• Review and evaluate.</li> <li>• Aid transition to other appropriate services.</li> <li>• Evaluate and Discharge when complete.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 Hoarding Therapy Service Criteria and Pathway



### Enabling Spaces CIC Hoarding Therapy Service

#### Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service

Enabling Spaces CIC (ES-CIC) is an award winning, independent, not-for-profit organisation, that is a specialist Occupational Therapy (OT) led mental health service specifically designed to address Hoarding Behaviours, self-neglect, and domestic squalor. ES-CIC is run by Directors Yvonne Singleton and Johanna Dowdeswell, Specialist Occupational Therapists.

Enabling Spaces provides client centred support through holistic assessments, interventions, and practical and psychological support to individuals with compulsive hoarding behaviours.

Enabling Spaces CIC has partnered with Coventry City Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) as part of the Early Prevention, Health and Well-being program to deliver a specialist hoarding therapy services to the people of Coventry.

This service is not time restricted; however, each client is evaluated regularly to ensure there is an eventual stepping off point. We will signpost to relevant services upon discharge.

#### Referring into the service

**As per our criteria referrals will only be accepted from Coventry Adult Social Care Service (Social Workers), General Practitioners and Qualified Mental Health Practitioners.**

#### **The Enabling Spaces Staff will:**

- Take a holistic client-centred approach and tailor services to the needs of the individual.
- Assess the client to ascertain motivation for change and assess the hoarding behaviour in detail.
- Address the psychological as well as the practical aspects of the hoarding behaviour and the impact on the individual and others around them.
- Assess for, and issue **basic equipment** if appropriate and required as staff are Occupational Therapists and have permission from the local authority for this. (All equipment issued will come from Coventry Equipment Stores) Staff will liaise with referrer as required.
- Expect referrers to work in partnership throughout the process.

- Enabling Spaces has its own team of specialist hoarding cleaning contractors through **Clearance with Care Ltd** to carry out necessary large-scale clearances and deep cleans. The clearance and deep clean will require funding as these practical elements are not covered by the therapy

**The Coventry Hoarding Service will only be available to residents in the City of Coventry.**

**This is a part-time service operating between Monday – Wednesday 9am-5pm. Any enquires made after Wednesday will be dealt with the following Monday. All referrals are assessed based on need and priority. Please see Service Pathway below for more information.**

**The following are not included as part of the Enabling Spaces hoarding therapy process.**

- We are not there to clean the client's property
- We do not assist with house removals
- We do not sell items on behalf of clients
- We do not do removal of large items to take to the tip
- We do not tolerate abusive language or behaviour
- **We are not a quick fix service**

**Clearance with Care Ltd, under the guidance of Enabling Spaces staff, can offer the following practical support (costs are calculated on an individual basis):**

- Large scale clearance
- Deep Cleans
- Garden clearance
- Removal of large and small items to charity
- Support hospital discharges – preparing living room for a hospital bed, rearrange ground floor of the property, clear and clean for home care visits to take place.

If the person meets the criteria for Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service, there will be no cost for Enabling Spaces' therapy intervention. However, in addition to Enabling Spaces input, there are often additional costs for decluttering and deep cleans of properties and funding will need to be sourced to cover these costs. In some instances, for the health and safety of all, the property has to be decluttered and deep cleaned before work with the person can commence. Enabling Spaces do not work with outside clearance and cleaning companies due to having their own team. Experiences in the past have shown us that they do not have the qualifications or skills to work effectively with individuals who compulsively hoard as they lack compassion and empathy.

## **Enabling Spaces Hoarding Therapy Service**

### **Referral Criteria**

Person must meet all of the following:

- ❖ Must be 18yrs+
- ❖ Must live within the boundaries of City of Coventry
- ❖ Demonstrate hoarding behaviours (collects items that appear of little value)
- ❖ Significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding
- ❖ Have additional mental health conditions, learning disability and/or other vulnerabilities including dementia and frailty
- ❖ Individual must consent to Enabling Spaces' support to address hoarding or legal representative consents, if individual is unable to consent (Capacity).
- ❖ Referrals for adults made by Coventry Children's Services are chargeable

### **Environmental Impact**

The environment must be deemed unsafe if...

