

Adult Social Care Operations

Hoarding Practice Toolkit

Introduction

This toolkit is to be used in conjunction with the [Self Neglect and Hoarding Procedure](#) and [Bedbug Guidelines](#).

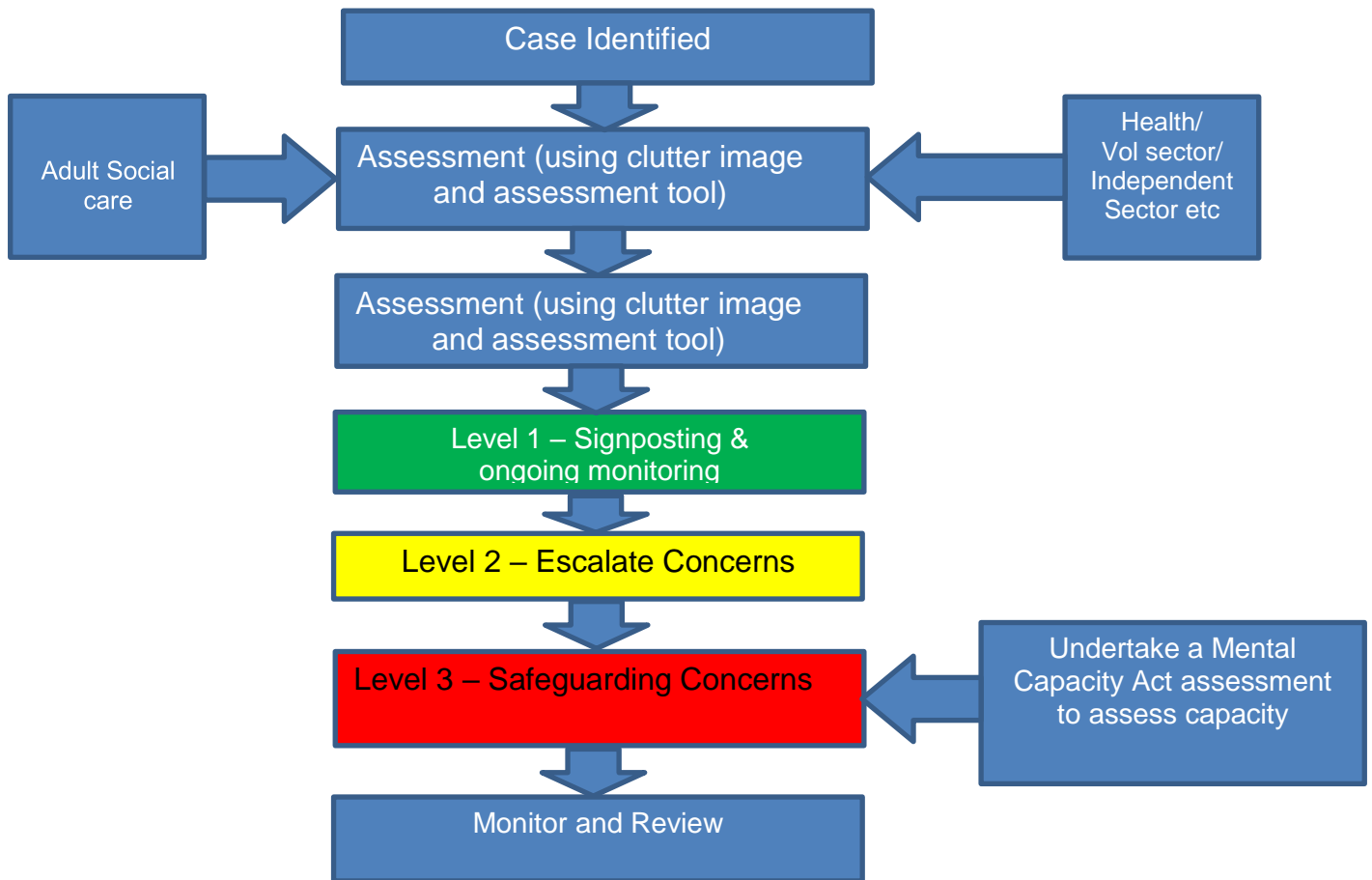
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1. Process for Clutter Image Rating Tool (CIRT)

Flow chart explaining the process to be applied

The flow chart below sets out the process for use of the Clutter Image Rating Tool. If in doubt, please ask your line manager for assistance.



see the clutter image rating to assess the level of hoarding

Images 1-3 Level 1

Images 4-6 Level 2

Images 7-9 Level 3

Then refer to the clutter assessment tool to guide which details the appropriate action you should take. Record all actions taken in Azeus, detailing conversations with other professionals, actions taken and action yet to be taken.

