

LHC Managing Hoarding Policy



Reference:	V1	Author:	Sue Needham
Scope:	Loddon Homes and Berry Brook Homes	Approved by:	Holly Messenger
Legislation:	Housing Acts 1988, 2004 Human Rights Act 1998 Equalities Act 2010 Data Protection & GDPR 2018 The Mental Capacity Act 2005 The Care Act 2014 Public Health Act 1936 (Environmental Health) Environmental Protection Act 1990	Date of approval:	November 2019
Regulatory/ Governance:	Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) 2006 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 The Gas safety (Management) Regulations 1996	Date of next review:	November 2022
Related Policies:	Health & Safety policy Lone working policy Safeguarding Adults at Risk policy Safeguarding Children and Young People policy Gas policy Allocations policy Data Protection Policy Confidentiality Policy		

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to Loddon Homes and Berry Brook Homes which collectively will be referred to Local Housing Companies (the LHC).

1.2 The LHC delegates responsibility for the delivery of this policy to Wokingham Borough Council Tenancy Services.

1.3 Although WBC has been delegated responsibility, the LHC will be consulted and to sign off the following proposed actions in delivering this policy:

- Any enforcement action to be taken as a result of hoarding tendencies.

1.4 The LHC are committed to promoting independence and personal choices for residents.

1.5 There may, however, be occasions when through life style choices or as a result of a medical condition the collection of excessive quantities of goods or objects by residents becomes problematic for themselves or a nuisance to others.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 The LHC:

1.1.1 is committed to supporting any of their residents who are affected by a hoarding disorder; ensuring that they are treated fairly and with sensitivity at all times, and are provided with adequate support and guidance to resolve any issues.

1.1.2 recognises that with some residents the 'clutter' or deterioration of their property is not due to them having a hoarding disorder, but is instead the result of issues not related to their mental health. For example, deterioration in physical health, combined with a lack of support, may lead to the property falling into disrepair and/or unclean. Residents presenting with such vulnerabilities will be offered all the relevant support and signposting as necessary to resolve matters.

1.1.3 will be proactive in tackling incidents of hoarding and use a multi-agency approach to tackle and resolve incidents where residents present with a hoarding disorder.

1.1.4 will only take enforcement action as a last resort where all measures to support and advise the resident has failed to address the problem adequately and the continued hoarding poses a health and safety and/or fire hazard to residents.

1.1.5 will always refer a resident with a hoarding disorder to the relevant Fire & Rescue Service using the Multi- agency referral form.

1.1.6 will refer to residents affected by a hoarding disorder as "a resident with hoarding tendencies" as the term "hoarder" can be perceived as derogatory or offensive by our service users.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the LHC working in teams that respond to and provide services to residents and Wokingham Borough Council Tenancy Services who act as managing agents.

2.2 This policy applies to all residents irrespective of tenure.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of all resident facing staff to identify where a resident is demonstrating signs of hoarding using the Managing hoarding guide and toolkit (especially the Clutter Image tool) and the Property Assessment levels at section 9 below.
- 3.2 For staff and contractors not directly working for the LHC, they should alert their supervisor or manager regarding the identified signs of hoarding so that a referral can be made to the relevant team.
- 3.3 Tenancy Services will support any officer working with residents presenting with hoarding disorders.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 A Hoarding disorder is where a resident 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. (NHS definition of hoarding disorder).
 - 4.1.1 The World Health Organisation defines the condition as an 'accumulation of possessions due to excessive acquisition of or difficulty discarding possessions, regardless of their actual value'.
- 4.2 Compulsive Hoarding Frost and Hartl's (1996) definition: "this is characterised by the following features:
 - The inability of individuals to dispose of items that may or may not have a meaning to other individuals
 - Having rooms at home that are no longer fit for purpose
 - The impairment of a person's functioning (both physical and psychological)
 - Excessive acquisition"
- 4.3 The tendency to hoard is classified as self-neglect within the Care Act 2014. Self-neglect is where a vulnerable adult lives in a way that puts his or her health, safety or well-being at risk.
- 4.4 Clutter image rating: (see Section 9) A system devised by The International OCD Foundation that allows an objective assessment of the level of clutter in a specified room which assists in assessing the level of risk relating to the hoarding.

5. Legislation

- 5.1 In delivering this policy the LHC must have due regard to the following statutes:
 - Housing Acts 1988, 2004
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Equalities Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - The Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - The Care Act 2014
 - Public Health Act 1936 (Environmental Health)
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990

6. Supporting residents who have hoarding tendencies

- 6.1 The LHC is committed to supporting residents with a hoarding tendency who are willing to engage with support. In addition the LHC will always take into account and

balance the needs of residents living in the property, and other residents and members of the public living in the vicinity of the property.

