



Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils HOARDING POLICY

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Pashto	که چیرې ددغه سند ژباړه غواړئ یا یې لویې چاپې یا بریل بڼې ته اړتیا ولرئ، مهرباني وکړئ 0300 123 4000 ته زنګ ووهئ او 3 آپشن یا غوراوی وټاکئ.
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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out the commitment of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to prevent and deal with cases of hoarding and self-neglect in the districts. It outlines what we mean by hoarding and neglect and describes how we will support our residents. It sets out guiding principles for our Officers who may be informed of or discover cases of hoarding and neglect.
- 1.2 This policy ensures that addressing hoarding and neglect is embedded across our services, and partnership working between departments and key agencies is effective and consistent.
- 1.3 Hoarding has been identified as a growing problem which has potentially serious and costly implications for housing providers, these include: -
- Risk management challenges
 - Health and Safety concerns
 - Extensive enforcement and legal costs
 - Safeguarding issues
- 1.4 We recognise that hoarding is a complex condition which cannot be resolved quickly. Successful management of the behaviour requires significant input from several agencies and cooperation from the tenant. In its capacity as a landlord, the Council does not expect to resolve the hoarding behaviour, but rather, work with the tenant and external partners to source appropriate support, while mitigating any health, safety and environmental risks to the tenant and neighbours, and limiting damage to the property.

2. Our Responsibilities.

- 2.1 All employees must report concerns regarding property neglect and/or hoarding. We recognise that staff who spend more time in our homes such as repairs staff, contractors and officers will see more of our customers and have a significant role in reporting concerns.
- 2.2 We are committed to working in partnership with other agencies and will use all available tools and powers to address hoarding and neglect in our homes.

3. Definitions

3.1 Hoarding disorder is now a recognised mental health condition and is defined by the NHS as “where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items can be of little or no monetary value”.

3.2 Hoarding is recognised within the Care Act 2014 as one of the manifestations of self-neglect and requires all public bodies to safeguard individuals at risk of harm and neglect.

3.3 Hoarding can become a risk in someone’s home when:

- The amount of clutter interferes with everyday living e.g. a person cannot use a room for its intended function, or they cannot access certain areas of the property.
- The property poses a health and safety risk e.g. a fire risk or increased risks of trips and falls.
- The clutter causes significant distress or negatively affects the quality of life for the person or their family e.g. the person becomes overwhelmed when someone tries to clear the clutter.

3.4 There are three main types of hoarding:

- Inanimate objects (the most common) - newspapers, books, magazines, food packaging, glass or plastic bottles etc.
- Animals – unable to offer the basic care to any pets they may own or have in their possession. Have a large number of animals, who may be living in unhygienic conditions and not cared for.
- Data storage – large number of computers, electronic storage devices or paper. A need to store copies of emails or documents in an electronic format.

3.5 Self-neglect is defined in the Care Act Guidance as a wide range of behaviours that involve neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Self-neglect is often defined across three domains: neglect of self, neglect of the environment and a refusal to accept help. Neglect of self may include the following:

- Unsanitary, untidy, or dirty conditions, which create a hazardous situation that could cause serious physical harm to the individual or others.
- Poor hygiene and dirty/inappropriate clothing

- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Poor maintenance of property
- Hoarding pets that are poorly cared for
- Lack of heating or running water
- Social isolation

4. **IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES**

- We recognise that no two individuals, or cases, are the same and that people who self-neglect and/or hoard often have a variety of physical, mental, financial, and other support needs.
- We will show empathy and understanding when dealing with cases of hoarding and neglect and will not use any language that could be seen as judgemental or negatively judge the tenant's possessions.
- We understand that in some cases, the culmination of items may be because of the bereavement of a loved one and the difficulty in parting with these items. We will remain sensitive to the resident's wishes but be realistic about how many items can be kept. We will try and advise on alternative solutions for the storage of any remaining items where possible.
- We will categorise the level of a person's hoarding and neglect by using the 'Clutter Scale' rating tool (appendix 2) and by taking photographs with the tenant's permission. The Hoarding Clutter Scale (officially the Clutter Image Rating Scale or ICD Clutter-Hoarding Scale) is a visual assessment tool designed to objectively measure the severity of clutter in a home. It helps individuals, mental health professionals, and support workers determine when normal messiness crosses the line into a diagnosable hoarding disorder or poses safety hazards. This will aid us in monitoring resident progress and identifying risk that need immediate responses.
- We are committed to supporting tenants with a self-neglect and hoarding tendency and who are willing to engage with support. The appropriate support will be identified following an assessment with the tenant to identify the level of need and appropriate services for the individual tenant.
- We will signpost tenants to relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations including Social Services and follow Safeguarding procedures for anyone identified at immediate risk. We also have an online self-referral tool for any resident to contact us directly if they are experiencing difficulties with hoarding or neglect.

