



Loreburn Group

HOARDING POLICY

Policy	Hoarding Policy					
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Table of Contents

1 Purpose of this Policy	2
2 Related Policies, Procedures & Documents	2
3 Aims of this Policy	2
4 Hoarding Definition	3
5 Taking Action.....	3
6 Managing Risk.....	4
7 Safeguarding.....	5
8 Partnership Working	5
9 Monitoring.....	5
10 Complaints.....	6
11 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.....	6
12 Policy Review	6

Table of Appendices

- Appendix one: Clutter Scale Ruling
- Appendix two: Hoarding Risk assessment
- Appendix three: Hoarding Action Plan
- Appendix four: Hoarding Tips



1 Purpose of this Policy

1.1 This Policy sets out how we will respond to cases of hoarding and what tenants are expected to do to ensure their own safety and wellbeing:

- To develop an understanding of why hoarding has occurred and to put an action plan in place to help tenants manage their environment.
- To have a flexible approach in developing and maintaining our tenant relationship where hoarding is identified through action plans.
- To promote and develop how we respond through safeguarding and multi-agency working.
- To work with partners to deliver specialist services for and with our tenants who need it.
- To support the maintenance of fire safety and minimise the vulnerabilities of inappropriate storage which could compromise the design of our buildings.

1.2 Compulsive hoarding is highly complex and requires a collaborative and integrated approach. This policy will ensure there is meaningful, coordinated multi-agency partnership working to effectively deal with tenants who hoard.

2 Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following LHA policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policies
- Vulnerable Tenants Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

3 Aims of this Policy

3.1 This policy aims to:

- Reduce the risks associated with hoarding disorder on the individual, the community and LHA.
- Take a balanced approach to stop and/or control hoarding as quickly and effectively as possible by using a combination of measures.
- Treat those who hoard and those affected by hoarding with tact and sensitivity.
- Outline the action we will take alongside our partner agencies if the risk, as a result of hoarding, is high and/or the effect on the local community is unacceptable.



4 Hoarding Definition

- 4.1 Compulsive hoarding means excessively acquiring items that appear of little or no value and not being able to throw them away resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter.
- 4.2 In May 2013 Hoarding Disorder was officially recognised in the DSM-V (the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). It is common for people who collect to suffer with other mental health problems, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or anxiety or depression. In these cases the effects of their mental health problems may be affecting their ability to make decisions about how they live and to deal with the problems.
- 4.3 However some people who hoard things may not necessarily have any mental health problems and they can be capable of leading active and rewarding lives away from their homes. Hoarding becomes a significant problem when:-
 - The amount of clutter interferes with everyday living – for example, someone is unable to use the kitchen or bathroom and cannot access rooms.
 - The clutter is causing significant distress or negatively affecting a person's ability to function – for example, their social life, employment and maintaining a safe environment.
- 4.4 Some research has shown that hoarding is more prevalent in men but that more women will present for support.
- 4.5 There is no distinction between age, gender, ethnic group, socio-economic status, education or occupation.
- 4.6 91% of compulsive hoarders have at least one other mental disorder.
- 4.7 It is usual that there has been a family history of OCD/hoarding.
- 4.8 Only 5% of hoarders come to the attention of professionals.
- 4.9 Diogenes Syndrome is defined as “extreme self-neglect, domestic squalor, social withdrawal and apathy with a tendency to hoard”. They may be particularly drawn to hoard rubbish. It is often associated with dementia, alcohol dependency, psychosis or OCD.
- 4.10 OCD is characterised by either obsessions or compulsions, or both, and affects 1-3% of the population. Hoarding occurs in 20-30% of patients with OCD

5 Taking Action

- 5.1. LHA will consider hoarding a significant problem when the tenant is likely to be in breach of their tenancy agreement.
- 5.2. We will take immediate action where hoarding a fire or health and safety risk.
- 5.3. When one of the following occurs, we will take further action to address issues:



- A hazard or potential hazard (including fire, health and safety, smell or vermin) is created for the tenant, those living in the property, neighbours, LHA staff or contractors.
- There is an increased risk of accidents, personal injury or fire.
- The tenant's day to day functioning is impeded – for example, they are unable to use the kitchen or bathroom and cannot access rooms.
- The impact of the hoarding is negatively affecting neighbours or has been reported as anti-social behaviour.
- The impact of the hoarding is damaging or potentially damaging our property.
- There is a serious detriment to animal welfare.

5.5. LHA will take a risk-based approach when responding to hoarding and will consider the risk to the individual, others in the property, neighbours and staff members or contractors visiting the property.

5.6. It is important to gain trust and a relationship with the tenant:

DON'T

- Use judgemental language such as squalor, self-neglect, dirty or rubbish.
- Use words that devalue or negatively judge possessions
- Let your non-verbal expressions say what you are thinking.
- Make suggestions about the person's belongings
- Try to persuade or argue with the person
- Touch the person's belongings without them giving you permission to do so.