- ❖ The levels of clutter in the living spaces impede the use of their intended purpose
- ❖ Accumulation of, and failure to discard, a large volume of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value
- ❖ **Significant Risks**
  - Fire Risks, Falls Risks, Impaired mobility within the property
  - Vermin, Infestation, Excessive pets
  - Risk to others living in the property, risks to the wider community
  - Squalid conditions-human or animal waste, rotting food, insect infestation

### **Hoarding Impact on Activities of Daily Living**

- ❖ Self- Care - Self Neglect resulting in poor personal hygiene, insufficient space to complete tasks such as the inability to; prepare food and drinks, use the toilet, shower/bath, dress appropriately, (lack of washing facilities), risk of infection for those in poor health, ability to sit comfortably to eat/relax.
- ❖ Productivity - Insufficient space to work, complete daily tasks such washing up, impacting on health, and laundry resulting in negative impact on personal hygiene.
- ❖ Leisure - Inability to socialise in the home environment, embarrassment associated with the condition of the property.
- ❖ Isolation from family, friends and local community.
- ❖ Amenities not functioning.

### **Referrer must agree...**

- ❖ To continue working with and supporting the client where appropriate.
- ❖ To work in partnership with Enabling Spaces and other organisations.
- ❖ To source funding for clearance and deep cleans costs if the client is unable to fund themselves.

# Enabling Spaces CIC Hoarding Therapy Service Hoarding Pathway

## Hoarding Process



The person is presumed to be affected by hoarding, self-neglect, and domestic squalor.

Referrer to contact Enabling Spaces to discuss the potential client and their suitability for the service. Referral form issued if appropriate.

Referral form to be completed and returned via email to:  
covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk

Suitable for Hoarding Therapy  
YES

Enabling Spaces will send email  
confirming receipt of referral.

Suitable for Hoarding Therapy  
NO

ES will contact referrer to arrange  
time and date for initial hoarding  
assessment with client and  
referrer.

Liaise with referrer and  
signpost to appropriate  
agencies.

Initial assessment will be carried out (may take up 2/3 visits). Including hoarding interview, risk Ax, WEMWBS, MoCA, Clutter Rating Scale and more.

Hoarding Assessment report to be completed and interventions and goals outlined.

Hoarding intervention therapy begins, will be evaluated three monthly.

Practical interventions of clearance and deep cleans carried out with Clearance with Care. As appropriate.

Review, Evaluate, Continued therapy, discharge planning and discharge.

### **SCREENING PRIORITIES**

**All cases will be prioritised by the following:**

- Level of Risk 2-3
- Accessing Adult Social Care/ Mental Health Teams
- Known to the Fire Service
- In Safeguarding
- Prohibiting hospital discharge/unsafe discharge
- Preventing hospital admission for physical and



## Enabling Spaces – Risk Prioritisation Levels

### **Level One – LOW**

No specialised assistance is needed. General cleaning support from external agency may be required.

#### **Enabling Spaces will:**

Offer support and advice.  
Signpost to appropriate agencies.  
Monitor client and liaise with referrer over three-month period.  
Review.  
Discharge Client when appropriate.  
Signpost to other services (as appropriate).

### **Level Two - MEDIUM**

Home environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues in the property.

#### **Enabling Spaces will:**

Complete further assessments.  
Formulate client centred plan with the client.  
Implement ongoing three month plan.  
Monitor client and liaise with referrer throughout.  
Multi-agency working if required.  
Review and Evaluate.  
Aid transition to other appropriate services.  
Evaluate and Discharge when complete.

### **Level Three - HIGH**

This level of hoarding constitutes a Safeguarding alert due to the significant risk to health of the householders.

