

# Multi-Agency Hoarding Framework

## Guidance for Practitioners in Dudley



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## 1. Introduction

It's widely estimated that between 2% - 5% of the population may have symptoms of a hoarding disorder. It is estimated that only 5% of hoarders come to the attention of statutory agencies.

Based on the 2011 census, Dudley has approximately 130,000 households, therefore, potentially there could be between 2,500 – 6,000 households affected by hoarding to some degree. West Midlands Fire Service reported 92 cases of 'disorganised living'; a significant proportion of which including hoarding behaviour was a significant factor. Adult Social Care identified 106 cases of 'self-neglect' where hoarding was also a presenting issue. Whilst more work needs to be done on data collection and identifying hoarding, based on these figures, and the regional analysis, it appears that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There could be many more people out there that just haven't come to the attention of services yet. This document sets out a framework for collaborative multi-agency working within Dudley. The framework offers guidance to agencies working with people who hoard. This framework has been developed in partnership between West Midlands Fire Service, Dudley Council, Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership and a wide range of other agencies.

## 2. Aims of the framework

- Provide a multi-agency pathway which will maximise the use of existing services and resources and which may reduce the need for enforcement action and includes a single point of referral.
- Ensure that when solutions are required, there is a process for planning and coordinating solutions tailored to meet the needs of the individual and utilising a person centred approach.
- Establish best practice and improve knowledge and support that relates to hoarding behaviour.

## 3. Definition of hoarding

"Compulsive acquisition of objects, with marked and gross associated difficulties with discard, creating avoidance of discard behaviour". Steketee et al. (2000)

Hoarding is the excessive collection and retention of any material to the point that living space is sufficiently cluttered to preclude the activities they are designed for.

Hoarding disorder is a persistent difficulty in discarding or parting with possessions because of a perceived need to save them. A person with a hoarding disorder experiences distress at the thought of getting rid of the items. Excessive accumulation of items, regardless of actual value, occurs.

Compulsive hoarding is often 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 Mental Disorders (DSM-5). However,

many people are not diagnosed and hoarding can also be a symptom of other medical disorders.

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,
- Magazines or books
- Bills, receipts or letters
- Food and/or containers
- Collectables such as toys, DVDs or CDs
- Animals

#### 4. Types of Hoarding

There are typically three types of hoarding:

- **Inanimate objects:** This is the most common. This could consist of one type of object or a collection of a mixture of objects, such as old clothes, newspapers, food, containers or papers.
- **Wet hoarding:** including substances arising from bodily functions, this has ramifications for hazardous waste and blood borne viruses (BBV) and health and safety.
- **Animal hoarding:** This is on the increase and often accompanied with the inability to provide minimal standards of care. The hoarder is unable to recognise that the animals are at risk because they feel they are saving them. The homes of animal hoarders are often eventually destroyed by the accumulation of animal faeces and infestation by insects.

#### 5. The following general characteristics of Hoarding are commonly reported

**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 a large number of 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.

## 6. Mental Capacity

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides a statutory framework for people aged 16 and over who lack the capacity to make decisions by themselves. The Act has five statutory principles and these are legal requirements of the Act:

- 1) A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they lack capacity.
- 2) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps have been taken without success.
- 3) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he/she makes an unwise decision.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.

The principles of the presumption of capacity and respecting a person's entitlement to make unwise decisions with capacity (principles 1 and 3 of the MCA) are the starting point for any capacity assessment. So in other words, we need to assume that someone who is hoarding has the capacity to make this decision unless we can find evidence to the contrary. It is up to us as practitioners to use all of our communication skills to determine whether someone is having genuine difficulty making particular decisions for particular reasons. So a presumption of capacity does not mean that we do nothing.

Capacity is decision and time specific, saying that someone lacks capacity is meaningless. We need to ask ourselves, "What is the specific decision that needs to be made at this point?" If we don't define this question before we start undertaking the assessment, the exercise will be pointless and may lead us astray. So in other words, we may ask: "Do you understand that your hoarding has become dangerous and is now a real risk to your life?"