DO

- Try to imagine yourself in the tenant's shoes.
- Use encouraging language
- Highlight their strengths
- Focus the intervention initially on safety and organisation of possessions and later work on discarding

6 Managing Risk

6.1. All cases of hoarding will be assessed using the Clutter Scale Rating (See Appendix 1).

6.2. A full risk assessment will then be completed and reviewed by a manager to agree how to proceed.

6.3. The following risk levels provide an overall framework to work within:

- **Low Level** – Acceptable risk, signpost to external agencies and monitor.
- **Medium Level** – Involve other statutory agencies and monitor case. May include damage to property requiring major works or pest control.



- **High Level** – Risk of accidents, personal injury, self-neglect or fire. Immediate involvement of other statutory agencies and consider enforcement action. Notify LHA Health and Safety Co-ordinator and arrange a new Fire Risk Assessment.

7 Safeguarding

- 7.1. Living in hoarded properties can place both children and adults at risk. LHA will raise an appropriate safeguarding alert in accordance with local safeguarding criteria where:
- a person is declining assistance in relation to their care and support needs, and
 - the impact of their decision, has or is likely to have a substantial impact on their overall individual wellbeing.

8 Partnership Working

- 8.1. The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance formally recognises self-neglect as a category of abuse and neglect – and within that category identifies hoarding. The guidance outlines how partner organisations, such as housing associations, can and should work in partnership to help protect vulnerable people from abuse or neglect.
- 8.2. When a person's hoarding behaviour poses a serious risk to their health and safety, professional intervention will be required.
- 8.3. Any proposed intervention or action must be with the person's consent, except in circumstances where the level of hoarding and associated risks leads us to take immediate safeguarding action in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

9 Monitoring

- 9.1. People who have hoarded are likely to hoard again. We will record all cases of hoarding and continue to monitor until the risks have reduced to an acceptable level.
- 9.2. We will monitor this policy in line with any changes to the Equalities Act 2010, the Care Act 2014 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 9.3. Hoarded properties will be reported to our Health & Safety meeting where a health and safety concern exists.



10 Complaints

- 10.1. LHA is committed to valuing complaints and ensuring the organisation benefits from feedback provided.
- 10.2. LHA is fully compliant with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Any complainant that has exhausted internal procedures has the right to escalate their complaint to the SPSO.

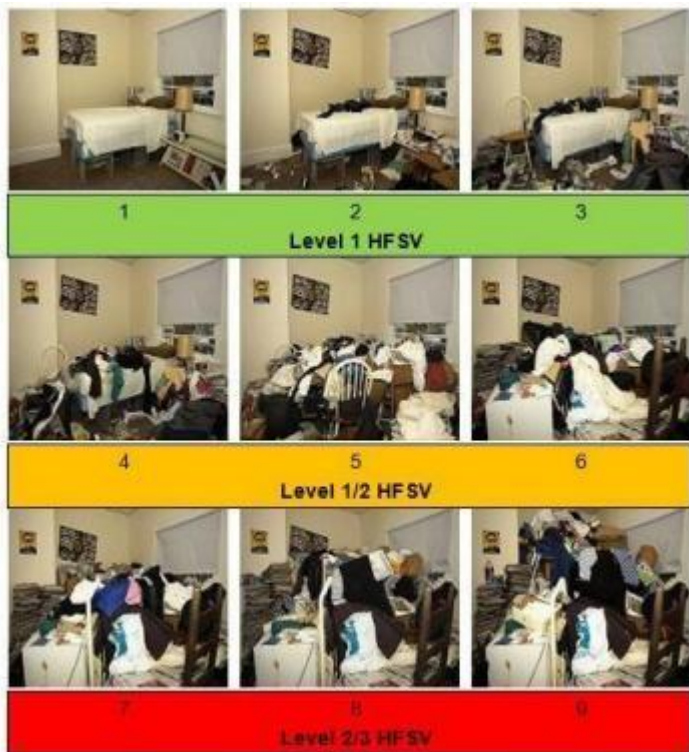
11 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

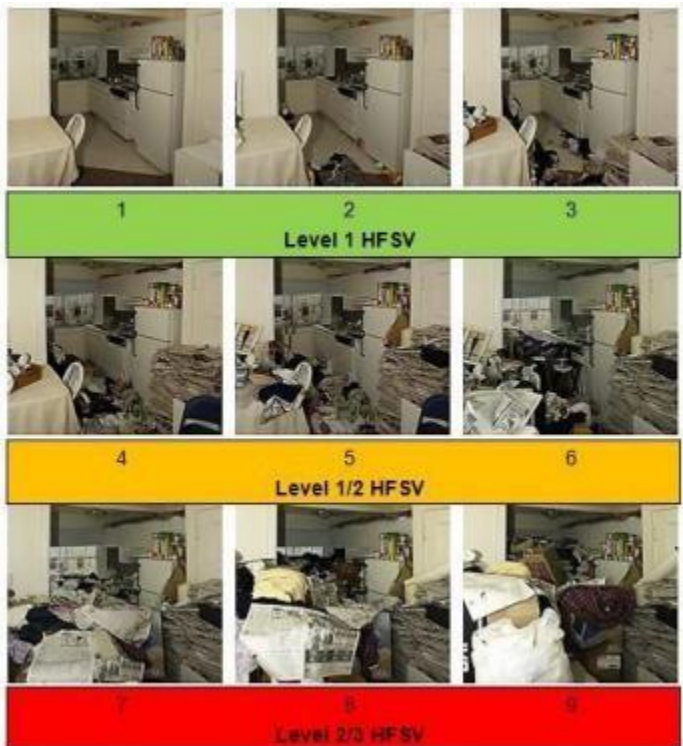
- 11.1. LHA aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to how tenants are treated. LHA support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of work, as an employer and service provider.
- 11.2. LHA will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010)