#### **Enabling Spaces will:**

Complete further assessments.  
Refer to other agencies for Mental Capacity and Best Interests assessments if appropriate.  
Multi-agency meeting – Working in partnership with referrer, liaise with fire service, environmental health, safeguarding etc. as appropriate.  
Formulate client centred plan with the client.  
Implement plan.  
Monitor client and liaise with referrer throughout.  
Review and Evaluate.  
Aid transition to other appropriate services.  
Evaluate and Discharge when complete.

## Clutter Image Rating Scale - Bedroom

This is an example of the clutter rating scale and is a visual representation of the colour coded levels on the previous page.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

## Appendix 4 Hoarding Therapy Service Referral Form Example

Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service

Hoarding Referral Form

01926 935055

covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk



Royal College  
of Occupational  
Therapists



Coventry and Rugby  
Clinical Commissioning Group



Please read the following information before completing the referral form, any referrals that are incomplete will be returned.

Before sending the referral, please contact Enabling Spaces CIC to discuss the client's suitability to the service.

### About the Hoarding Service:

Enabling Spaces CIC (ES CIC) is a specialist Occupational Therapy led Hoarding Therapy Service. ES CIC are working collaboratively with Coventry City Council & Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group as part of the "Preventative and Well-being Program".

ES CIC deliver a therapeutic approach for Coventry residents who are affected by the psychological condition, Compulsive Hoarding.

### Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service Opening Times:

Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service is part time service.

Monday – Wednesday 9am- 4.30pm only.

Enabling Spaces staff will not be available outside of these hours

### Who can refer a client into the service?

- Clients are unable to self-refer.
- ES CIC accepts referrals from the following qualified staff members:

CCC Adult Social Care Teams:	Health:	Mental Health CWPT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualified Registered Social Workers</li> <li>• Occupational Therapists</li> <li>• Physiotherapists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Practitioners</li> <li>• District Nurses</li> <li>• UHCW Discharge Team?</li> <li>• Social Workers</li> <li>• Doctors</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Registered Social Workers</li> <li>• Mental Health Nurse</li> <li>• CPNs</li> <li>• Drs</li> <li>• Consultants</li> <li>• Psychologists</li> </ul>

The referrer must agree to:

- Work collaboratively with Enabling Spaces CIC.
- Source additional funding if required, if the client or Enabling Spaces are not able to fund extra external costs relating to the practical input needed (deep clean and removal of excessive items).
- Continue to remain allocated to the client or if necessary, re allocated to a Community Case Worker or Support Worker to work in conjunction with ES CIC and for them to provide the relevant social / health care support.

## COVENTRY HOARDING THERAPY SERVICE CRITERIA

Who can be referred into the service:

The client must meet the following **FOUR** requirements.

1. Must be 18yrs and over
2. Must live within the boundaries of the City of Coventry
3. Must pay their council tax to Coventry City Council
4. Must consent to occupational therapy intervention and support

The client will be assessed for their suitability for the service and if they are suitable and demonstrate significant impairment in the following areas they will be accepted for therapeutic interventions and support.

- A. Failure and persistent difficulty to discard large quantities of possessions which appears to be useless or have very little value**
- B. This difficulty is due to a perceived need to save the items and distress associated with discarding.**
- C. The symptoms result in the accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas and substantially compromise their intended use.**
- D. The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.**

Where squalor is present without any of the above, Enabling Spaces will be unable to accept the referral, however they will signpost the referrer to the relevant support agency for cleaning.

## HOARDING BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE:

This Framework and Guidance has been developed by Coventry Safeguarding Adult Board (CSAB), in partnership with Enabling Spaces CIC Hoarding Therapy Service.

This framework is intended to be person-centred and is solution based focused. The framework is for multi-agency use (adult social care, health workers, housing providers and other agencies who have clients who may be at risk of hoarding, self-neglect or living in domestic squalor. The framework provides guidance, advice, process maps, assessments and approaches and best practice when engaging with this clientele.

