



WILLIAMSBURGH
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Hoarding Behaviour Policy

Revision History

Policy	Hoarding Behaviour Policy
Reviewer(s)	Louise McDonald & Sandra Doherty
Committee Name	Operations and Performance
Number and Date of Meeting	08, 7 August 2024
New Policy or Description of Revision	New Policy
Equality Impact Assessment Complete	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment Complete	N/A
Health and Safety Risk Assessment Complete	N/A
Consultation Complete	Yes
Next Review Date	June 2027

1. Introduction

This policy will describe what is meant by hoarding, the types of behaviour exhibited and what the impact may be to the individual and those around them.

Through this policy we will outline the risks to the individual and others, the steps that may be taken to mitigate these risks and outline the support available, both to the individual but also to the member of staff trying to assist an adult/tenant.

This policy should be read alongside the Hoarding and Self Neglect procedure which provides further details on how the Association will act and the steps that should be taken once a tenant with Hoarding Behaviours has been identified.

2. Equalities

As part of our commitment to equal opportunities, this policy can be made available in large print or audio tape or translated into another language if required. We are also committed to meeting Outcome 1 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter which states that Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that: - every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services

3. Legislation

Scottish Social Housing Charter and Legal Framework

The Association, in preparing this policy and the related procedures has given consideration to and sought compliance with, the following:

Scottish Social Housing Charter, as defined by The Scottish Housing Regulator – the regulatory body for housing associations. The relevant Charter Outcome numbers 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 state:

2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

“tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides”

6: Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that:

“tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe”

11: Tenancy sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

“tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations”.

Legislation that may apply:

- [The Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003 - Section 33](#)
- [The Adults with Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [Anti-Social Behaviour etc \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#)
- [Public Health etc \(Scotland\) 2008 Act](#)
- [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001 Act](#)
- [Public Health etc \(Scotland\) 2008 Act \(PART 3\),](#)
- [Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 - Section 4](#)

4. [Aims and Objectives](#)

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Create a safer and healthier environment for the tenants and others affected by hoarding behaviour, e.g. family, neighbours.
- Create a person-centred approach to how the Association acts towards tenants exhibiting hoarding behaviour.
- Allow the Association to work with tenants to create a clear action plan and defined milestones to ensure that all possible supportive action is provided, to minimise the need for further action.
- Support tenants to recognise hoarding behaviour and work towards a resolution.
- To establish best practice and improve knowledge of legislation that relates to hoarding behaviour.

5. Definition

Hoarding is the excessive collection and retention of any material to the point that it impedes day to day function. Pathological or compulsive hoarding is a specific type of behaviour characterised by:

- Acquiring and failing to throw out a large number of items that would appear to have little or no value and would be considered rubbish by other people;
- Severe cluttering of the person's home so that it is no longer able to function as a viable living space;
- Significant distress or impairment of work or social life.

Hoarding is usually characterised by:

- the collection of and failure to discard of items that appear to be of little use or value (such as rubbish, items of sentimental value, newspapers, furniture, and even animals);
- living spaces or private outdoor spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to prevent activities for which the spaces were designed;
- significant distress or impairment of the functioning of the resident because of hoarding.
- Serious hoarding can lead to properties that are unpleasant to look at, have a negative effect on the local environment (smells, vermin, and they can become a local dumping ground), and they can cause a severe health and safety risk.

6. Our approach to dealing with hoarding

Hoarding can have a profound effect on the person who is hoarding, on their neighbours, the local community, and on the property.

People who hoard items often have strong attachments to items which are not easy for others to understand. They are often resistant to the idea of clearing their home of the belongings, and the actual removal of the items from their homes can prove extremely traumatic for them.

As a responsible landlord, we must balance the needs of the individual along with the needs of surrounding neighbours. If we receive a report of hoarding we will try to work with the resident to address their support needs, their hoarding behaviour, and to remove the items in and around their home which are causing a concern. If the level of risk is high and/or the effect on others is unacceptable, we will take action alongside our partner agencies to compel the resident to clear the property of the offending items.

7. What you can expect from us

We will carry out a home visit where hoarding is suspected and will categorise the extent of the issue on the Clutter Image Rating Score (CIRS), as noted in our procedures, which is a recognised tool for this purpose. The tenant will be supported to remedy the situation.

We will make referrals to the Social Work Department if there are concerns that the resident is a vulnerable adult and would benefit from support.

If the resident does not make sufficient progress clearing their home or has refused to engage with external agencies, we may take legal action to compel them to clear the clutter if the level of risk and/or the impact on others is unacceptable.

8. Complaints

Should any tenant be dissatisfied with the implementation of this policy they should submit a complaint to the Association in order to get the matter resolved.

If, after exhausting the Association's complaints procedure (full details of which are available on our website, from staff or located in our reception) a tenant is still unhappy, they should contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS
(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is:

FREEPOST SPSO
Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk

9. REVIEW OF POLICY

This Policy will be subject to review every three years, or earlier if required by changes in legislation, guidance or informed by practice.