

Healthy Homes Hoarding Checklist

WHAT IS HOARDING?

Hoarding is where someone acquires a large number of items and stores them in an unorganised way. This is different to collecting where items might be filed or categorised. Things may mean a lot to someone that hoards but have little or no value, such as junk mail, carrier bags, receipts, old medication, and even things like hair, or rotten food.

HOW CAN HOARDING AFFECT HEALTH?

Hoarding can affect health in many ways:

- It can impact mental health by affecting relationships with family and friends. This can increase social isolation and loneliness.
- It can increase the risk of trips and falls in the home, or the likelihood of a fire particularly if routes to doors are blocked.
- It can encourage rodents or insects which may increase likelihood of bacteria or diseases.
- It can also affect existing health conditions particularly breathing problems, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

WHO IS MOST SENSITIVE TO THE EFFECTS OF HOARDING?

Anybody can be affected by hoarding, and it is thought to start in teenage years and become more noticeable with age. It is estimated that 2-5% of the population are affected by hoarding.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF HOARDING

Someone who has a hoarding disorder may typically:

- ☐ Keep or collect items that may have little or no monetary value, such as junk mail, carrier bags or items they intend to reuse or repair.
- ☐ Find it hard to categorise or organise items.
- ☐ Have difficulty making decisions about personal items or belongings.
- ☐ Struggle to manage everyday tasks, such as cooking, cleaning and paying bills.
- ☐ Become extremely attached to items, refusing to let anyone touch or borrow them.
- ☐ Avoid letting people into their home.

PRACTICAL STEPS

Here are some practical steps to try to manage hoarding in the home:

- ☐ Maintain a clear path to doors and a clear exit, so doors can open completely. This will ensure people can enter and leave in an emergency.
- ☐ Keep 24 inch clear around oven top, with no items, to reduce the risk of fire.
- ☐ Keep space clear to safely eat at home, away from items that may be unhygienic.
- ☐ Set up a filing system for important documents. Or use boxes for things like bills, stamps, or stationary, to protect important documents and avoid late payments and charges.
- ☐ Limit incoming papers such as newspaper or magazine subscriptions, and junk mail.

HELP AND SUPPORT

There is support and advice available for anyone experiencing or affected by hoarding
Scan the QR code or visit: www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk/hoarding