Hoarding Best Practice Framework and Guidance can be access below:  
<http://c-cluster-110.uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/dd7b481c-0585-4ee4-b67e-842bbee35333~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>

## Enabling Spaces CIC- Coventry Hoarding Therapy Service Referral Form

<b>Date of Referral:</b>	<b>Office use only- date referral received:</b>
--------------------------	---

### Referrer Details: (GPs, Social Workers, Qualified Clinical Practitioners Only)

<b>Title:</b> Please select	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>
<b>Service Area &amp; Team:</b>		
<b>Email Address:</b>		<b>Phone Number:</b>

If the referral is from the GP, please fill in the box below, referral without this information will not be accepted.

### (GP Only- GP Stamp, Date and Signature)

--

### Client Personal Details:

<b>Title:</b> Please select	<b>Name:</b>	<b>NHS No:</b>
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Gender:</b> Please select
<b>Ethnicity:</b> Please select		

<b>Address:</b>	<b>Postcode:</b>	
	<b>Client Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Language Spoken:</b>	<b>Interpreter:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Client's Next of Kin Name:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Relationship to Client:</b>

<b>Name of Client General Practitioners:</b>	<b>General Practitioners Address:</b>

<b>Present Medication:</b>	<b>Medical History:</b>
	<p><b>Does the client have any disabilities- physical, mental, Auditory, Visual impairment.....?</b></p>

<b>Does the client smoke?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there any evidence of substance abuse?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No.... if yes please explain
<b>Are there any syringes in the property?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ... if yes please explain

<b>Are there any adults or children safeguarding concerns? Please select</b>	If Yes, please give details...

**Client Consent:**

Has the client been made aware of this referral and given consent? <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Written	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the client given verbal or written consent to share information with Enabling Spaces CIC?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If No, what is your rational for presenting this referral without consent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Best Interest <input type="checkbox"/> Other Adults or Children are at risk <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-social behaviour
Other reasons:	Please explain:

Is the client known to the following Teams/ Service?			
Mental Health / IPU <input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Disability <input type="checkbox"/>	Older People Team 65+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Others: (Please explain)

Other Statutory Services involved with the client: (please provide name and contact details)	Non- Statutory Services in place i.e. family support:

### Occupational Performance Areas

Key: (1) Independent (2) Independent with equipment (3) Assistance of one or two  
(4) Cognitive problems (5) Unsafe without supervision (6) Unable (7) Not seen (8) NA

	Key	Comments
<b>Mobility &amp; Balance, Can the individual...</b>		
Walk independently		
Walk with aid or assistance		
Complete sit to stand		
Tolerate Standing		
Reach & bending		
Carry and lift Items, fine motor control		
Access their bed		
<b>Personal care ADLS... how is the individual...</b>		
Eating and drinking		
Grooming		
Dressing		
Bathing/Showering		
Toileting		
Self-medicating		
<b>Domestic Tasks Is the individual able to complete...</b>		
Meal preparations		
Housework		
Laundry		
Garden/Home Maintenance		
<b>Community ADL... is the individual able to...</b>		
Drive		
Access public/community transport		
Manage finances		
Shopping		
Writing/telephone		
<b>Work and Leisure. Does the individual...</b>		
<b>Work</b>	Please select	
<b>Volunteers</b>	Please select	
<b>Retired</b>	Please select	



<p align="center"><b>Client insight into their hoarding behaviour</b>  Please use the guidance to inform your comments</p>		
Use the guide as a baseline to describe the individual attitude towards their hoarding.	Hoarding Insight characteristics	Please provide your findings below:
<b>Good or fair insight</b>	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.	
<b>Poor Insight</b>	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.	
<b>Absent (delusional)</b>	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 excepting of their living environment despite it being hoarded and possibly a risk to health.	
<b>Detached with assigned blame</b>	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.	

**Property information:**

What type of property does the client live in? Please select

Does the client own the property? Please select

<b>If No, please state the housing association or private landlord:</b>	Name:
	Address:

Is there anyone else living in the property? Please select if Yes please provide details below:

Name of others in the household	Relationship	Date of Birth	Any disability, health problems etc.

### Environmental Condition of the Property:

Described in full, the condition of each rooms & areas internal and external the property that is affected by hoarding, clutter and squalor.

