



# Multi-Agency Hoarding Framework

**Guidance for Practitioners in  
Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire**



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Special thanks to the London Borough of Merton for allowing us to use their Hoarding protocol as the basis of our framework

## **1. Introduction**

This document sets out a framework for collaborative multi-agency working within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire using a 'person centred solution' based model. The protocol offers clear guidance to staff working with people who hoard. This protocol has been developed in partnership with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Ashfield District Council's Environmental Health Team and the Nottinghamshire Hoarding Steering Group.

## **2. Who Does This Framework Apply To?**

This framework applies to all agencies supporting the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire multi-agency hoarding pathway and those who have agreed to support the framework.

There is an expectation that everyone in partnership with the protocol engages fully to achieve the best outcome for the individual, while meeting the requirements and duties of their agency or Board.

The following agencies and Boards support the framework;

Ashfield District Council

Clinical Commissioning Groups

District and Borough Environmental Health Teams

Housing Associations and Social Landlords

Nottingham City Council

Nottingham City Adult

Nottingham City Child Safeguarding Board

Nottingham City Trading Standards

Nottinghamshire County Council

Nottinghamshire Child Safeguarding Board

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire Public Health

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Nottinghamshire Trading Standards

### **3. Aims of This Protocol**

#### **The aims of this framework are to:**

- Create a safer and healthier environment for the individual and others affected by the hoarding behaviour, e.g. family, neighbours.
- Develop a multi-agency pathway which will maximise the use of existing service's and resources and which may reduce the need for compulsory solutions.
- Ensure that when solutions are required, there is a process for planning solutions tailored to meet the needs of the individual and utilising a person centred approach. Possible solutions should include professional support and monitoring, property repairs and permanent or temporary re-housing.
- Develop creative ways of engaging individuals in the process.
- To establish best practice and improve knowledge of legislation that relates to hoarding behaviour through the Hoarding Steering Group.

### **4. Definition of Hoarding**

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

The acquisition of, and failure to discard, possessions which appears to be useless or of limited value (Frost & Gross, 1993).

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 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 2013. However, hoarding can also be a symptom of other medical disorders. Hoarding Disorder is distinct from the act of collecting and is also different from people whose property is generally cluttered or messy. It is not simply a lifestyle choice. The main difference between a hoarder and a collector is that people who hoard have strong emotional attachments to their objects which are well in excess of their real value.

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 not limited to:

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

## 5. 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 collection of a mixture of objects, such as old clothes, newspapers, food, containers or papers.
- **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.
- **Data Hoarding:** This is a relatively new phenomenon. It could present with the storage of data collection equipment such as computers, electronic storage devices or paper. A need to store copies of emails, and other information in an electronic format.

## 6. General Characteristics of Hoarding

- **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 competent:** 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.

## 7. Key Facts

- It is estimated that between 2 and 5% of the population hoard.
- This equates to at least 1.2 million households across the UK.
- It is estimated that only 5% of hoarders come to the attention of statutory agencies.
- Hoarding cases can cost up anywhere from £1000 to £60,000.
- 20-30% of OCD sufferers are hoarders (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health)
- Often, people who hoard can stop landlords from meeting their statutory duties- i.e. Gas safety checks and other certification required for registered Social Landlords

## 8. Mental Capacity

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 provides a statutory framework for people 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.

When a person's hoarding behaviour poses a serious risk to their health and safety, professional intervention will be required. With the exception of statutory requirements, the intervention or action proposed must be with the individual's consent. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (The right to respect for private and family life) - is engaged. Interference with a person's life must be lawful, necessary and pursue a legitimate aim.

In extreme cases, taking statutory principle 3 (above) into account, the very nature of the environment may lead the professional to question whether the customer has capacity to consent to the proposed action or intervention and trigger a capacity assessment. All interventions must be undertaken in accordance with the 5 statutory principles and using the 'two stage' test of capacity (see MCA Code 4.11 – 4.25).

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.

## **9. Information Sharing**

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, 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.

An Information Sharing Protocol will be developed by the Hoarding Steering Group to allow the safe transition of information between agencies.

## **10. 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 also spread to neighbouring properties if the level of hoarding is severe or if flammable items such as gas containers are being stored. It also poses a high risk to fire fighters when attending the scene.