2. Clutter Image Rating Scale

Photographs that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in the rooms to obtain the Hoarding level to be applied to your assessment

2.1 Bedroom

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



1

2

3



4

5

6



7

8

9

2.2 Clutter Image Rating Scale - Lounge

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

2.3 Clutter Image Rating Scale – Kitchen

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



1

2

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4

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6



7

8

9

3. Assessment Tool Guidelines

How to apply the tool to obtain clutter rating to be applied to your assessment

See Appendix 1 for guidance on questions which could be used during an assessment

<p>1. Property structure services and garden area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the access to all entrances and exits for the property. (Note impact on any communal entrances & exits). Include access to roof space. <input type="checkbox"/> Can the occupant escape from all rooms in the event of a fire or other emergency? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a clear plan of what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency and does everyone in the home know it? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the property have a working smoke-alarm? <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out a cursory visual assessment of the condition of the services within the property e.g. plumbing, electrics, gas, air conditioning, heating; this will help inform your next course of action. <input type="checkbox"/> Are essential services connected? <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the garden: size, access and condition.
<p>2. Household Functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the current functionality of the rooms and the safety for their proposed use. e.g. can the kitchen be safely used for cooking, can the occupier(s) properly use the bathroom/ WC or does the level of clutter within the room prevent their normal use. <input type="checkbox"/> Select the appropriate rating on the clutter scale. <input type="checkbox"/> Please estimate the % of floor space covered by clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Please estimate the height of the clutter in each room
<p>3. Health and Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the level of sanitation in the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Are the floors clean and are readily cleansed? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the work surfaces clean? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you aware of any odours in the property? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there rotting food? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the resident use candles, portable electric or gas heaters? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you witness a higher than expected number of flies and other insects? <input type="checkbox"/> Are household members struggling with personal care? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there random or chaotic writing on the walls on the property? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there unreasonable amounts of medication collected? (Prescribed or over the counter?) <input type="checkbox"/> Is there evidence of illegal drug use? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the resident aware of any fire risk associated to the clutter in the property? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there faecal matter, urine or other body fluids visible within the property?

4. Safeguard of Children & Family members	<input type="checkbox"/> Do any rooms rate 7 or above on the clutter rating scale? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the household contain young people or children?
5. Animals and Pests	<input type="checkbox"/> Are there any pets at the property? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the pets well cared for; are you concerned about their health? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there evidence of any infestation? e.g. bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas, rats, mice, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Are animals being hoarded at the property? If so, are they healthy and being well looked after. <input type="checkbox"/> Are outside areas seen by the resident as a wildlife area? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the resident leave food out in their garden to feed foxes or other animals.
6. Personal health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Following your assessment, do you recommend the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at future visits? Please detail. <input type="checkbox"/> Following your assessment do you recommend the resident is visited in pairs or with the Police? Please detail.

