



Mount Green  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# Hoarding Policy

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| Service Area:              | Operations |

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# Hoarding Policy

## 1. Scope

This policy sets out our approach to residents when hoarding is identified and our way of managing those who have hoarding tendencies or a hoarding disorder. This policy applies to our Independent Living, General Needs and Keyworker properties.

## 2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Reduce the risks associated with hoarding disorder on the individual, the community and Mount Green.
- Take a balanced approach to stop and/or control hoarding as quickly and effectively as possible by using a combination of measures.
- Treat those who hoard and those affected by hoarding with tact and sensitivity.
- Outline the action we will take alongside our partner agencies if the risk, as a result of hoarding, is high and/or the effect on the local community is unacceptable.

## 3. Introduction

A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items can be of little or no monetary value. Items that can be hoarded include:

- Newspapers and magazines
- Books
- Clothes
- Leaflets & letters including junk mail
- Bills and receipts
- Containers including plastic bags and cardboard boxes
- Food and other household supplies



#### 4. Taking Action

Mount Green consider hoarding a significant problem when the resident is likely to be in breach of their tenancy or license.

We will take immediate action where the hoarding poses a fire or health and safety risk.

When at least one of the following occurs, we will take further action to address the issues:

- A hazard or potential hazard (including fire, health and safety, smell or vermin) is created for the resident, those living in the property or other neighbours.
- There is an increased risk of accidents, personal injury or fire.
- The resident's day to day functioning is impeded – for example, they are unable to use the kitchen or bathroom and cannot access rooms.
- The impact of the hoarding is negatively affecting neighbours or has been reported as anti-social behaviour.

Mount Green will take a risk based approach when responding to hoarding and will consider the risk to the individual, others in the property, neighbours and staff visiting the property.

#### 5. Managing Risk

All cases of hoarding will be assessed using the Clutter Scale Rating (See Appendix 1). A full risk assessment will then be completed and reviewed by a manager to agree how to proceed. The following risk levels provide an overall framework to work within:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Low Level    | Acceptable risk, signpost to external agencies and monitor.  |
| Medium Level | Involve other statutory agencies and monitor case. May include damage to property requiring major works or pest control.   |
| High Level   | Risk of accidents, personal injury, self-neglect or fire. Immediate involvement of other statutory agencies and consider enforcement action. Notify MG H&S officer and arrange a new Fire Risk Assessment. |

#### 6. Fire Safety

Hoarding may pose a significant fire risk to the hoarder's property and neighbouring properties, particularly in blocks of flats. It also significantly increases the severity of risks if a fire were to occur, due to increased load risk in the property and a lack of escape routes.



Where we are aware of a hoarding case which presents a high fire risk, the relevant documents must be logged on the appropriate database and monitored until the fire risk has been resolved.

Mount Green will inform the local fire service where we become aware of a hoarded property which poses a high risk to health and safety. In these cases, we will fully explain why we must do this to the resident.

## **7. Safeguarding**

Living in hoarded properties can place both children and adults at risk. Mount Green will raise an appropriate safeguarding alert in accordance with local safeguarding criteria where:

- a person is declining assistance in relation to their care and support needs, and
- the impact of their decision, has or is likely to have a substantial impact on their overall individual wellbeing.

## **8. Partnership working**

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance formally recognises self-neglect as a category of abuse and neglect – and within that category identifies hoarding. The guidance outlines how partner organisations, such as housing associations, can and should work in partnership to help protect vulnerable people from abuse or neglect.

When a person's hoarding behaviour poses a serious risk to their health and safety, professional intervention will be required.

Any proposed intervention or action must be with the person's consent, except in circumstances where the level of hoarding and associated risks leads us to take immediate safeguarding action in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

## **9. Responding to Hoarding**

If we receive a report of hoarding we will:

- Visit the property to assess the level of risk. Where access cannot be gained we will try to make contact with the next of kin or any known support worker.
- Carry out an assessment of what is being hoarded and the impact on the individual.
- Use the Clutter Image Rating Scale to assist in measuring the degree of clutter in the home.
- Consider any damage to the property requiring intervention.
- Where animal hoarding is occurring we will notify the RSPCA straight away.



- We will raise Safeguarding alerts in respect of impacted children and adults with care and support needs.
- Alert social services if there are concerns that the resident is a vulnerable adult or there are other occupants at the property who may be at risk.
- If the items being hoarded could represent a fire risk, or cause injury in the event of a fire we will contact the fire service to assist with completing a fire risk assessment including identifying mitigation measures.
- Work with the resident and other lead agencies to clear the home to an acceptable level such as health services, social services, environmental health, and specialist removal agencies.
- Remove hoarded items that are in shared areas in line with our Communal Area Policy.
- If the resident does not make sufficient progress clearing their home we will take legal action to compel them to clear the clutter if the level of risk and/or the impact on the local community is unacceptable.
- Provide support and advice to neighbours.
- Utilise any legal remedies available to bring the hoarding to an end and ensure the safety of others.

## 10. **Monitoring**

People who have hoarded are likely to hoard again. We will record all cases of hoarding on a hoarding register and continue to monitor until the risks have reduced to an acceptable level.

## 11. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

For Mount Green, diversity is about respecting people's individual differences and ensuring that all people that come into contact with us have access to the same high standards of behaviour and service.

We are committed to ensuring that no resident will be treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.



## Appendix 1 - Hoarding Policy Clutter Image Rating Scale



1 2 3

Level 1 HFSV



4 5 6

Level 1/2 HFSV



7 8 9

Level 2/3 HFSV



1 2 3

Level 1 HFSV



4 5 6

Level 1/2 HFSV



7 8 9

Level 2/3 HFSV



1 2 3

Level 1 HFSV



4 5 6

Level 1/2 HFSV



7 8 9

Level 2/3 HFSV

### Level 1 Clutter image rating 1 - 3

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 vulnerability.

### Level 2 Clutter Image Rating 4 – 6

Household environment requires professional assistance to resolve the clutter and maintenance issues in the property.

### Level 3 Clutter image rating 7 - 9

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.