The sharing of information is extremely important for operational firefighter crew safety. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is required to be compliant with the Fire Services Act, 2004, Regulation 7.2d to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for the purpose of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in their area. The multi-agency approach to sharing Information about Hoarding enables compliance with the Act and also strengthens the operational risk assessment when dealing with Incidents and fires where hoarding is present.

## **11. 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.

### **Public Health Act 1936**

#### **Section 79: Power to require removal of noxious matter by occupier of premises**

The Local Authority (LA) will always try and 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 not defined, but usually is “harmful, unwholesome”. No appeal 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 owner or occupier of land/ 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

[http://www.cieh.org/uploadedfiles/core/policy/publications\\_and\\_information\\_services/policy\\_publications/publications/hoarding\\_ppn\\_may09.pdf](http://www.cieh.org/uploadedfiles/core/policy/publications_and_information_services/policy_publications/publications/hoarding_ppn_may09.pdf)

## **12. Safeguarding Children**

Safeguarding Children refers to protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of their health or development and ensuring that they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. 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.

The needs of the child at risk must come first and any actions we take must reflect this. Where children live in the property, a Safeguarding Children alert should always be raised. Please refer to the following link for guidance:

<http://nottinghamshirescb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

## **13. Safeguarding Adults**

Safeguarding Adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent, and stop, both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

This framework accepts the guidance as supplied by the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Procedure for raising a concern and referring in order to safeguard an 'Adult at Risk'.

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/adultsocialcare/backgroundsupport/safeguardingadults/procedure-and-guidance/>

An 'adult at risk' may also be living with a hoarder in a property. There may be a safeguarding concern about the adult if they are at risk of harm due to the way the hoarder is choosing to live in the property. If in doubt, discuss the issue with a manager or contact the local authorities' safeguarding team.

## **14. The Care Act 2014**

The Care Act, 2014 builds on recent reviews and reforms, replacing numerous previous laws, to provide a coherent approach to adult social care in England. Local authorities (and their partners in health, housing, welfare and employment services) must now take steps to prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support for all local people.

The Care Act introduced three new indicators of abuse and neglect to Adult Safeguarding. The most relevant to this framework is self-neglect. The guidance states; this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. In practise, this means that when an adult at risk has care and support needs, their case may require a safeguarding enquiry.

However, the initial intervention from Adult Social Care would be to offer an individual an assessment of their care and support needs; this may avoid the need to enter formal Safeguarding procedures.

## **15. Multi-Agency Response**

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.

Any professional working with individuals who may have, or appear to have, a hoarding condition should ensure they complete the Practitioners Assessment and use the clutter image rating tool kit to decide what steps to take. See 18.

Evidence of animal hoarding at any level should be reported to the RSPCA as well as other relevant agencies. See referral forms and contact details in the appendices.

## **16. Guidance on Setting up a Hoarding Panel**

Should Local Authorities require help or advice on setting up a Hoarding Panel, this support is available through the Hoarding Steering Group which is Chaired by Sally Savage of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service tel: 07971 720031 [sally.savage@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:sally.savage@notts-fire.gov.uk)

The document template examples are in the appendices and were produced by Jacqui Harvey, Ashfield District Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer and Louise Robinson Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Risk Reduction Officer for the Ashfield Pilot.

## **17. Utilising the Vulnerable Persons Panel (County) and Complex Persons Panel (City) process for dealing with Hoarding Cases**

It is suggested that if Local Authority areas are only discussing a small number of hoarding cases, that these may be able to be discussed in your local Vulnerable Person Panel (VPP) or Complex Persons Panel (CPP)

We appreciate that the VPP/CPP is historically used to facilitate a multi-agency approach for dealing with the most vulnerable within the community. Depending on your caseload, this may be a suitable forum to utilise a multi-agency approach to resolving issues associated with hoarding cases.

If there are a higher number of hoarding cases, it is recommended to set up a Hoarding Panel as stated in 16.

## 18. Clutter Image Rating Tool Guidance

### 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) – LOUNGE

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

## 19. Assessment Tool Guidance

### Guidance for practitioners

Listed below are examples of questions you may wish to ask where you are concerned about someone's safety in their own home, where you suspect a risk of self-neglect and/or hoarding.

Most clients with a hoarding problem will be embarrassed about their surroundings so try to ascertain information whilst being as sensitive as possible.

