

## HOARDING POLICY



### MONITORING INFORMATION:

**POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:**

**DATE APPROVED:**

**EXPIRY DATE:**

**OWNER:**

**APPROVAL ROUTE:**

**HOARDING POLICY**

**AUGUST 2022**

**AUGUST 2025**

**HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & ESTATES**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM**

# Hoarding Policy

## 1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Teign is committed to promoting independence and personal choice for customers living in its Independent Living and general needs accommodation.
- 1.2 There may, however, be occasions when through lifestyle choices or as a result of a medical condition the collection of excessive quantities of goods or objects by customers becomes problematic for themselves or a nuisance to others. This situation, although taking many different forms, is known collectively as 'hoarding'
- 1.3 Teign recognises hoarding as a cognitive disorder as defined by the Mental Health Act 2013. Hoarding is a disorder which is most effectively managed in partnership with other agencies and in co-operation with the individual suffering from the disorder.
- 1.4 Practitioners should guard against dismissing any form of self-neglect as a 'lifestyle choice'
- 1.5 When professionals doubt that a person has understanding of the impact their behaviour or circumstances are having on their wellbeing, or that of others, this should prompt a decision specific assessment of capacity in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 1.6 Hoarding is often part of a self-neglect presentation as described in chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014. Under s.42 of the Care Act, Local Authorities have a duty to make or cause to be made, enquiries in cases where they reasonably suspect that **an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from this abuse and neglect or the risk of it.** Concerns involving hoarding may need to be referred to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team as part of a strategy to support the adult at risk involving co-ordinated actions from a range of potential services
- 1.7 Sometimes when all efforts to engage with the person have failed, the impact of the self-neglect on the person's health and wellbeing and that of others are of such serious concern that legislative action may need to be considered. Partner agencies must work together with legal advice to assess the best course of action.
- 1.8 Any action taken on behalf of a person who lacks capacity should be done so in their Best Interests, following the statutory checklist (s.4 MCA 2005), involving the person themselves

and those who have an interest in their welfare where possible supported by appropriate recording

- 1.9 In urgent cases where there is a reasonable belief that a person lacks capacity, but a full assessment has not yet concluded, the Court of Protection can make an interim order to allow urgent intervention.
- 1.10 The welfare of children effected by adults who hoard must be considered and referrals to the Local Authority should be made where appropriate.
- 1.11 There has been an increase in the number of reported hoarding cases and Teign has seen a number in recent years. If hoarding goes unnoticed for a number of years, the consequences can become uncontrollable. The property becomes unliveable and often results in the person having none of the basic amenities that are required such as access to a working kitchen or bathroom.
- 1.12 Other issues may arise such as a fire occurring and the ability 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. Additional risks present to fire fighters when they attend the scene. In such circumstances advice must be sought from the local Fire Service.
- 1.13 Where conditions of the home pose a serious risk to the person such as squalor and infestations or the living conditions are effecting neighbours enjoyment of their property, advice should be sought from Environmental Health,
- 1.14 Consideration for the welfare of animals may also need to be considered with a view to partnership working with public health officials and the RSPCA etc.
- 1.15 People with hoarding tendencies may accumulate items for: -
  - Sentimental value – emotional attachment
  - Utility value – the item could be useful
  - Visual value – the item is considered to be beautiful
  - Circumstantial – outside circumstances may have resulted in items having to be stored within the property until an alternative place can be found.
- 1.16 It may be difficult to identify a person who has hoarding tendencies as the indicators are not always clear and not all people carry the same characteristics, but some general characteristics may be:

- Fear of having possessions taken away or a heightened/excessive emotional attachment to unnecessary possessions.
- Extreme indecisiveness.
- Social isolation from family and friends and refusing home visits from professionals.
- Large number of pets (animal hoarding). They may perceive themselves as having 'rescued' the animals.
- Extreme clutter that may prevent a property from being used for its purpose.
- Lack of self-care.
- Lack of insight into their behaviour or situation (actions or inaction).

## 2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to residents and our way of managing cases of hoarding and will have the following objectives.