4. Clutter/ Hygiene rating framework

Clutter Hygiene Levels with action required

Level 1 Clutter image rating 1-3	Household environment is considered reasonable. No specialist 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.
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All entrances and exits, stairways, roof space and windows accessible. <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke alarms fitted and functional or referrals made to London Fire Service for Fire safety check and separate clutter rating. <input type="checkbox"/> All services functional and maintained in good working order. <input type="checkbox"/> Garden is accessible, tidy and maintained
2. Household Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No excessive clutter, all rooms can be safely used for their intended purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> All rooms are rated 0-3 on the Clutter Rating Scale <input type="checkbox"/> No additional unused household appliances appear in unusual locations around the property <input type="checkbox"/> Property is maintained within terms of any lease or tenancy agreements where appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Property is not at risk of action by Environmental Health
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property is clean with no odours, (pet or other) <input type="checkbox"/> No rotting food <input type="checkbox"/> No concerning use of candles <input type="checkbox"/> No concern over flies <input type="checkbox"/> Residents managing personal care <input type="checkbox"/> No writing on the walls <input type="checkbox"/> Quantities of medication are within appropriate limits, in date and stored appropriately.
4.Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No concerns for household members.
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pets at the property are well cared for <input type="checkbox"/> No pests or infestations at the property
6.Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No Personal protective equipment(PPE) required <input type="checkbox"/> No visit in pairs required.

Clutter/ Hygiene Rating Level 1: Actions

Level 1	ACTIONS
1. Service/Team holding the case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss concerns with resident <input type="checkbox"/> Raise a request to the Fire and Rescue Service to provide fire safety advice <input type="checkbox"/> Refer for Care Act assessment if appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to GP if appropriate
2. Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No action
3. Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to GP if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Refer for support assessment if appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details of support streams open to the resident via charities and self-help groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details on debt advice if appropriate to circumstances <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions
4. Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Hoarding Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Make appropriate referrals for support <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to social landlord if the client is their tenant or leaseholder
5. Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information is shared with statutory agencies & feedback is provided to referring agency on completion of home visits.
6. Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No action unless advice requested
7. Safeguarding Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted
8. MASH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider referring any children or young persons present to Early Help unless other sources of abuse are noted, in which case refer to MASH.

<p>Level 2 Clutter image rating 4-6</p>	<p>Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and the maintenance issues of the property.</p>
<p>1. Property structure, services & garden area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Only major exit is blocked <input type="checkbox"/> Only one of the services is not fully functional <input type="checkbox"/> Concern that services are not well maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke alarms are not installed or not functioning <input type="checkbox"/> Garden is not accessible due to clutter, or is not maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of indoor items stored outside <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of light structural damage including damp
<p>2. Household Functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Interior doors missing or blocked open <input type="checkbox"/> Clutter is causing congestion in the living spaces and is impacting on the use of the rooms for their intended purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Clutter is causing congestion between the rooms and entrances. <input type="checkbox"/> Room(s) scores between 4-5 on the clutter scale. <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent levels of housekeeping throughout the property <input type="checkbox"/> Some household appliances are not functioning properly and there may be additional units in unusual places. <input type="checkbox"/> Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable. <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of outdoor items being stored inside <input type="checkbox"/> Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of outdoor items being stored inside
<p>3. Health and Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen and bathroom are not kept clean <input type="checkbox"/> Offensive odour in the property <input type="checkbox"/> Resident is not maintaining safe cooking environment <input type="checkbox"/> Some concern with the quantity of medication, or its storage or expiry dates. <input type="checkbox"/> No rotting food <input type="checkbox"/> No concerning use of candles <input type="checkbox"/> Resident trying to manage personal care but struggling
<p>4. Safeguard of Children & Family members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarding on clutter scale 4 - 7 doesn't automatically constitute a Safeguarding Alert. <input type="checkbox"/> Please note all additional concerns for householders <input type="checkbox"/> Properties with children or vulnerable residents with 'additional support' needs may trigger a Safeguarding Alert under a different risk
<p>5. Animals and Pests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pets at the property are not well cared for <input type="checkbox"/> Resident is not able to control the animals <input type="checkbox"/> Animal's living area is not maintained and smells <input type="checkbox"/> Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed <input type="checkbox"/> Sound of mice heard at the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Spider webs in house

	<input type="checkbox"/> Light insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to RSPCA for advice and guidance.
6. Personal health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal protective equipment required.