- How do you get in and out of your property?
- Do you feel safe living here?
- Have you ever had an accident, slipped, tripped up or fallen? How did it happen?
- How do you move safely around your home? (Where floor is uneven or covered or there are exposed wires, damp, rot or other hazards)
- Has a fire ever started by accident? Is the property at risk from fire?
- Is there hot water, lighting and heating in the property? Do these services work properly?
- Do you have any problems keeping your home warm?
- When did you last go out in the garden? Do you feel safe to go outside?
- Are you able to use the bathroom and toilet ok? Have a wash, bath, shower etc.?
- Where do you sleep?
- Are there any obvious major repairs that need carrying out at the property?
- Are you happy for us to share your information with other professionals who may be able to help you?

## Level One Actions

<b>Level 1 Clutter image rating 1 - 3</b>	<b>Household environment is considered standard. No specialised assistance is needed. If the resident would like some assistance with general housework or feels they are declining towards a higher clutter scale, appropriate referrals can be made subject to age and circumstances.</b>
<b>1. Property structure, services &amp; garden area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All entrances and exits, stairways, roof space and windows accessible.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms fitted and functional or referrals made to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to visit and install if criteria met.</li> <li>• All services functional and maintained in good working order.</li> <li>• Garden is accessible, tidy and maintained</li> </ul>
<b>2. Household Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No excessive clutter, all rooms can be safely used for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• All rooms are rated 0-3 on the Clutter Rating Scale.</li> <li>• No additional unused household appliances appear in unusual locations around the property.</li> <li>• Property is maintained within terms of any lease or tenancy agreements where appropriate.</li> <li>• Property is not at risk of action by Environmental Health.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Health and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property is clean with no odours, (pet or other).</li> <li>• No rotting food.</li> <li>• No concerning use of candles.</li> <li>• No concern over flies.</li> <li>• Residents managing personal care.</li> <li>• No writing on the walls.</li> <li>• Quantities of medication are within appropriate limits, in date and stored appropriately.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Safeguard of Children &amp; Family members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns for household members.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Animals and Pests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any pets at the property are well cared for.</li> <li>• No pests or infestations at the property.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PPE required.</li> <li>• No visit in pairs required.</li> </ul>

## Level One: Multi-Agency Actions

Level 1	Actions
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss concerns with the Individual.</li> <li>• Raise a request to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for a Home Safety Check and to provide fire safety advice.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment.</li> <li>• Refer to GP if appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Landlords</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances.</li> <li>• Refer to GP if appropriate.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide details of support streams open to the resident via charities and self-help groups.</li> <li>• Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions.</li> <li>• Refer for tenancy support if appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure that all utilities are maintained and serviceable.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Hoarding Assessment form.</li> <li>• Make appropriate referrals for support to other agencies.</li> <li>• Refer to social landlord if the client is their tenant or leaseholder.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service-</b> Carry out a Home Safety Check if it fulfils Service criteria and share with statutory agencies.</li> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service-</b> Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No action unless advice requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding of Adults and Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> </ul>

## Level Two Actions

<b>Level 2</b> <b>Clutter Image Rating 4 – 6</b>	<b>Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues in the property.</b>
<b>1. Property structure, services &amp; garden area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only major exit is blocked.</li> <li>• Concern that services are not well maintained.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms are not installed or not functioning.</li> <li>• Garden is not accessible due to clutter, or is not maintained</li> <li>• Evidence of indoor items stored outside.</li> <li>• Evidence of light structural damage including damp.</li> <li>• Interior doors missing or blocked open.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Household Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter is causing congestion in the living spaces and is impacting on the use of the rooms for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• Clutter is causing congestion between the rooms and entrances.</li> <li>• Room(s) score between 4-5 on the clutter scale.</li> <li>• Inconsistent levels of housekeeping throughout the property.</li> <li>• Some household appliances are not functioning properly and there may be additional units in unusual places.</li> <li>• Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable.</li> <li>• Evidence of outdoor items being stored inside.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Health and Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen and bathroom are difficult to utilise and access.</li> <li>• Offensive odour in the property.</li> <li>• Resident is not maintaining safe cooking environment.</li> <li>• Some concern with the quantity of medication, or its storage or expiry dates.</li> <li>• Has good fire safety awareness with little or no risk of ignition.</li> <li>• Resident trying to manage personal care but struggling.</li> <li>• No risk to the structure of the property.</li> </ul>
<b>4.Safeguard of Children &amp; Family members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoarding on clutter scale 4 -7. Consider a Safeguarding Assessment.</li> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Please note all additional concerns for householders.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.</li> <li>• Is PPE required?</li> </ul>