- To act to stop hoarding as quickly and effectively as possible.
- To take a balanced approach using a combination of measures including support, prevention, early intervention and enforcement.
- To provide a pro-active approach in the management of casework.
- To treat those who hoard and those affected by hoarding with tact and sensitivity.
- There is a procedure to assist staff in dealing with cases of hoarding.

2.2 Hoarding can have numerous detrimental effects including:

- Inability to use facilities within a home and surrounding areas
- inhibiting personal functions and hygiene
- Increased risk of fire / flooding hazard
- Environmental hazard, including noise nuisance, unsightly appearance of properties and outside spaces, risk of infestation
- Offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006

2.3 Teign will ensure that it manages its Hoarding Policy in accordance with best practice together with relevant policy and legislation, including the following:

- [Care Act 2014](#)

- [Public Health Act 1936](#)
- [Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949](#)
- [Mental Health Act 1983 \(amended 2007\)](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014](#)

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and Board and Committee members.
- 3.2 Failure by any Worker to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against them. Any disciplinary action will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

### 4. Responsibility

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the Head of Housing to ensure the implementation of the Hoarding Policy and to ensure that:
- All relevant staff are familiar with the Hoarding Policy and associated procedures, including: -
    - Neighbourhood Services Advisers
    - Independent Living Advisers
    - Contractors
    - Estates Staff
    - ASB Advisers
    - Income Advisers
    - Lettings Advisers
  - All relevant staff are trained in the Hoarding Policy's associated procedure via a specialist organisation
  - Residents are aware of the Hoarding Policy

### 5. Policy

- 5.1 Teign recognises hoarding as a complex cognitive disorder which:

- 5.1.1 Compels an individual to purchase and/or acquire excessive quantities of objects and prevents or inhibits that individual from deciding to discard those objects.
- 5.1.2 Is believed to have a variety of triggers which include bereavement, health problems, being in debt, feeling isolated, a sense of loss and career change.
- 5.1.3 Can involve a variety of objects including clothes, newspapers, magazines, books, bills, receipts, letters, food, food containers, animals, medical equipment, toys, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc.
- 5.1.4 Teign will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that services are provided in a co-ordinated way to manage hoarding.
- 5.2 Teign will identify customers who may be experiencing problems with hoarding issues by a variety of means, including:
- Through staff observations from Keeping in Touch (KIT) visits
  - Via regular visits undertaken by the Independent Living Advisors
  - Via annual gas safety checks and electrical checks
  - Via reporting from third parties, including neighbours, friends, family, advocacy
  - Via Templer HomeBuild visits
  - Via Fire Risk Assessments undertaken internally or by contractors on Teign's behalf
  - groups or statutory enforcement agencies
  - Via self-referral or requests for assistance
- 5.3 Some tenants may exhibit signs of hoarding, but this may not be because of a hoarding disorder. It may in fact be a result of poor physical health combined with a lack of support. If this is the case, the resident will be referred to Adult Social Care with a view to setting up a support package. In addition, Teign might consider undertaking a deep clean to their accommodation if satisfied this would work in a complementary way to other measures.
- 5.3.1 Hoarding may have many damaging consequences which include but are not limited to: risk of fire, social isolation, lack of access to basic washing and cooking facilities and can lead to mental illness such as depression and anxiety.

- 5.3.2 Teign's primary objective is to maintain the safety, health and well-being of all its customers. If a customer's hoarding behaviour poses a real and present danger to their own safety and health, or to that of others, then their mental capacity must be questioned. If the individual is found to lack capacity after assessment by Social Services, Teign will consider the safety of the individual and of other residents before the will of the individual displaying the hoarding behaviour
- 5.4 Teign recognises that every case is unique, and hoarding can affect anyone regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, religion or gender. We will therefore deal with each case on its own and not base any of our decisions on assumptions from other cases.
- 5.5 Teign will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation. Staff and others with whom Teign works, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).
- 5.6 The Teign Hoarding Management Policy will be implemented as soon as an alleged case of hoarding is reported to any member of staff. Hoarding presents a fire risk and a risk assessment will be carried out.

## **6. Related Documents**

- Tenancy Agreement
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## HOARDING FLOW CHART

