

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20 REPORT NO. 210

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet
11th March 2020

REPORT OF:

Director of Adult Social Care,
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| Agenda - Part: 1 | Item: 5 |
| Subject: Multi-Agency Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy (KD-5071) | |
| Wards: All | |
| Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Needs for Social Housing, Cllr Cazimoglu for Health and Social Care, Cllr Savva for Licensing and Regulatory Services | |

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to protect individuals from self-neglect, it also requires housing providers to ensure the health and safety of tenants, their neighbours and staff. The Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy has been put together in order to implement a multi-agency, person-centred approach to supporting vulnerable adults who hoard and self-neglect. Each case is unique and will therefore require involvement and a joint-working approach from several different services and agencies. The policy aims to ensure that all the relevant services and agencies are involved as soon as necessary, share information and consult with one another while supporting vulnerable adults who hoard/ self-neglect in their physical health and environment. This will be done without judgement or prejudice.

The main purpose of the policy is to:

- Give clear guidance on how/ when a referral needs to be made for an individual
- Give clear guidance on which agencies/services need to take an active approach in supporting the individual.
- Promote a multi-agency approach, whereby relevant agencies consult and share information with one another to get the best outcome for the individual.
- Adopt a person-centred approach that is non-judgemental and involves the individual and, if required, their family/carers or advocate in all decision-making processes.

- Be of benefit to the lives of adults who hoard and self-neglect, helping them improve their quality of life and their living conditions.

The Council is also working towards appointing a Hoarding Coordinator to manage intervention and support for adults who hoard.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approve the Multi-Agency Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy is being developed as a council-wide policy to offer support and guidance to vulnerable adults who hoard and self-neglect by setting out guidelines for professionals to assist them in delivering a consistent and effective service.

3.2 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. The clutter reaches a level that impedes every day functioning.

3.3 Enfield Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had over 600 referrals where hoarding or self-neglect were a factor in 2018-19. An adult who is experiencing a hoarding disorder or self-neglect may be in contact with different services and agencies, many times, over the period in which they are hoarding. Supporting the adult is not the sole responsibility of one service or agency and an effective approach to helping the adult will require a multi-agency response.

3.4 Hoarding cases are complex due to the way hoarding impacts on different aspects of an adult's life: their home, their social connections, physical and mental health and environment. Adults who hoard and self-neglect therefore require the support and services of different agencies and council partners over the course of the intervention period.

3.5 This policy sets out the role and powers of different agencies, so that practitioners can be confident about what their own role is, who to refer to or contact when a hoarding or self-neglect related issue presents itself.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Person-Centred Approach

The policy sets out to involve the individual in all aspects of decision-making in order to achieve the best outcome to improve their health, wellbeing and

environment. A person-centred approach is vital to encourage the individual to engage with services and consent to support or interventions. This approach ensures that if a property is to be cleared out to reduce clutter and clean, that the individual, who is likely to have an attachment to the things they are hoarding and may be distressed, is given wrap-around support. It safeguards the individual's feelings and helps to foster trusting relationships between the individual and the agencies involved. A person-centred approach focuses on treating the individual with respect and care, being conscious of their likely emotional attachments to the clutter in their homes and being mindful that the behaviour may be a result of traumatic experiences such as bereavement.

4.2 Multi-Agency Approach

An adult who hoards/ self-neglects may have a complex range of needs and require support from a number of services. Hoarding impacts several areas of an individual's life; their home, their social connections, physical and mental wellbeing, and their environment. An effective approach to getting the best outcome for the individual is to adopt a multi-agency approach, whereby agencies work together and consult with one another to agree actions in the best interests of the individual. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the relevant agencies, ensuring practitioners can feel confident about their individual role, and how to refer to other services when it is appropriate to do so.

4.3 Information Sharing

Effective sharing of information is essential in order to establish a full picture of the individual's needs, identify any risks and obtain the right support for the best outcome. Officers and practitioners will always seek consent to record or share an adult's personal information and will always consider whether consent may not be needed because there is a vital or public interest. Information sharing will be in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

4.4 Community MARAC

The Community MARAC facilitates joint-working relationships between council services and partner agencies that work with adults who hoard/ self-neglect. The purpose of a referral to the Community MARAC is to share information and identify a lead agency for each case of hoarding/ self-neglect. The key purpose of the Community MARAC will be to allocate roles and determine timelines for decisions and actions to take place.

Members of the Community MARAC will discuss referrals of hoarding/ self-neglect that are deemed high-risk or complex. High risk and complex cases involve an adult:

1. Whose home is at a clutter level of 6 or above on the Clutter Image Rating; and
2. who has resisted several attempts at engagement; or
3. where the risks are considered to be very high/ chronic; or
4. where an agency has been working with the person for a period of time but has been unable to mitigate the risks.

We do not anticipate more than 10 cases to be referred to the Community MARAC each year.

4.5 Consultation

We conducted a 6-week consultation with a range of professionals. This was in the shape of an online survey that was publicised to professionals by Adult Social Care. We received 7 responses to the survey. We have also engaged with professionals from London Fire Brigade, The Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust and the Enfield Safeguarding Adults Board throughout the development of the policy.

We also conducted a public consultation at a well-publicised service user event. This took the form of a survey and discussion. User feedback to the development of the policy was positive.