## Level Two: Multi-Agency Actions

Level 2	<b>Actions</b> <b>In addition to actions listed below these cases need to be monitored regularly in the future due to RISK OF ESCALATION or REOCCURRENCE</b>
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant.</li> <li>• Refer to Environmental Health if resident is a freeholder.</li> <li>• Raise a request to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a home Safety Check with a consideration for monitored smoke alarms/ assistive technology.</li> <li>• Provide details of garden services.</li> <li>• Refer to Social Care for a care and support assessment.</li> <li>• Referral to GP.</li> <li>• Referral to debt advice if appropriate.</li> <li>• Refer to animal welfare if there are animals at the property.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all necessary statutory agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an inspection of the property utilising the referral form.</li> <li>• At the time of inspection, Environmental Health Officer decides on appropriate course of action.</li> <li>• Consider serving notices under Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004.</li> <li>• Consider Works in Default if notices not complied by occupier.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Landlord</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit resident to inspect the property &amp; assess support needs.</li> <li>• Refer internally to assist in the restoration of services to the property where appropriate.</li> <li>• Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions.</li> <li>• Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents responsibilities.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all necessary statutory agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an assessment of the property utilising the referral form.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service</b> Carry out a Home Safety Check, share risk information with Statutory agencies and consider assistive technology.</li> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service</b> Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits via the referral form.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property.</li> <li>• Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding Adults and Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> </ul>

## Level Three Actions

<p><b>Level 3 Clutter image rating 7 - 9</b></p>	<p><b>Household environment will require intervention with a collaborative multi-agency approach with the involvement from a wide range of professionals. This level of hoarding constitutes a Safeguarding alert due to the significant risk to health of the householders, surrounding properties and residents. Residents are often unaware of the implication of their hoarding actions and oblivious to the risk it poses.</b></p>
<p><b>1. Property structure, services &amp; garden area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to the property due to extreme clutter.</li> <li>• Extreme clutter may be seen at windows.</li> <li>• Extreme clutter may be seen outside the property.</li> <li>• Garden not accessible and extensively overgrown.</li> <li>• Services not connected or not functioning properly.</li> <li>• Smoke alarms not fitted or not functioning.</li> <li>• Property lacks ventilation due to clutter</li> <li>• Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp.</li> <li>• Interior doors missing or blocked open.</li> <li>• Evidence of indoor items stored outside.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Household Functions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clutter is obstructing the living spaces and is preventing the use of the rooms for their intended purpose.</li> <li>• Room(s) scores 7 - 9 on the clutter image scale. Rooms are not used for intended purposes or very limited.</li> <li>• Beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation.</li> <li>• Entrances, hallways and stairs blocked or difficult to pass.</li> <li>• Toilets, sinks not functioning or not in use.</li> <li>• Resident at risk due to living environment.</li> <li>• Household appliances are not functioning or inaccessible.</li> <li>• Resident has no safe cooking environment.</li> <li>• Resident is using candles.</li> <li>• Evidence of outdoor clutter being stored indoors.</li> <li>• No evidence of housekeeping being undertaken.</li> <li>• Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates.</li> <li>• Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable.</li> <li>• Property is at risk of notice being served by Environmental Health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Health and Safety</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human urine and excrement may be present.</li> <li>• Excessive odour in the property may also be evident from the outside.</li> <li>• Rotting food may be present.</li> <li>• Evidence may be seen of unclean, unused and or buried plates &amp; dishes.</li> <li>• Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates.</li> <li>• Inappropriate quantities or storage of medication.</li> <li>• Pungent odour can be smelt inside the property and possibly from outside.</li> <li>• Concern with the integrity of the electrics.</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of electrical extension cords or evidence of unqualified work to the electrics.</li> <li>• Concern for declining mental health.</li> </ul>

