

RECOGNISE – WHAT DO YOU SEE?

What is Self-Neglect?

Self-Neglect is a wide range of behaviour where a person neglects to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings. The definition encompasses three primary characteristics:

- **Lack of Self Care** – neglecting personal hygiene, nutrition, hydration, or health to an extent that endangers safety.
- **Lack of environmental Care** – Squalor or elevated fire/health risks in the home, often associated with hoarding behaviour. Strong odours/infestations, blocked exits, no heating/water/electricity.
- **Refusal of services** – Repeatedly refusing essential support and care services. Neglecting their medical needs and are socially isolating.

What is Hoarding?

Hoarding involves the acquisition of items with an associated inability to discard things that have little or no value to the point where it interferes with use of living space or activities of daily living.

Use the clutter scale below to provide a concise guide to help multi agency involvement understand the level of Hoarding identified:



Images 1-3 Minimal risk; Images 4-6 Moderate risk; Images 7-9 High/Critical risk

ACTIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

1. Assess Immediate Risk

Consider:

- Your own safety and the safety of others
- Is there immediate risk to life? – contact emergency services
- Have you identified Safeguarding Concerns? - Risks to children, other dependants/adults, neighbours? Follow your organisation's safeguarding procedures
- Mental capacity concerns?

2. Use a person – centred approach

- Be calm, respectful, and non-judgemental
- Understand what matters to the person – ask what they would like to happen.
- Avoid shaming or blaming language
- Recognise trauma, loss and mental health factors. Allow time.
- Be professionally curious!

3. Mental Capacity

Consider whether the person can at that moment in time:

- Understand information
- Retain information
- Weigh up risks
- Communicate decisions

An unwise decision alone does not mean lack of capacity

4. Record Concerns Clearly and Factually

Document:

- What have you observed – self neglect - the persons presentation/living conditions
- Any Risks identified
- Is Hoarding present – what level on the Clutter Rating Scale? Include this in the referral.
- What the person said, would like to happen.
- Any Actions taken
- Be factual and objective

5. Referral Pathway/Signposting

- Police – if there has been a crime/suspicion of abuse/exploitation
- Adult Social Care
- Mental Health Services/GP – If there are concerns for Mental Health
- Fire and Rescue Service – For a Home Fire Safety Check
- Environmental Health/Housing – if concerns identified about the property
- RSPCA, Voluntary/Community services/charities

Legal and Safeguarding Frameworks

- Care Act 2014: self-neglect is a category of abuse, A Safeguarding referral should be considered
- Mental Capacity Act 2005: Consider whether the person can understand, weigh and communicate decisions at the time.
- Police Powers: may apply if there is immediate risk to life.
- Multi Agency Duty: Collaborate with adult social care, fire service, police, Housing, RSPCA and Environmental Services to name a few.