We have given our due consideration to ensure that the policy allows us to deliver the most cost-effective approach that is in the best interests of adults with hoarding disorder.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

An alternative to this policy is to continue with the current approach whereby individual services and agencies intervene with hoarding situations as and when they are identified. This policy provides a more effective and consistent approach to supporting adults who hoard or self-neglect with clear guidelines. The policy adopts a multi-agency approach that ensures the individual receives support from services and agencies that are working in partnership with one another to cover the range of the individual's needs. The policy sets out guidelines for a person-centred method, that keeps the individual at the centre of all decisions and actions taken. This ensures, the individual is consistently treated with respect, has their voice heard and feels properly supported. The policy ensures that practitioners have clear guidance on how to support individuals in every aspect of their life that is impacted by the hoarding behaviour. The policy also helps the individual who is hoarding/ self-neglecting, or their family members/ carers seek out support. Without the policy, vulnerable adults may not be referred to the necessary services or may not be referred as soon as they require help, leading to a delay in help given and possibly a less effective outcome.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This policy addresses a Council-wide need for a coordinated, multi-agency approach for working with adults who hoard and self-neglect. Adults who hoard or self-neglect often face intervention or require support from different services within the Council and partner agencies because of the way hoarding and self-neglect impacts different areas like housing, environmental health, adult social care and mental health. In order to coordinate an effective approach, it is vital that a multi-agency approach is established. Joint-working

enables services to share information and make collective decisions that will be most effective in the long term.

The policy sets out a wraparound package of care for adults with hoarding disorder. This includes long-term therapeutic care and monitoring to support them in treating the underlying cause of the disorder. This approach will reduce the need for repeated interventions such as de-cluttering, council house repairs, temporary accommodation and other costly and time-consuming methods. Long-term support will also help the individual re-build relationships, that may have been impacted by the disorder, with neighbours and loved ones, and maintain a safe and comfortable environment.

7. COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

7.1 Financial Implications

There should be no additional cost, as a result of this policy. If any expenditure is needed this will be contained within the safeguarding budget.

7.2 Legal Implications

Section 42 of the Care Act places a duty on local authorities to undertake safeguarding enquiries if certain conditions are met. A local authority is under a duty to make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether (and if applicable, what) action should be taken in the case of an adult in its area (whether or not the adult is ordinarily resident in its area) where the local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that the adult meets the following 3 requirements: has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs); is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. 'Neglect' can include 'self-neglect'. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance states that self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour and includes hoarding.

A multi-agency approach and the sharing of information are fundamental to the successful implementation of this policy. Such information sharing must be undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations.

The policy is in line with the local authority's duties and powers under housing, environmental and public health legislation.

7.3 Property Implications

None.

8. KEY RISKS

This policy addresses a number of risks identified with the existing processes as detailed in this report and adoption of this policy will ensure these risks are mitigated.

9. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES - CREATING A LIFETIME OF OPPORTUNITIES IN ENFIELD

9.1 Good Homes in Well-Connected Neighbourhoods

The policy will help the council prevent vulnerable adults being made homeless, either from social or private tenancies, due to breach of tenancy agreements. The policy will enable council services and partner agencies to support adults who hoard/ self-neglect in improving their living environments.

9.2 Sustain Strong and Healthy Communities

The policy sets out clear guidelines designed to support vulnerable adults with both their physical and mental well-being using a multi-agency, person-centred approach which will identify risk, and share information in order that the individual receives appropriate support as soon as possible and is helped to achieve optimal health and resilience in the long term. The policy will also support individuals to thrive and reintegrate into society by helping to build trusting relationships and confidence.

9.3 Build our Local Economy to Create a Thriving Place

The policy's multi-agency approach will help the council and partner agencies intervene to improve outcomes for an individual who hoards/self-neglects at an earlier date, therefore minimising the necessity of more costly actions further down the line.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

An Equalities Impact Statement has been completed for this policy. National research and professional accounts within Enfield suggest that elderly people are more likely to be experiencing a hoarding disorder due to frailty, social isolation and the nature of the disorder which tends to escalate over time. The policy will meet its obligations under the Equalities Act; it will not discriminate against any particular group and each individual will be treated fairly and without discrimination.

11. PERFORMANCE AND DATA IMPLICATIONS

The policy requires that council services and agencies record and report decisions, actions and outcomes related to each case in order that the Enfield

Safeguarding Adults Board is able to assess the effectiveness, support future learning and training and gather a catalogue of best practice.

The numbers of hoarding and Self Neglect will continue to be collected, reported and reviewed to allow us to understand any changes in volumes and to allow us to gauge the success of the policy.

The policy sets out guidelines for collecting and monitoring data related to hoarding cases for future planning. This data will be used to assess whether any amendments need to be made to the policy.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The policy sets out how agencies and services will work together to ensure the living environments of adults who hoard are safe and risks such as fire-hazards and clutter that may lead to injury are effectively removed. The policy also gives consideration to the mental wellbeing of adults involved and sets out how services will work together with a person-centred approach.

13. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The policy sets out guiding principles that will help individuals who hoard/ self-neglect receive the necessary support and facilitate healthier, more positive outcomes that include clean, clutter free homes, good personal hygiene and a healthier lifestyle which promotes improved physical and mental health. Furthermore, achieving these outcomes will contribute to better social cohesion, for example, improved relationships with neighbours and family members.

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Draft Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy Cover Report

Draft Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy

Equality Impact Assessment