<b>4. Safeguard of Children &amp; Family members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties with adults presenting care and support needs should be referred to the appropriate Social Care referral point.</li> <li>• Please note all additional concerns for householders.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Animals and Pests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property.</li> <li>• Resident may not able to control the animals at the property.</li> <li>• Animals' living area is not maintained and smells.</li> <li>• Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed.</li> <li>• Hoarding of animals at the property.</li> <li>• Heavy insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.).</li> <li>• Visible rodent infestation.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.</li> <li>• Visit in pairs required.</li> </ul>

### Level Three: Multi-Agency Actions

Actions	Level 3
<b>Referring Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise Safeguarding <b>Alert within 24 hours if there are care and support needs.</b></li> <li>• If the individual does not meet the Safeguarding thresholds for a referral, consider contacting Social Care regarding possible care and support needs assessment.</li> <li>• Raise a request to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service within 24 hours to provide a Home Safety Check.</li> <li>• Refer to Environmental Health via the referral form.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an inspection.</li> <li>• At time of inspection, EHO decides on appropriate course of action.</li> <li>• Consider serving notices under Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004.</li> <li>• Consider Works in Default if notices not complied by occupier.</li> </ul>
<b>Landlord</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit resident to inspect the property &amp; assess support needs.</li> <li>• Attend multi agency hoarding meeting or VPP/PPP.</li> <li>• Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to “Hoarding Guidance Questions for practitioners”.</li> <li>• Complete Practitioners Assessment Tool.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service-</b> Carry out a Home Safety Check, share risk information with Statutory agencies and consider assistive technology.</li> <li>• <b>Nottinghamshire Police and East Midlands Ambulance Service-</b> Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies &amp; feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits via the referral form.</li> <li>• Attend hoarding multi agency meetings/VPP/PPP on request.</li> <li>• Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.</li> <li>• Provide feedback to referring agency on completion of home visits.</li> </ul>
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property.</li> <li>• Remove animals to a safe environment.</li> <li>• Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate.</li> <li>• Take legal action for animal cruelty if appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Multi Agency Hoarding Assessment Referral Form

<b>MULTI AGENCY HOARDING ASSESSMENT REFERRAL FORM</b>			
Referral Date		Referral Time	
Referrer: Agency: Contact address Email/telephone		Primary Agencies  Referred to	For example. Police, Fire, ADC (Private Sector enforcement team), Mental Health team, Adult Social Care, District Nurse
Occupants Name		Occupants Address, telephone	
Age		Male/Female	
Ethnic Origin (please highlight or insert tick ✓)	White British Irish Turkish/Turkish Cypriot Gypsy/Traveller Other Chinese or other ethnic group Chinese Vietnamese	Mixed White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian Other Black or Black British Caribbean African	Asian or Asian British Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Tamil No information Any other ethnic group Other
Please note all agencies you are aware of involved with this case at present			
Circumstances leading to hoarding alert			

Property information (excluding full address)			
Area			
Property type			
Tenure Council/Private/ Rented			
Disability or vulnerability  None  <input type="checkbox"/>	Mobility  Wheelchair user  Stick user short distance  <input type="checkbox"/>	Impairment  Hearing/Sight/Other  <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health  Dementia  Limited Capacity/Any other diagnosis  <input type="checkbox"/>
Any dependent children in the property			
Other supporting circumstances	<p>E.g. Are items limiting the free movement and/or entrance/exit to the property?</p> <p>Are items stacked in such a way that they are a risk to the occupier and visitors/emergency services?</p> <p>Is the occupier living in one room?</p> <p>Have there been complaints from Neighbours?</p>		
Notes:			

## Clutter Rating

Please tick one of the Red, Amber or Green boxes to indicate the current level of risk.

Low Risk	<p>All Doors, Stairways and windows accessible</p> <p>No evidence of pests</p> <p>Clutter obstructs SOME functions of key living area – Looks untidy</p> <p>Safe Maintained sanitation conditions</p>
Medium Risk	<p>Blocking of Doors, some windows, possibly major exit</p> <p>Light infestation of pests (e.g. bed bugs, lice, fleas, rats)</p> <p>Clutter obstructing functions of key living space, stairs, entrances, hallways etc.</p> <p>Evidence of non-maintained sanitation conditions (e.g. food preparation surfaces heavily soiled, lots of dirty dishes, obvious odours which irritate etc.)</p> <p>Evidence of burns to the carpet , clothing etc.</p>
High Risk	<p>Whole rooms accessible, exits blocked, windows not able to be opened</p> <p>Utilities cut off (e.g. no heating, gas capped)</p> <p>Heavy infestation of pests (rats seen, heard, reported by neighbours, cockroaches fleas etc.)</p> <p>Key living spaces not available for use, person living in one room</p> <p>Evidence of urine/excrement in room, rotting food, very insanitary conditions</p> <p>Evidence of previous fire or burns in the carpet, clothing etc.</p>