Clutter /Hygiene rating Level 2 Actions

Level 2	Actions
1. Agency holding the case	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to landlord if resident is a tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Environmental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Raise an request to the London Fire Brigade to provide fire prevention advice <input type="checkbox"/> Provide details of garden services <input type="checkbox"/> Refer for support assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to GP/MDT <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to debt advice if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Animal welfare if there are animals at the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
2. Environmental Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Environmental Health with details of client, landlord (if relevant) referrer's details and overview of problems where appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> At time of inspection, Environmental Health Officer decides on appropriate course of action <input type="checkbox"/> Consider serving notices under Public Health Act 1936, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004 <input type="checkbox"/> Consider Works in Default if notices not complied with by occupier
3. Social Landlords	<input type="checkbox"/> Visit resident to inspect the property & assess support needs <input type="checkbox"/> Refer for housing related support. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure residents are maintaining all tenancy conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
4. Practitioners	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to "Guidance for Hoarding Guidance Questions to Ask" <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Practitioners Assessment Tool <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
5. Emergency Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to referring agency on completion of home visits.
6. Animal Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property.

	<input type="checkbox"/> Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate - seek advice from the RSPCA. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals
7. Safeguarding Adults	<input type="checkbox"/> No action unless other concerns of abuse are noted. If other concerns of abuse are of concern or have been reported, progression to safeguarding referral and investigation may be necessary.
8. MASH	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider referring any children or young persons present to MASH or Early Help unless other sources of abuse are noted, in which case refer to MASH.

Clutter image rating 7-9	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.
1. Property structure, services & garden area	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited access to the property due to extreme clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter seen at windows <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter outside the property <input type="checkbox"/> Garden not accessible and extensively overgrown <input type="checkbox"/> Services not connected or not functioning properly <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke alarms not fitted or not functioning <input type="checkbox"/> Property lacks ventilation due to clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Interior doors missing or blocked open <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of internal damp and / or mould <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of indoor items stored outside
2. Household Functions	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter seen at windows <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence may be seen of extreme clutter outside the property <input type="checkbox"/> Garden not accessible and extensively overgrown <input type="checkbox"/> Services not connected or not functioning properly <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke alarms not fitted or not functioning <input type="checkbox"/> Property lacks ventilation due to clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Interior doors missing or blocked open <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of structural damage or outstanding repairs including damp <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of internal damp and / or mould. <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of indoor items stored outside <input type="checkbox"/> Clutter is obstructing the living spaces and is preventing the use of the rooms for their intended purpose. <input type="checkbox"/> Room(s) scores 7 - 9 on the clutter image scale

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rooms not used for intended purposes or very limited <input type="checkbox"/> Beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation <input type="checkbox"/> Entrances, hallways and stairs blocked or difficult to pass <input type="checkbox"/> Toilets, sinks not functioning or not in use <input type="checkbox"/> Resident at risk due to living environment <input type="checkbox"/> Household appliances are not functioning or inaccessible <input type="checkbox"/> Resident has no safe cooking environment <input type="checkbox"/> Resident is using candles, electric or gas heating appliances <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of outdoor clutter being stored indoors. <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence of housekeeping being undertaken <input type="checkbox"/> Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates <input type="checkbox"/> Concern for declining mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Property is not maintained within terms of lease or tenancy agreement where applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Property is at risk of notice being served by Environmental Health
3. Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Human urine and or excrement may be present <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive odour in the property, may also be evident from the outside <input type="checkbox"/> Rotting food may be present <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence may be seen of unclean, unused and or buried plates & dishes. <input type="checkbox"/> Broken household items not discarded e.g. broken glass or plates <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate quantities or storage of medication. <input type="checkbox"/> Pungent odour can be smelt inside the property and possibly from outside. <input type="checkbox"/> Concern with the integrity of the electrics <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate use of electrical extension cords or evidence of unqualified work to the electrics. <input type="checkbox"/> Concern for declining mental health
4. Safeguard of Children & Family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarding on clutter scale 7-9 constitutes a Safeguarding Alert. <input type="checkbox"/> Please note all additional concerns for householders
5. Animals and Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Animals at the property at risk due the level of clutter in the property <input type="checkbox"/> Resident may not able to control the animals at the property <input type="checkbox"/> Animal's living area is not maintained and smells <input type="checkbox"/> Animals appear to be under nourished or over fed <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarding of animals at the property <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy insect infestation (bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Visible rodent infestation <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to RSPCA
6. Personal health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visits where Personal protective equipment (PPE) required: i.e. Latex Gloves, boots or needle stick safe shoes, face mask, hand sanitizer, insect repellent.

