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Hoarding Awareness

Area in city/ citywide:	Citywide
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Appendix:	

Purpose:

May 11th – 15th was National Hoarding Awareness Week. This annual campaign is led by Clouds End Community Interest Company and is a stakeholder awareness campaign across the political, health and social care communities to raise awareness of the risks associated with hoarding. This year's campaign was focused on what should be included in national guidelines for hoarding support.

This report is provided to give an update on developments in our work on hoarding – what we are doing to support our tenants and work we are doing with other partners and stakeholders.

Main body of the report:

Hoarding is something which we are becoming increasingly aware of across the city. It has a significant impact on people who are hoarding, often leading to isolation and feelings of shame. It can impact on the families of people who are hoarding – they may become isolated themselves, or have to provide support to their relative. Where hoarding spreads outside a property it can impact on the neighbourhood, become unsightly and unhygienic, as well as impacting on building and fire safety, particularly where it happens in blocks.

What is hoarding

- A complex issue, and is a category of self-neglect, as defined by the Care Act 2014 and affects 2 – 5 % of the population.
- A recognised mental health issue, often due to past traumatic events and usually leads to "clutter".
- People often hoard because it provides them with a feeling of safety, comfort and control.
- It can have a negative impact on emotional and physical wellbeing, building and fire safety.

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What we are doing

To support tenant's wellbeing and to ensure we meet statutory obligations under Building Safety Act, Fire Safety Act and Care Act (Safeguarding) we have updated our Hoarding procedure to -

- ensure that Housing staff who visit properties and see hoarding know how to raise this for further action / support
- ensure that hoarding in high rise blocks, particularly LPS blocks, is addressed as a priority
- ensure that officers who work directly with people who are hoarding are aware of the correct process to follow, including ensuring fire safety and the involvement of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service when appropriate
- ensure that officers take a trauma /psychologically informed approach, which puts tenants at the centre of action planning
- ensure that we are using our systems to record those properties where we know there is hoarding

We have provided briefings to Housing staff to ensure they understand what hoarding is the impact it can have on individuals and communities and the risks that it poses.

We have set up a Hoarding panel alongside Adult Social Care, Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service . This looks at cases where the level of hoarding is particularly high, impacting on the tenant and possibly neighbours and is proving hard to address. It aims to provide suggestions / solutions to the issues and ensure that all relevant steps are being taken and statutory obligations met.

Alongside Adult Social Care we have commissioned a new cleaning and decluttering service to assist us in clearing clutter from people's properties. We work closely with this service to ensure that clutter is cleared in a respectful, trauma informed way, putting our tenants welfare at the centre of the work.

We are part of a Hoarding Focus Group with housing partners in East Sussex which is looking into what services and good practice currently exist across the county to support people who are hoarding, what gaps exist and how they can be filled. This group is looking at how to involve people with lived experience of hoarding in

offering support and advice to people who hoard and professionals working with them.

Tenancy Sustainment Team

The Tenancy Sustainment Team provide support to people who face challenges on a number of issues to sustain their tenancies. Supporting people who hoard is a significant part of the work they do – in 2026 to date hoarding is the reason for 60% of the referrals to the team. They work with people over a long period (this can be many months and sometimes a year and more) , to explore the reasons behind their hoarding and understand the risks that it poses to them and to others. They work with the person to agree actions to start clearing their property and reduce that risk, reviewing that the actions that are being taken work for the person and do not re-traumatise them.

Next Steps/how to get involved:

If you would like support with hoarding, know a tenant who does or have concerns about a tenant please contact - Housing.CustomerServices@brighton-hove.gov.uk / 01273 293030.

The Tenancy Sustainment Team will be at the Tenant Celebration Day on 24th June, where you can talk to us about hoarding.

www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/hoarding-disorder
www.hoardinguk.org
www.mind.org.uk/hoarding