



Hoarding Policy

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Approved by Committee/Board	N/A
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Policy developed by	Senior Housing Manager
Consultations	Involved Customer Group
Associated procedure	Hoarding Procedure

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Version Control

Version	Author	Date Published	Next Review	Comments
1.0		01 Oct 21	31 Oct 24	Policy review
1.1		31 Oct 24	31 Oct 27	Policy review

Introduction

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the way in which Connexus will deal with customers that have hoarding tendencies.
- 1.2 Hoarding has emerged as a significant housing issue in recent years. It not only impacts the individual but also affects the property, neighbours, and the local environment.
- 1.3 Scope: The policy applies to Connexus Homes Limited.

2. Problem to Solve

- 2.1 One of the major challenges with hoarded properties is the heightened fire risk. Given the prevalence of hoarding and the associated dangers, it's crucial for us to adopt a strong approach to managing hoarding.
- 2.2 The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders highlight five diagnostic criteria to identify a hoarding case, these being:
 - Persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their monetary value.
 - This difficulty is due to a perceived need to save the items and distress associated with them.
 - The difficulty in discarding possessions results in the accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas.
 - The hoarding causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.
 - The hoarding is not attributable to another medical condition or mental disorder.
- 2.3 The difference between a hoarder and a collector is that hoarding impacts adversely on the individual and environment, whereas it is very possible to be an avid collector and for the collection to never congest or disrupt the home

environment. Furthermore, a collector will not suffer the same levels of anxiety and distress should their items be removed that would be experienced by an individual with a hoarding disorder.

3. Method/s

3.1 Whilst working with customers with hoarding tendencies, we will adopt the following principles: -

- We will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure services are provided in a co-ordinated way, to develop appropriate strategies for working with and responding to the needs of customers.
- We aim to raise awareness of hoarding disorder – the impact on the individual, others within the property, neighbours and the economic and environmental impact, through appropriate training, communications, campaign and publicity.
- We are committed to supporting individuals with a hoarding tendency who are willing to engage with support, whilst balancing the needs of other impacted people living in the property, residents and homeowners.
- We will consider all reasonable adjustments required in our approach.
- We will achieve consistency in our approach through the use of the “Clutter Image Rating Tool” that helps standardise in all cases by showing a series of images depicting rooms in various stages of clutter - [Clinical Assessment - Hoarding](#).

3.2 Where a customer is not willing to engage with the assessment and support process, we will use the tools available to us within the tenancy agreement to take further action. The offer of support should always remain open. Legal action should only be taken where: -

- The customer’s behaviour is so extreme as to cause significant harm to themselves or other person.
- The customer’s behaviour is so extreme it has created a high fire risk that needs immediate action to mitigate.
- There has been continuous failed engagement with the customer and the customers actions have been proven to have a detrimental effect on the property and/or others.
- Where access to the property for any reason is required and access has been repeatedly refused or when it is impossible to carry out the works required to ensure that we meet our duties under statutory safety regulations.

3.3 Legal action may be taken as an emergency without the customer’s knowledge should the situation require it.

3.4 Where it is suspected that someone may lack mental capacity, adult social services should always be contacted, and an urgent assessment requested.

- 3.5 Hoarding is a recognised psychological disorder; therefore, we must ensure that each case is dealt with appropriately and proportionately. We have a duty of care for the wellbeing and safety of all of our customers.

4. Measurement

- 4.1 Hoarding cases will be recorded and monitored on our Housing Management system.

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment Form