

Appendix 1 Definitions & indicators of self-neglect & how to engage with the individual

Self neglect

The Care Act statutory guidance 2014 defines self-neglect as;

"self-neglect - this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding"

Hoarding

Hoarding behaviour was previously seen as a symptom of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) but it has now received a separate clinical definition of 'hoarding disorder' and is defined as:

'A psychiatric disorder characterised by persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value resulting in significant clutter that obstructs the individual's living environment and produces considerable functional impairment.'

GMFRS Hoarding, Prevention and Protection policy gives clutter images to support with assessing the risk.)

Characteristics of self-neglect

The following characteristics and behaviours are useful examples of potential self-neglect and consequent impairments to lifestyles:

- Living in very unclean, sometimes verminous, circumstances, such as living with a toilet completely blocked with faeces, not disposing of rubbish;
- Neglecting household maintenance, and therefore creating hazards;
- Obsessive hoarding creating potential mobility and fire hazards;
- Animal collecting with potential of insanitary conditions and neglect of animals;
- Poor diet and nutrition, evidenced by for instance by little or no fresh food or mouldy food in the fridge;
- Failure to maintain social contact;
- Failure to manage finances;
- Declining or refusing prescribed medication and/or other community healthcare support – for example, in relation to the presence of mental disorder (including the relapse of major psychiatric features, or a deterioration due to dementia) or to podiatry issues;
- Refusing to allow access to health and/or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care – for example, in relation to single or double incontinence, the poor healing of sores; Refusing to allow access to other organisations with an interest in the property, for example, staff working for utility companies (water, gas electricity); Being unwilling to attend appointments with relevant staff, such as social care, healthcare or allied staff.

Characteristics of hoarding

Hoarding behaviour is typically manifested in three ways:

Acquisition

Compulsive buying and/or the accumulation of free items such as newspapers, junk mail and items left at the side of the road.

Saving

People save for 'sentimental' reasons (it reminds them of someone they love and miss), 'instrumental' reasons (saved in case they are needed at a later date), or 'aesthetic' reasons (items are too beautiful to be discarded).

Disorganisation

Items of value are mixed with rubbish and items of no apparent value.

It is common for people who hoard not to recognise the severity of the problem and ignore, or not see, the clutter in their home. Conversely, the person who hoards may be acutely aware of the issue and feel embarrassed

Empowering/engaging the adult at risk

Building a positive relationship with individuals who self-neglect is critical to achieving change for them, and in ensuring their safety and protection.

- Consider if they have the necessary information in a format they can understand
- check whether they understand options and consequences of their choices
- listen to their reasons for mistrust, disengagement, refusal and their choices
- ensure there is the time to have conversations over a period and building up of a relationship
- consider whom (whether family, advocate, other professional) can support you to engage with the adult
- The family member or carer of an adult at risk should be engaged wherever possible with the consent of the adult at risk
- Consider if the person has capacity in relation to the decisions they are making to self-neglect/hoard

Build rapport	Take time to get to know the person
Finding the right tone	Being honest while also being non-judgmental, separating the person from the behaviour
Going at the individuals pace	Moving slowly and not forcing things; continued involvement over time
Agreeing a plan	Making clear what is going to happen; a weekly visit might be the initial plan
Finding something that motivates the individual	Linking to interests (e.g. hoarding for environmental reasons, link into recycling initiatives)
Starting with practicalities	Providing small practical help at the outset may help build trust
Keeping company	Being available and spending time to build up trust
Straight talking	Being honest about potential consequences
Finding the right person	Working with someone who is well placed to get engagement