- Where it is suspected someone may lack mental capacity we will refer to Social Services for a mental capacity assessment as a matter of urgency.
- We will work with tenants and external agencies/ partners to develop multi-agency solutions, maximising the use of existing services and resources of professional support and monitoring.
- We will establish best practice when working with people who display hoarding or neglect behaviour, so that a personalised response is provided and the person's rights, choices and autonomy are respected.
- We will recognise and engage with family members living in the household or who are supporting the tenant, that may also be affected by the resident's living situation, provided we have the resident's permission.
- We understand that a person's hoarding or neglect may impact nearby residents, particularly if this includes a severely overgrown garden or items have spread to the outside of the property. We will ensure their voices are heard and their feedback is considered and acted upon where appropriate.
- We will assist tenants to source grants to aid funding for helping with the management of the case i.e., provision of skips, removal costs etc. In urgent cases, the Council may fund small clearances or provide waste collection, but we reserve the right to re-charge this back to the tenant.
- We will hold regular hoarding strategy meetings and multi-agency meetings with the tenant as well as all relevant professionals identified in the case.
- We will focus on prevention and modification of hoarding and neglect behaviours, aiming to reduce the need for formal or compulsory solutions.
- We reserve the right to use legal action at any time if or when engagement and/or progress is not maintained, dealing with this as a breach of the tenancy.
- We will support tenants in ensuring their home is safe and habitable assisting them in addressing their self-neglect and hoarding behaviours. However, enforcement action will be implemented in such cases as:
 - where significant harm to the tenant or others is identified.
 - there has been continuous failed engagement by the tenant whose actions have a detrimental effect on the tenant, property, or others.
 - access to the property is denied by the tenant for statutory gas and electrical safety checks which is required to ensure we meet our duties under relevant safety regulators.

- Where there is an immediate risk to the tenant of others that needs to be mitigated.
- In cases of significant hoarding or neglect, where there is an imminent risk to the resident or neighbours or significant hazards, we will look to decant the residents into another property/hotel whilst works are being undertaken in their home. In those circumstances we will adopt the temporary move policy.
- Enforcement action may include a legal possession notice or injunction to enter or clear the home. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the severity of the situation/risk assessment and engagement from the resident.

5. Legislation

5.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Housing Acts (1985,1988,1996,2004)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Public Health Act 1936
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Health Act 1983
- Equality Act 2010
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

6. Related Documents

6.1 This policy can be read in conjunction with the Councils internal policies and documents:

- Our tenancy agreement - Babergh District Council
- Our tenancy agreement - Mid Suffolk District Council
- Babergh Tenant Handbook
- Mid Suffolk Tenant Handbook
- BMSDC Safeguarding Policy
- BMSDC Gas and Heating Policy
- BMSDC Fire Safety Policy
- BMSDC Electrical Safety Policy
- DMSDC Temporary Move Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

7. Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 7.1 We are committed to promoting equality within the delivery of our services to ensure all residents are treated with respect, dignity, fairness and above all not discriminated against. The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to ensure Council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner.
- 7.2 We will make sure this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our residents and will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people. We will act sensitively towards the needs of individuals and communities, and we will take positive action to reduce victimisation, discrimination and harassment.
- 7.3 We will provide additional support to vulnerable customers affected by hoarding or self-neglect, working with them to identify their support needs, how best to meet those needs and agreeing an action plan.
- 7.4 A full equality impact assessment has been completed for this policy

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Confidentiality and safety are of the utmost importance, however if a safeguarding issue is identified during a hoarding or neglect investigation, then the Council's safeguarding policy must be followed. Staff are required to contact Social Services if a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.
- 8.2 Tenant information will be processed in accordance with the law and Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils privacy statement.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 We are committed to continually reviewing the service we provide so that we can identify and share best practice and make necessary service improvements.
- 9.2 This policy will be implemented through our Hoarding and Self-Neglect procedures and other associated policies and procedures.
- 9.3 We will undertake periodic reviews of this policy and update or amend as appropriate. This will include taking account of feedback, working with service users and any legislative changes. We aim to undertake a full review of this policy every 3 years.

10. Complaints

- 10.1 We are committed to providing high quality services and support for all our customers and residents. We value all feedback as it allows us to make improvements to our services.
- 10.2 The Council has a complaints policy which should be the first point of call for people that are dissatisfied with the service they receive. More information about the Council's complaints procedure can be found on the Council's complaints webpage [here](#).

11. Document control sheet

- 11.1 This guidance will be reviewed as required.

Version	Notes	Date
1	Final approved version	11 th August 2026
2		
3		
4		

Appendix 1.

Support Services

Suffolk Domestic Abuse Helpline

Operates 24/7

0800 977 5690

www.suffolkdahelpline.org.uk

Restore

Cover Bury, Stowmarket, Haverhill & Newmarket

0330 551 9495

www.restore-wa.org.uk

Compassion

Cover Sudbury & Stowmarket

www.compass-ion.org

Leeway

Cover Norfolk & Suffolk

Don't take self-referrals but helpline can be used. Referrals are received by the police.

0300 561 0077

www.leewaysupport.org

Norfolk & Suffolk Victim Care

Offer support to victims and those affected who have not experienced domestic abuse directly.

Cover Norfolk & Suffolk

0300 303 3706

www.nsvictimcare.org

Lighthouse Women's Aid

Based in Ipswich Suffolk providing support and advice to women and young people experiencing domestic abuse in their personal or family relationships.

01473 228270

www.lighthousewa.org.uk

Mankind

Advice and support for men experiencing domestic abuse

01823 334244

www.mankind.org.uk

Respect

Support for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

0808 802 4040

www.respect.org.uk

National Centre for Domestic Violence

Advice for applying for an emergency court injunction

0800 970 2070

www.ncdv.org.uk

Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils

Self- Referral for residents experiencing problems with Hoarding or Neglect

[Hoarding Self-Referral Babergh DC](#)

[Hoarding Self-Referral Mid-Suffolk DC](#)

Appendix 2.

Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Clutter Image Rating: Bedroom

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

Clutter Image Rating: Living Room

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9