Preparation assessing capacity – A crucial step is to prepare for the assessment. We need to think about the best ways that we can put someone at ease, so that we can gain the information we need without distressing or isolating them further.

Take all practicable steps - What can we do which might mean an individual is able to make the decision for themselves? Think about specific types of communication or language, times of the day, etc.

Applying the test – The MCA test for capacity has two aspects: the diagnostic element (is there an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain; what evidence is there of this?) and the functional element (is the person unable to make a decision because of the impairment?). Being unable to make a decision means being unable to understand, retain or "use or weigh" information relevant to the decision, or to communicate their decision.

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.

### **Guidance on assessing mental capacity in connection to hoarding**

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.

## **7. Information Sharing and Data Protection/ Information Sharing /Consent**

Under the General Data Protection Regulations 2017 (GDPR), we all have the responsibility to ensure that personal information is processed lawfully and fairly. All customers have a right to view any information held about them. Practitioners should consider this when they are recording information about that person. However, the data protection act 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.
- If in doubt, follow the seven golden rules of information sharing and take advice from your manager

### **Seven golden rules for information sharing**

- 1) Remember that GDPR is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
- 2) Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- 3) Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- 4) Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- 5) Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
- 6) Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- 7) Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Partners and agencies are reminded to ensure their compliance with their own GDPR policy and procedures in the following of this framework.

## 8. Fire Safety

Hoarding increases the risk of a fire occurring and makes it more difficult for people living within the property to evacuate safely. Fire can spread to neighbouring properties if the level of hoarding is severe or if flammable items such as gas containers are being stored. It can also pose a high risk to fire fighters when attending the scene.

West Midlands Fire Service provide a free service called a Safe & Well visit which 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, the aim of which is to reduce the risk and vulnerability. This may include recommendations for resources, adaptations and equipment, for example, fire retardant bedding for an individual who smokes in bed.

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

Their priorities are:

- Carry out a detailed assessment as a priority
- Make the person/s as safe as possible
- Fit required safety equipment as soon as practicable
- Refer to another organisation where appropriate
- Work with agencies to help resolve issues

To make a referral please contact our Home Safety Centre on 0800 389 5525 or [homesafety.centre@wmfs.net](mailto:homesafety.centre@wmfs.net) or visit [www.wmfs.net](http://www.wmfs.net)

## 9. 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 and by means of a case study and the results of a survey, reviews the incidence and diversity of cases coming to the attention of environmental health authorities in the hope that, eventually, that may lead to better ways to resolve them. However, legal action should always be a last resort. To speak to the DMBC Environmental Team, please contact by telephone 0300 555 2345.

### **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)  
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

(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

## 10. Dudley MBC Private Sector Housing

If there is disrepair in the property, officers from Dudley Council can inspect the property and ensure that the landlord carries out all repairs. This may be difficult; however, if the tenant has filled the property with possessions and the landlord cannot gain proper access to do the work.

For more information about disrepair contact 0300 555 2345.

There is a risk of eviction and potential use of closure orders if officers are concerned about the safety of the home and dwelling.

## 11. Housing

There are serious reputational risks and legal consequences for all housing providers who fail to respond effectively when hoarding issues are identified. For example, in a neighbouring Black Country local authority, the tragic death in 2012 of a resident hoarding in a social housing property resulted in widespread media coverage. The fire crew who attended the scene emphasised the difficulty and danger of conducting a rescue in a property with hoarded items, and the coroner involved wrote to social housing providers about the need to reduce the risks hoarding poses to individuals and statutory services. 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.

For housing advice, please contact Dudley Council Homeless Prevention Response Team on 01384 815035.