12 Policy Review

- 12.1. The Policy Champion is the Director of Operations.
- 12.2. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner due to legislative or substantive changes occurring.

Appendix 1 – Clutter Scale Rating





Level 1 Clutter image rating 1 – 3

Household environment is considered standard. No specialised assistance is needed. If the resident would like some assistance with general housework or feels they are declining towards a higher clutter scale, appropriate referrals can be made subject to age and vulnerability.

Level 2 Clutter Image Rating 4 – 6

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

Level 3 Clutter image rating 7 – 9

Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach with the involvement from a wide range of professionals. This level of hoarding constitutes a Safeguarding alert due to the significant risk to health of the householders, surrounding properties and tenants. Tenants are often unaware of the implication of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses.



Appendix 2 – Hoarding Risk Assessment Form

To be used during inspection of suspected hoarding issue. Complete as appropriate

<p>Address</p>	
<p>Name and DOB of tenant</p>	
<p>Tenancy type</p>	
<p>Tenant</p> <p>List any known vulnerabilities/disabilities/ medical issues</p> <p>Discuss consent form to liaise/refer to other agencies</p> <p>GP & contact details</p>	
<p>Household members</p> <p>Details of other occupants residing in the property (include DOB and vulnerabilities)</p> <p>List any pets?</p>	



<p>Type of hoarding and where</p> <p>Can kitchen be used for cooking safely? Use clutter rating to assess level of clutter in each room</p> <p>Estimate height of clutter in each room</p> <p>Estimate available floor space</p> <p>Assess level of sanitation in the property</p> <p>Assess level of hygiene in the property Is tenant on any medication are special storage measures required for this? e.g. insulin</p> <p>Check for other risky behavior e.g. use of candles, fairy lighting multiple socket use</p> <p>Any history of hoarding</p> <p>Any history of fires at the property or for this tenant?</p>	
<p>Should future visits take place using protective clothing? if yes why? Should there be visits in pairs only? if yes why?</p>	

<p>Health and safety factors to be checked in property</p> <p>Does the property have working smoke alarms?</p> <p>Does the property have utilities? Is there gas supply? is gas safety check up to date? Is there electricity supply? is electrical safety check up to date?</p> <p>What gas appliances are in use?</p> <p>What electrical appliances are in use?</p> <p>Are there any particularly inflammable items being hoarded (e.g. lots of paper, petrol cans lots of cardboard boxes?)</p> <p>Detail the volume of any particularly inflammable items being hoarded Assess the access to all entrances and exits to the property</p> <p>Concerns of Fire or Environmental Health risk to tenants and others?</p> <p>Smoke alarms in working order (address urgently if not)?</p>	
<p>Structure and type of property</p> <p>Flat/house?</p> <p>Loft space access?</p> <p>Is the loft also full of belongings? Arrange a check if not known Missing doors?</p> <p>Poor or no access/exit hampered by hoarding Blocked stairwell/hallway?</p> <p>Access to boiler?</p> <p>Does property join neighbouring properties if so how? Terrace?</p>	

<p>Control measures/advice given</p> <p>Immediate advice given Smoke alarms to be installed if none present Fire service assessment completed? Referrals to statutory services for Mental Health or care and support tenant aware? Request GP details? Discussed options for support via LHA to help address issues? Action plan agreed? Explained consequences/enforcement action of failure to address the issues to tenant</p>	
<p>Safeguarding adults and children</p> <p>Consider level of clutter rating if over 7 could potentially be a safeguarding issue depending on who lives there</p>	
<p>Animals</p> <p>Are there any pets at the property? Detail any concerns about these pets Is there animal hoarding?</p>	
<p>Garden areas</p> <p>Check the garden detail condition of garden Is there any signs of vermin</p>	
<p>Date and name of visiting officer(s)</p> <p>Date for next visit Attach to action plan</p>	

If the situation is judged to be serious clutter 5+ in most rooms and there is a high risk of potential harm to the occupier and others advise what immediate action needs to be taken? Where immediate action is required to reduce high risks identify what needs to be done straight



away and allow tenant 5 working days to address those immediate high-risk issues consider need to pursue legal action if this is not done (emergency injunction needs to be sought if tenants fails to adhere to these requests).

Ongoing hoarding and property condition issues need to be managed through the action plan