



Why it Matters:

Self-neglect presents risks of harm to the life, social, physical, psychological and mental health, and well-being of the individual and others.

[Care Act 2014, S.42-45](#) safeguarding duties are applicable as self-neglect is classified as one of the categories of abuse.

Data:

- 45% of SARs relate to self-neglect and hoarding
- Most frequently reviewed type of abuse or neglect
- 7% of safeguarding concerns raised to LAs in 2022 – under-reported and hidden occurrence.

Findings from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) with a theme of self-neglect:

- Not recognised, understood or explored
- Lack of concerned curiosity
- Acceptance of self-reports and not consulting others
- Assumption of lifestyle choice
- Failure to follow policy and procedures relating to safeguarding, mental capacity, refusal of support and multi-agency working
- Search [National SAR Library](#) for relevant SARs

Definition of Self-neglect:

Lack of self-care: nutrition, hygiene, hydration and health which endangers the individual's well-being and/or

Neglect of ones' environment – hoarding, squalor and/or

Refusal/non-engagement with services which would mitigate the risks e.g., care and support and health interventions.

Self-Neglect Indicators

- Poor personal hygiene, unkempt appearance
- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Untreated medical conditions or refusal to seek medical care
- Unkempt and unsafe living conditions (e.g., no heating, poor sanitation, broken appliances or infestation)
- Social isolation or withdrawal from family, friends, and community
- Lack of concern or awareness about health and well-being
- Refusal of help or services, even when clearly needed.

Indicators of Hoarding

- Excessive accumulation of items
- Clutter and blocked access to key areas of the home (e.g., kitchen, bathroom, hallways)
- Difficulty discarding possessions, regardless of their condition or usefulness
- Living spaces are not used for their intended purposes (e.g., bed buried under clutter)

Procedures for Adult Social Care Staff and Partner Agencies

Managers must:

- Develop a policy framework to guide practice – single and multi-agency
- Support staff – supervision, case discussions, reflective sessions
- Provide/facilitate access to specialist and legal advice
- Workforce development/training and a culture which promotes best practice
- Developing services which meet the needs of individuals who are at risk

Others:

(when there is an imminent risk to the individual's and others well-being and safety)

1. Activate safeguarding procedures
2. Robust Risk Assessments
3. Collaborate with agencies - health housing, fire services, and social care teams and others.
4. Multi-Agency Risk Management Plan
5. Agree lead agency lead professional
6. Document and share comprehensive information with others.

Risk Mitigation Strategies

- Empowerment and autonomy
- Tailored solutions which minimise immediate risks and reduce harm
- Building long-term relationships and trust
- Collaboration e.g. prioritising fire safety and access to essential areas in the home
- Professional support and treatment for underlying causes

Types of Hoarding

Inanimate objects – clothes, household items, furniture etc.

Data hoarding - books, mail, newspaper, photographs, paper files digital devices

Pets - acquiring and keeping various animals without the ability to care for them

Guide - Clutter Rating Scale Risk levels: 1-9 rating risk as low, medium or high (see [Appendix 1 – RSAB Self-Neglect and Hoarding Protocol](#))