## 12. Trading Standards – Scams

Scams are now a serious problem which is causing financial and mental devastation to millions of silent victims of fraud. DMBC Scams Unit based within Trading Standards are ready to help residents who have or are at risk of becoming victims of this crime. Scams come in many forms; uninvited contact is received by email, letter, and telephone or in person making false promises to con victims out of money. There are many of these sorts of scams but some of the most common are fake lotteries, deceptive prize draws or sweepstakes, clairvoyants, computer scams, and romance scams. The criminals attempt to trick people with flashy, official looking documents or websites, or convincing telephone sales patter, with the aim of persuading them to send a processing or administration fee, pay postal or insurance costs, buy an overvalued product or make a premium rate phone call. Doorstep Scams are crimes carried out by bogus callers, rogue traders and unscrupulous sales people who call, often uninvited, at people's home under the guise of legitimate business or trade. You can find more information about scams and how you can protect yourself and others on our website at [www.dudley.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/tradingstandards) Telephone number 01384 818871

## Scams in relation to hoarding

Some scam victims receive large amounts of scam mail which over time can build up significantly. They may start keeping the mail, either due to an inability to dispose of the mail at a quick enough rate or because they believe they have or will eventually win a substantial sum and the paperwork needs to be retained until that day. Victims of scam mail may initially keep meticulous records but the amount of mail received can quickly become overwhelming. Some cases involving scam mail have been identified as hoarding due to volume of mail within their home. When a case of hoarding is identified it is important to establish exactly what is being kept as paperwork for example may identify further issues such as financial abuse. If it is suspected that scams may be taking place this issue needs to be addressed in order for any assistance with hoarding to be effective.

## 13. Dudley Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care offer a range of prevention and re-enablement services to support people to live independently. They can also arrange an assessment of someone's care and support needs. For further information please contact via 0300 555 0055 or by emailing: [accessteam.dachs@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:accessteam.dachs@dudley.gov.uk)

## 14. Safeguarding Children

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.

Other impacts of hoarding on a child include:

- Social isolation: not being able to have friends over
- Reduced living space: children may have to use one space for multiple uses and purposes, such as sleeping, eating, homework, TV and playing.
- Anxiety: this may develop due to their parent's behaviour towards objects. They may get anxious living within a household with many objects that they are unable to touch.
- Health: asthma, allergies, headache etc. which can be due to dust, the cleanliness of the household and the things that are being hoarded.

The needs of the child at risk must come first and any actions we take must reflect this. (If practitioners are unsure then complete a clutter tool to determine risks)

Where children live in the property, and the hygiene conditions within the home present a serious and immediate environmental/health risk to children or the physical accommodation places the child in danger, a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) must be submitted using the [Request for Help and Support Form via the DMBC website](#). You can also call direct on 0300 555 0050.

Please refer to the [Dudley Levels of Support Guidance Framework](#), if you have concerns and are not sure if the children meet the levels of support, please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

## **15. 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.

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 should be considered. Consent from the adult should be gained wherever this is possible and where the adult has mental capacity to understand the referral being made.

For assessments, advice and support please contact the Access Team on 0300 555 0055. To report a safeguarding concern visit <https://adultsocialcare.dudley.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/safeguarding>

## **16. How to use the Hoarding Pathway**

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 the individuals that hoard will receive support from statutory services such as Mental Health. By taking joint responsibility and a joined-up approach, the right support can be provided at the right time, hopefully assisting the person to achieve positive outcomes.

The Hoarding pathway on page 15, has been developed to advise agencies of the support options available when they come across a hoarder and a single referral route for those cases that need a more coordinated response.

Using the clutter rating pictures (appendix 1), enables agencies to decide which picture most resembles the level of clutter in the person's property; this will determine the level of response.

Using the clutter images is only a guide and there may be other factors that professionals need to consider before deciding on the level of risk. For example, the clutter image may be at level 1, but may be compounded by safeguarding issues, type of clutter (dangerous

substances) or the adult having significant care and support needs which would raise the risks to a level 2 or 3, so there is always some subjectivity involved dependent upon the circumstances. The pathway includes levels of risk that may help to determine this.

In the case of level 3 hoarding cases, the MASH lead officer may need to call a professionals meeting to discuss how we can support the individual to recognise that there is a problem and the best way forward.