Level 3	Actions
Agency Holding the Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Raise Safeguarding Referral within 24 hours <input type="checkbox"/> Raise a request to the Fire and rescue service within 24 hours to provide fire prevention advice.
1. Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Environmental Health with details of client, landlord if relevant) referrer's details and overview of problems <input type="checkbox"/> At time of inspection, EHO decides on appropriate course of action <input type="checkbox"/> Consider serving notices under Public Health Act 1936, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949 or Housing Act 2004
2. Landlord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visit resident to inspect the property & assess support needs <input type="checkbox"/> Attend multi agency MRM meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Enforce tenancy conditions relating to residents responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> If resident refuses to engage serve Notice of Seeking Possession under Ground 13 to Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988
3. Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to "Hoarding Guidance Questions for practitioners" See Appendix 1 Complete Practitioners Assessment Tool <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution.
4. Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attend multi agency MRM meeting on request <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure information sharing with all agencies involved to ensure a collaborative approach and a sustainable resolution. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to case holding agency on completion of home visits.
5. Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Notify the RSPCA for further advice and guidance. <input type="checkbox"/> Visit property to undertake a wellbeing check on animals at the property. <input type="checkbox"/> Remove animals to a safe environment <input type="checkbox"/> Educate client regarding animal welfare if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Take legal action for animal cruelty if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Provide advice / assistance with re-homing animals
6. Safeguarding Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding alert should progress to referral for multi-agency approach and further investigation of any concerns of abuse. Multi-agency strategy meeting required.
7. Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Children and Young Peoples Services/ MASH if children or young people present (within 24 hours)

5. Guidance for Practitioners – Insight Characteristics

A guide to provide a baseline of the person's attitude towards their hoarding to be used to inform your assessment and approach.

Hoarding Insight characteristics

Use this guide as a baseline to describe the client's attitude towards their hoarding. Provide additional information in your referrals and reports to enable a tailored approach that is relevant to you client.

Good or fair insight:

The client recognises that hoarding – related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are problematic. The client recognises these behaviours in themselves.

Poor insight

The client is mostly convinced that hoarding – related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary. The Client might recognise a storage problem but has little self – recognition or acceptance of their own hoarding behaviour.

Absent (delusional) insight

The Client is convinced that hoarding- related beliefs and behaviours (relating to difficulty discarding items, clutter or excessive acquisition) are not problematic despite evidence to the contrary. The Client is completely accepting of their living environment despite the hoarding and possibly a risk to health.

Detached with assigned blame

The client has been away from their property for an extended period. The client has formed a detachment from the hoarded property and is now convinced a 3rd party is to blame for the condition of the property. For example a burglary has taken place, squatters or other household members.

6. Practitioners Hoarding Assessment

Where to bring together all stages of your assessment, applying the toolkit ratings and action required to inform the plan required

This assessment tool below needs to be completed by the practitioner in order to decide whether this case should be addressed through a multi-agency strategy meeting, or if this can be managed 'in-house' with the support of partners.

Date of Home Assessment			
Client's Name			
Client's date of birth			
Client contact details			
Type of dwelling	Owner Occupier	Leaseholder	Tenant – name and address of landlord
Household members	Name	Relationship	Date of Birth
Pets if any. Indicate any concerns			
Agencies currently involved. Include contact details			
Non-agency support currently in place			
Client's attitude towards hoarding.			
Please indicate if present at property			
Structural damage to property	Insect or rodent infestation	Large number of animals	Clutter outside
Rotten food	Animal waste in house	Concerns over cleanliness	Visible human faeces
Concerns of self neglect	Concerns for children at property	Concern for other adults at the property	

