



# Hoarding and Self-Neglect



**Fife Adult Support & Protection**  
[www.fife.gov.uk/adultprotection](http://www.fife.gov.uk/adultprotection)





## What is self-neglect?

Self-neglect is the lack of self-care.

This is when you do not look after yourself or meet your basic needs like feeding and personal hygiene.



This can affect your:

**Health**

**Wellbeing**

**Environment**

It can affect the people around you too.



## What is hoarding?

Hoarding is known as a mental health illness in its own right.

Hoarding is when you collect or keep so many items that it stops you:

- doing daily tasks safely because everything is cluttered.
- from being able to care for yourself properly.



6



Someone who hoards is called a hoarder.

Hoarding is **more than** just a messy house.

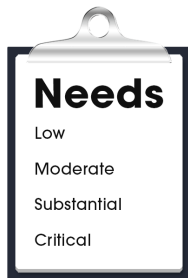
It is **more than** being untidy or disorganised.

## Hoarding can affect anyone.



These pictures below can help you understand what hoarding looks like.

These 9 pictures are used to assess the level of hoarding in someone's home.



These 9 pictures are called the: Clutter Image Rating Scale. Read about each picture and what they show.



1

Look at picture **number 1**.

There is nothing out of place in this living room so it is easy to live in.

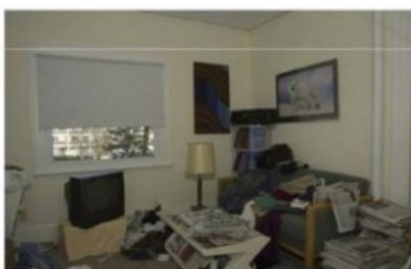


2

Look at picture **number 2**.

You would need to clear the settee before you could sit down.

This is quite easy to solve.



3

See picture **number 3**.

You can see there is more clutter but you would be able to sort it in a few minutes.



4

Picture number 4 shows a room that is starting to be very messy and is the beginning of hoarding.



5

Picture number 5 shows that hoarding is beginning to make problems. The coffee table and settee can not be used straight away. There is mess on the floor.



6

In picture number 6 you can see there is now a serious problem of hoarding. Objects have gathered and there are piles everywhere. Nothing can be used.



7

In picture number 7 none of the furniture can be used or found. They are lost in a pile of mess.



8

Look at pictures numbers 8 and 9.

Your personal hygiene is now compromised. You cannot live in this safely.



9

This shows extreme hoarding.



## What do people hoard?

There are 3 types of belongings that people hoard:



- A mixture of things like clothes, newspapers, boxes and food containers.



- Animals.



- Computers, paper documents and electronic devices.

## Why do people hoard?

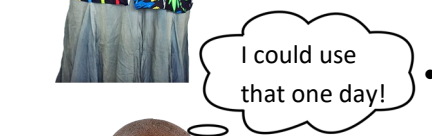


- Trauma—bad past life experiences.

- Emotions like depression and anxiety.



- Attachment to the items because they mean something to that person but not to anyone else.



- All the items hold the same value. People do not know what to throw away.



- People believe the items might be useful one day even if they are broken.

## What are the risks of hoarding?

If you hoard, you could face:

- Isolation because you don't want to let other people (family or friends) into your home.
- Health and wellbeing issues because you cannot follow good hygiene, make healthy food, have a balanced lifestyle.
- Accidents such as being trapped because piles of clutter can collapse.
- Financial problems if you can not find bills and paperwork.
- Housing problems such as your house being infested by rats, and the walls and ceilings can be covered by damp.
- Fire risks which are explained below.



I can't get in!

## Hoarding and fire risks

If there are lots of items in a house, fire can spread very quickly.

It can make it hard for you to get out safely and for someone to get in and help you.

There are 3 main fire risks in homes.

Hoarding can make the risk of a fire **worse**.

People might also hoard paper, plastic and cardboard. These can catch fire easily.



- **Cooking**

If there are a lot of things stored around or on cooking appliances, these can catch fire.