- 6.2 When a potential case of hoarding is highlighted, the LHC will conduct an initial assessment, providing the resident is willing to engage with the assessment process. This will assess whether the individual struggles with hoarding, the degree of risk to the individual and others living in or near the property, and the resident's willingness to engage with support. A decision over the appropriate course of action will then be made.
- 6.3 Where a resident is not willing to engage with the assessment and support process, tenancy enforcement may be considered, under the circumstances identified at 8.0 below.
- 6.4 However, should enforcement action begin to take place, the offer of support should remain open. Where it is suspected someone may lack mental capacity the staff member should refer, as a matter of urgency, to social services for a mental capacity assessment, and seek advice from an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA), if deemed necessary.

7. Partnership working

- 7.1 The LHC recognises that residents with hoarding tendencies will not be all the same. Residents with hoarding tendencies may have a suite of physical, mental, financial and other support needs. Partnership working will be essential in meeting the needs of the resident and others living in or near the property.
- 7.2 The staff member will decide the most effective way and at the right point to involve partner agencies without overwhelming the resident.

8. Tenancy enforcement

- 8.1 The LHC recognises that forcing a resident who hoards to participate in large clearances, without their cooperation and agreement can often lead to the exacerbation of the resident's condition and have a long term negative impact on their mental health and well-being.
- 8.2 The LHC is aware that a resident's hoarding tendencies can have a significantly negative impact on others living in the property, neighbours and the property itself. Tenancy enforcement may be necessary, especially where the resident does not engage to address the issue.
- 8.3 The LHC will always aim to support residents in addressing their hoarding behaviours and enforcement action will only be considered where any of the following apply:
 - The resident's behaviour is so extreme as to cause significant harm to themselves or other resident/residents
 - There has been continuous failed engagement with the resident and the resident's actions have been proven to have a detrimental effect on the health and safety to other residents/residents and/or a fire hazard for the property
 - Where access to the property for gas safety checks is required, and has been repeatedly refused, to ensure we meet our duties under gas safety regulations.
- 8.4 The LHC will always consider the most appropriate method of solving the issue, considering a range of available options, and taking into account the severity and urgency of the situation. Options may include:
 - Providing a support worker or case worker to work with the resident to remedy their

hoarding behaviours whilst enforcement action is being taken.

- In areas of the business where a support worker is not available, referral to floating support or another local support service provider.
- Assisting the resident source both internal and external funding to help with costs of removal and disposal of items where necessary.
- Sign posting to relevant organisations.

9. Property assessment levels

In order to assess the level and associated risks of any hoard:

9.1 All staff will use the Clutter image rating tool and assessment in the LHC's Hoarding guide.

9.2 All staff will use the following to assess the risk to the resident and property as a result of hoarding:

9.3 High risk – safeguarding issues (assessment level 3)

Immediate and considerable health and safety risks are present that can cause severe disrepair: fire hazards, access issues, structural damage, and inability to undertake essential maintenance.

This level requires immediate and urgent action to safeguard the resident and household members, neighbours and the property.

In these circumstances enforcement action may be taken immediately and then support and assistance put in place to address the cause.

9.4 Medium risk – some immediate health and safety issues (assessment level 2)

Substantial cluttering preventing rooms from being used and low to medium risk disrepair present.

This level requires immediate action to safeguard the resident and household members, neighbours and the property. The relevant staff member will investigate and put support and assistance in place for the resident to address the situation as soon as practicable.

9.5 Low risk - no immediate health and safety issues (assessment level 1)

The property appears cluttered in places but rooms can be used, there are no potential hazards and there is no risk to the resident, household members or the property.

9.6 As low risk cases have the potential to escalate then monitoring will take place to ensure that the property does not deteriorate to medium or high risk.

9.7 Any cases identified by Asset management will be referred to the relevant officer in Tenancy Services for any necessary action to be undertaken in compliance with this policy.

10. Equality & Diversity

10.1 The LHC recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality and Diversity Policy, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Equalities Act 2010. The LHC works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. The LHC will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability

11.0 Confidentiality

11.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, which includes the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
- sensitive organisational information.

11.2 The LHC employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

12.0 Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant LHC policies.

13.0 Performance

13.1 Performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the established reporting mechanisms to the associated Boards.

11. Appendices

None