## **17. The role of the Adult MASH**

The Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub receive safeguarding concerns for adults who do not have a social worker. Their role is to understand the presenting risks and reach a threshold decision on what should happen next. The MASH will gather information from partner agencies and, where appropriate, speak to the citizen themselves

The MASH use this information to inform a threshold decision under the Care Act. They will look to understand whether the citizen:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse
- they are unable to protect themselves from the abuse as a result of their care and support needs.

Where all three criteria are met the concern will progress to a section 42 enquiry and transfer to the appropriate social work team to complete.

Where all three criteria are not met the MASH will decide on other actions to address the concern. This may be signposting to other agencies, a section 9 or 11 assessment or a mental capacity assessment.

## 18. Dudley Hoarding Pathway

**IMPORTANT:** when referring an occupier, you must have verbal consent. However, the following must be considered should the individual not give their consent.

- Safeguarding,
- Care Act ,
- Children in the property,
- Fire Safety,
- Animals,
- Mental Capacity,
- Neighbours Affected,
- Health & Safety,
- Inaccessible utilities (gas/electric/ water),
- Property is serious disrepair ,
- Environmental health /pests

For any referral made, always use the clutter tool, explaining which rooms are causing concern and with consent attach pictures of the property.

<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p><b>Low Risk</b></p> <p>Clutter image rating 1-3</p>	<p>Household environment is considered standard. No specialised assistance needed. If resident would like some assistance with general household or feels like they are declining towards higher clutter scale, appropriate referrals can be made subject to age and circumstances.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Doors, Stairways and windows accessible</li> <li>• No evidence of pests</li> <li>• Clutter obstructs SOME functions of key living area – Looks untidy</li> <li>• Safe Maintained sanitation conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Response</b>	
<p>Obtain consent from individual</p> <p>Discuss support solutions with consent for consideration</p> <p>Refer to West Midlands Fire Service for safe and well check 0800 389 5525</p> <p>Refer to Adult Social Care Enquiry 0300 555 0055 for referral to Floating Support, Prevention Services, Community Alarm or an assessment for care and support needs</p> <p>Use the support level and guidance framework to consider if Early Help is needed Children and Families Service, contact: Tel 0300 555 0050</p> <p>Advice and support to register with a G.P. if not registered</p> <p>Dudley Welfare Rights 0300 555 0055, for debt benefit issues. Dudley Council: <a href="https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/">https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/</a></p>	

<p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p><b>Medium Risk</b></p> <p>Clutter image rating 4-6</p>	<p>Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve clutter and maintenance issues in the property</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blocking of Doors, some windows, possibly major exit</li> <li>• Light infestation of pests (e.g. bed bugs, lice, fleas, rats)</li> <li>• Clutter obstructing functions of key living space, stairs, entrances, hallways etc.</li> <li>• Evidence of non-maintained sanitation conditions (e.g. food preparation surfaces heavily soiled, lots of dirty dishes, obvious odours which irritate etc.)</li> <li>• Evidence of burns to the carpet, clothing etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Response</b></p>	
<p>Discuss Solutions / Interventions / Support Options with the individual and obtain consent if a referral for support is required</p> <p>If the individual does not meet safeguarding adults threshold, consider a referral to Adult Social Care Enquiry 0300 555 0055f or referral</p> <p>If there are children living in the property, use the support level and guidance framework and refer to Early Help, Children and Families Service contact 0300 555 0050</p> <p>If Housing Association tenant Dudley Council officers to contact Housing Association to advise they need to visit and use the framework</p> <p>WMFS Safe and Well Check 0800 389 5525 Refer to private sector housing – 0300 555 2345</p> <p>Refer to Environmental Health – 0300 555 2345 if a public health issue</p> <p>Refer to Adult Social Care Enquiry 0300 555 0055 for referral to floating support, Prevention Services, Community Alarm, or an assessment</p> <p>Refer to Welfare Rights 0300 555 0055</p> <p>Dudley Council: <a href="https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/">https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/</a></p> <p>Dudley Community Information Point for access to voluntary sector and support services</p> <p>Refer to RSPCA if there are any animal welfare concerns 0300 1234 999 <a href="https://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty">https://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty</a></p>	