**Appendix 2: Hoarding Panel Terms of Reference** **These are from the Ashfield Pilot**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HOARDING ISSUES.**

**Issues with Hoarding**

Fire Risk

Environmental Issues

Wellbeing and welfare

Mental Health Issues

Access to Premises

Engaging with Occupiers

Mental Capacity Concern

**Solutions to Issues**

Multi agency approach

Best Agency for the specific tasks

Short term solutions and risk reductions

Long term solutions with management of the risks

Form an agreed Protocol for all agencies involved in hoarding issues

Mental Capacity Assessment

**Agencies Involved to date**

Environmental Health (Private Sector Enforcement ADC)

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (ASHFIELD)

Community Nurses

Adult Mental Health (ASHFIELD)

Adult Mental Health Services (ASHFIELD)

Children's Mental Health

Social Care

Ashfield Homes Limited

Nottinghamshire Police

## **Aims and Objectives of Group.**

- A commitment by organisations who have engaged with the Group to be involved where necessary.
- Coordinating a joint approach to dealing with cases where residents hoard, with a view to reducing costs and time taken to deal with cases.
- To highlight best practice over the county and to engage in areas to have trials on multi-agency working.
- Providing guidance, support and sharing of best practice.
- Developing an understanding of the psychological reasons why a person hoards.
- To understand when a hoarding case should be considered by Community mental health or Social Care & Health.
- A develop a panel Toolkit and potential training programme to address a multi-agency approach to hoarding in Ashfield. The Toolkit and training would provide guidance whilst identifying techniques used to establish the best practice that has worked with clients.
- To highlight when a Hoarding case is also a safeguarding case.
- To assist in improving the quality of life for individuals and help them to live safely, access support and sustain their independence.
- To assist staff from partner organisations to identify connected risks and prioritise actions.
- To identify a range of support and enforcement measures, including legal routes and assist/help in determining appropriate and effective measures.
- To publicise any projects or best practice shared by the Group.

## **Hoarders Case Meeting**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes from last Meeting
4. Case 1
5. Case 2
6. Case 3
7. General Referral Update
8. Date of next meeting – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015
9. Any Other Business

## **Appendix 4: Websites for further reading**

**Cloud's End CIC** [www.cloudsend.org.uk](http://www.cloudsend.org.uk)

Resources to help hoarders and housing associations dealing with hoarding

**Help for Hoarders** [www.helpforhoarders.co.uk](http://www.helpforhoarders.co.uk)

Information support and advice for hoarders and their families. Including and an online support forum,

**OCD UK** [www.ocduk.org/hoarding](http://www.ocduk.org/hoarding)

Information and support about Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, which includes hoarding

**Hoarding UK** [www.hoardinguk.org](http://www.hoardinguk.org)

Information and support for hoarders and agencies, including local support groups

**The Association of Professional De-Clutterers and Organisers (UK)**

[www.apdo-uk.co.uk](http://www.apdo-uk.co.uk)

Provide support, networking and promotion for members of the Professional Organising & Decluttering industry, and information and services for their clients.

## Appendix 5: Useful telephone numbers

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ	0115 9670880
<b>Environmental Health Teams:</b>	
Ashfield District Council	01623 450000
Bassetlaw District Council	01909 533219
Broxtowe Borough Council	0115 9173438
Gedling Borough Council	0115 9013972
Mansfield District Council	01623 463189
Newark and Sherwood District Council	01623 650000
Nottingham City Council	0115 9152020
Rushcliffe Borough Council	0115 9819911
RSPCA Contact Helpline	0872 4941002
MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (County)	0300 500 8080
Adult Contact Team (City)	0300 300 3333
Children and Families (City)	0115 876 4800
Nottinghamshire Police Non-Emergency	101