Using the Clutter scale, please score each of the rooms below			
Bedroom 1	Bedroom 2	Bedroom 3	Bedroom 4
Kitchen	Bathroom	Lounge/Dining Room	Separate Toilet
<p>Please provide a description of the hoarding problem i.e. presence of human or animal waste, rodents or insects, rotting food, are utilities operational, structural damage, problems with blocked exits, are there combustibles, is there a fire risk?</p>			
<p>Please refer to the multi-agency Hoarding Strategy and Guidance Document tool.</p> <p>Based on the information provided above, what level is your case graded at?</p>			
Level 1 (Green)	Level 2 (Orange)		Level 3 (Red – take case to High Risk Panel)
Name of practitioner undertaking assessment			
Name of organisation			
Contact details			
Next actions to be taken			
List of agencies referred to with dates and contact names			

The Risk Assessment

Staff should always complete the generic risk assessment within Azeus for all cases, alongside use of this specific tool for those who hoard. Combined the two assessments provide a framework to help direct practice and facilitate effective case intervention and multi-agency working with adults who are at risk of serious harm or death through self-neglect, risk taking behaviour or refusal of services.

Advocacy and support

It is essential to ensure all efforts are made to ensure the person suspected of self-neglecting and or hoarding is consulted with and included in discussions, with concerns raised directly with them at the earliest opportunity.

The individual concerned should be invited to participate in the multi-agency strategy meeting and offer the necessary support to do so by the case holding agency. If the person's choice is not to attend the meeting the case holding agency must feedback back any decision that is made to the person within a reasonable time period.

If there is concern that the person is in need of additional support to ensure they understand the concerns raised, the involvement of an appropriate advocate must be considered where it is deemed necessary to do so. This may be a friend or family member, or a representative from a voluntary agency or formal Advocacy. Where the individual refuses to participate or engage with agencies or provide access, information obtained from a range of other sources may 'hold the key' to achieving access into the property or to determining areas / levels of risk.

Staff

For staff dealing with cases of self-neglect and or hoarding this can be a stressful time and all agencies should have robust support mechanisms and policies in place, to ensure the health and safety of its employees. This should include practice supervision, peer support, lone working systems and where appropriate access to health and welfare advisory support services.

To enable employees to be effective in dealing with cases of self-neglect and hoarding, employees should also have access to a range of learning and development opportunities either offered by their own organisation, or by a multi-agency approach.

7. Guidance questions to be used during an assessment

Questions for practitioners and supervisors to use and consider during their assessment and planning

Listed below are examples of questions to ask where you are concerned about someone's safety in their own home, where you suspect a risk of self-neglect and hoarding? The information gained from these questions will inform a Hoarding Assessment and provide the information needed to alert other agencies. Most clients with a hoarding problem will be embarrassed about their surroundings so adapt the question to suit your assessment with the person.

- 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 have you made your home safer to prevent this (above) from happening again?
- How do you move safely around your home (where the floor is uneven or covered, or there are exposed wires, damp, rot, or other hazards)
- Has a fire ever started by accident?
- How do you get hot water, lighting, heating in here? Do these services work properly? Have they ever been tested?
- Do you ever use candles or an open flame to heat and light here or cook with camping gas?
- How do you manage to keep yourself warm? Especially in winter?
- When did you last go out in your garden? Do you feel safe to go out there?
- Are you worried about other people getting in to your garden to try and break-in? Has this ever happened?
- Are you worried about mice, rats or foxes, or other pests? Do you leave food out for them?
- Have you ever seen mice or rats in your home? Have they eaten any of your food? Or got upstairs and be nesting anywhere?
- Can you prepare food, cook and wash up in your kitchen?
- Do you use your fridge? Can I have look in it? How do you keep things cold in the hot weather?
- How do you keep yourself clean? Can I see your bathroom? Are you able to use your bathroom and use the toilet ok? Have a wash, bath, shower?
- Can you show me where you sleep and let me see your upstairs rooms? Are the stairs safe to walk up? (if there are any)
- What do you do with your dirty washing?
- Where do you sleep? Are you able to change your bed linen regularly? When did you last change them?

- How do you keep yourself warm at night? Do you have extra coverings to put on your bed if you are cold?
- Are there any broken windows in your home? Any repairs that need to be done?
- Because of the number of possessions you have, do you find it difficult to use some of your rooms? If so which ones?
- Do you struggle with discarding things or to what extent do you have difficulty discarding (or recycling, selling, giving away) ordinary things that other people would get rid of.