<p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p><b>High Risk</b></p> <p>Clutter image rating 7-9</p>	<p>Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach with the involvement from a wide range of professionals. This level of hoarding is a significant risk to the health of the householders, surrounding properties and residents. The occupier is often unaware of the implications of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole rooms inaccessible, exits blocked, windows not able to be opened</li> <li>• Utilities cut off (e.g. no heating, gas capped)</li> <li>• Heavy infestation of pests (rats seen, heard, reported by neighbours, cockroaches fleas etc.)</li> <li>• Key living spaces not available for use, person living in one room</li> <li>• Evidence of urine/excrement in room, rotting food, very insanitary conditions</li> <li>• Evidence of previous fire or burns in the carpet, clothing etc.</li> </ul>
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**Response**

<p>Act as Coordinator, visit tenant and inspect whole property</p> <p>Obtain consent or inform of referral</p> <p>Raise an adult safeguarding concern if there are care and support needs and attached clutter risk rating</p> <p>If Housing tenant – Neighbourhood Officer to contact Housing Association to advise they need to visit and use the framework.</p> <p>West Midlands Fire Service safe and well check within 24 hours 0800 389 5525</p> <p>If there are children living in the property, use the support level guidance framework and submit a request for help and support to Children &amp; Families Services</p> <p>Refer to Environmental Health 0300 555 2345 due to public health issue Refer to Dudley MBC Housing Team 0300 555 2345 if the property is uninhabitable</p> <p>Consider what support the voluntary sector can provide</p> <p>Arrange a multi- agency professionals meeting to include Dudley Council (Housing), Adults Social Care (if applicable), Children’s &amp; families (if applicable) and any agency you have referred to and may be involved</p> <p>Dudley Council: <a href="https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/">https://www.dudley.gov.uk/contact-us/</a> Dudley Community Information Point for access to voluntary sector and support services</p> <p>Refer to RSPCA if there are any animal welfare concerns 0300 1234 999 <a href="https://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty">https://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/contactus/reportcruelty</a></p>
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## Appendix 1 Clutter Image Rating Guidance

These ratings are via The International OCD Foundation and were originally from a study by Frost RO, Steketee G, Tolin DF, Renaud S. Development and validation of the Clutter Image Rating. Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioural Assessment. 2008;32:401–417.

### Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – BEDROOM

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter:



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

**Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – KITCHEN**

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter:



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

**Clutter Image Rating (CIR) – LIVING ROOM**

Please select the CIR which closely relates to the amount of clutter:



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

## Appendix 2: Resources

### National Organisations

Clouds End CIC; Dedicated to helping people with hoarding disorder.

<https://www.cloudsend.org.uk/>

[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.compulsive-hoarding.org](http://www.compulsive-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.org](http://www.hoardinghelpuk.org); Give practical support and offer expert advice to those who hoard

[www.ocduk.org/hoarding](http://www.ocduk.org/hoarding); Supports those with OCD who hoard

[www.animalhoardng.com](http://www.animalhoardng.com); Offers information and support around animal hoarding

[www.counselling-directory.org.uk/compulsivehoarding](http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/compulsivehoarding); Provides information on hoarding and a list of counsellors who work with those who hoard

<http://global.oup.com>; Treatment That Work site with loads of downloadable tools for working with those who hoard

<http://hoardingdisordersuk.org/>; You will find information on research and resources

[http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Hoarding\\_briefing\\_-\\_August\\_2015.pdf](http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/pub.housing.org.uk/Hoarding_briefing_-_August_2015.pdf); National Housing Federation – good examples of best practice when working with hoarders from a housing perspective

<https://www.housing.org.uk/blog/time-to-think-outside-the-box-about-hoarders/> Practical tips for working with hoarders