Appliances like microwaves need space around air vents to cool down.

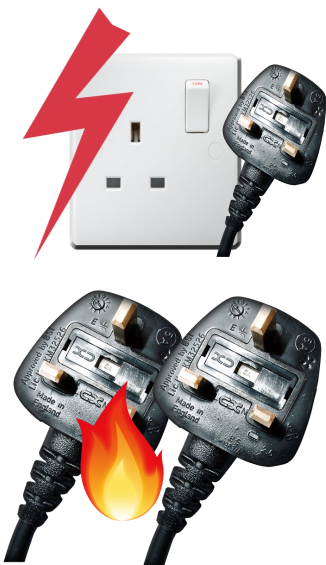
Clutter can stop the microwave cooling down and cause a fire.



- **Electricals**

The risk of using too many plugs in one extension lead can start a fire. This is called daisy chaining.

A hoarder may only be able to use one extension because the rest of the electrical sockets are behind the mess. This overuse can lead to a greater fire risk.



Some people hoard broken electricals which can be dangerous.



- **Smoking**

Smoking in a room with lots of items can increase the risk of a fire happening.



## Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service can provide support to you by:

- Carrying out free home safety visits.
- Supporting in a clean up with your agreement.
- Giving you advice through a chat.
- Providing you extra smoke alarms.
- Providing special alarms if you have hearing difficulties.
- Providing fire retardant bedding.
- Working with relevant people to support you.
- Revisiting high risk cases in **1 year**.



Remember:

1. Hoarding can affect you and your neighbours because of fire risks
2. The workers who come to support you will not judge you. They can come in plain clothes so that your neighbours do not notice them.





If you know someone who hoards, you can refer them for a home safety visit from the SFRS. This can be done online:

<https://cset.firescotland.gov.uk/Public/HFSV/RequestVisit>



In an emergency call **999**



### Animal Welfare

Hoarders can own pets and might hoard them.



This means that there can be many animals in the home.



Animals can get lost or trapped in the clutter.

Animals may not be getting cared for properly .

They may not be getting food.

Animals might unfortunately die.



There can be health risks for humans from living in animal faeces or urine.

If you have concerns about the care of an animal, contact:

**Scottish SPCA 03000 999 999**





## Who else can help?

There are many people who can help.



### **Housing:**

If you are a Fife Council Tenant, you can contact your Housing Officer for support.

Contact by phone **03451 55 00 33**, online or at your local office.



Your housing officer can help you:

- Find support networks who can support you.



- Decide if a clean up is needed and arrange for special services and funding to help with this (depending on your circumstances).



- Arrange a visit from the Fire and Rescue Service.

- Offer paint packs for re-decoration.



- Work with you to set targets - for example, to clear one room at a time,



If you are a private tenant, contact your landlord for help.

## Other important information

### **Fife Council: Social Work Contact Centre:**

Contact: 03451 551 503

Email: [SW.ContactCtr@fife.gov.uk](mailto:SW.ContactCtr@fife.gov.uk)

### **Emergency Social Work Service:**

Contact: 03451 550 099 (if out of office hours and weekends)



**Closed**



Visit Self-Neglect and Hoarding Guidance at Fife Council:

<https://fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/health-and-social-care2/help-for-adults-and-older-people/adult-support-and-protection>



### **Online peer support at Hoarding UK**

- <https://hoardinguk.org/support-groups/lgbtq-support-group/>

online last Tuesday of every month.



- <https://hoardinguk.org/support-groups/space-time-stuff-support-group/>

virtual meetings held fortnightly for all.



- <https://hoardinguk.org/support-groups/place-in-the-spcae-support-group/>

virtual group which focuses on managing space.



What can you do?

**SEE** Something?



**HEAR** Something?



**SAY** Something!



If you are concerned about someone who may be at risk of harm, this should be reported as soon as possible by:

- Completing a Report of Harm Referral form
- Calling the Adult Support and Protection line on **01383 602200**



In an emergency contact **999**