\*Please use the Clutter Rating Scale standardise assessment attached to the referral to rate the rooms\*

Rooms / Areas	Comments	Clutter rating Scale
Front Door		Please select
Hallway		Please select
Living Room		Please select
Dining Room		Please select
Kitchen		Please select
Downstairs WC		Please select
Stairs		Please select
Upstairs Landing		Please select
Bathroom / Toilet		Please select
Shower Room		Please select
Bedroom 1		Please select
Bedroom 2		Please select
Bedroom 3		Please select

Bedroom 4		Please select
Storage Linen Cupboard		Please select
Loft / Attic		Please select
Front and back garden		Please select
Garage		Please select

Is there any off-site storage? Please select (i.e. storage unit)
Any infestation of insects and rodents? Please select ... if Yes please give details...
How difficult would it be for emergency services or contractors to move through the property or carry out repairs?
Are there any obvious fire risks? Are there a smoke alarm in situ?
Are there a large number of animals in the property? Please select ... if yes, explain
Please indicate whether the following utilities; Gas, Water, Electricity are in working order
Are there any structural damage to the property? Please select

**Please indicate the action that is likely to be taken, should the client not receive support with their hoarding behaviour:**

Damage to property <input type="checkbox"/>	Court Injunction <input type="checkbox"/>	Forced Clearances <input type="checkbox"/>
Court Action(arrears) <input type="checkbox"/>	Eviction (arrears) <input type="checkbox"/>	Court Action (ASB) <input type="checkbox"/>
Sectioned under the Mental Health Act. <input type="checkbox"/>	Abandonment <input type="checkbox"/>	
Removal of Children <input type="checkbox"/>	Falls <input type="checkbox"/>	Fire <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

Other ... Explain:

**Please return the completed referral form to:**

**Email:** [covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk](mailto:covhoarding@enablingspacescic.co.uk) **or post to:**

**Enabling Spaces CIC- Hoarding Therapy Service**

**Rural Innovation Centre, Unit 169,  
Avenue H, Stoneleigh Park,  
Kenilworth,  
CV8 2GL**

**Office Telephone Number: 01926 935055**

**Website:** [www.enablingspacescic.co.uk](http://www.enablingspacescic.co.uk)

## Appendix 5 Wider Resources

National Organisations and key contacts.

[www.enablingspacescic.co.uk](http://www.enablingspacescic.co.uk)

An Occupational Therapy led service dedicated to working with individuals affected by hoarding disorder. Training and consultation also available on request.

<https://enablingspacescic.co.uk/clearance-with-care-ltd>

Clearance with Care team to provide a very client centred approach to tackling the physical side of hoarding, the clearance, and the deep cleaning of cluttered or extremely hoarded and squalid properties. Clearance With Care staff are experienced professionals who can be trusted to carry out the work compassionately, holistically, and sensitively. Clearance with Care specialists has undertaken many jobs where compulsive hoarding has been a problem.

[www.helpforhoarders.co.uk](http://www.helpforhoarders.co.uk)

A comprehensive hoarding website, with a good page of resources with counsellors and groups specialising in hoarding.

[www.childrenofhoarders.com](http://www.childrenofhoarders.com)

Offering support and advice to the families of those that hoard.

[www.complusive-hoarding.org](http://www.complusive-hoarding.org)

A website dedicated to raising awareness and understanding of hoarding.

[www.hoardinguk.org](http://www.hoardinguk.org)

Offer phone, email and advocacy support free of charge.

[www.hoardinghelpuk.co.uk](http://www.hoardinghelpuk.co.uk)

Give practical support and offer expert advice to those who hoard.

<https://www.ocduk.org/related-disorders/hoarding-disorder/>

Supports those with OCD who hoard.

[www.animalhoarding.com](http://www.animalhoarding.com)

Offers information and support around animal hoarding.

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/compulsive-hoarding.html>

Provides information on hoarding and a list of counsellors who work with those who hoard.

[www.cloudsend.org.uk](http://www.cloudsend.org.uk)

Offers information, training and one to one support for those that hoard.

<http://hoardingdisordersuk.org>

You will find information on research and resources.