

What is Self-Neglect?

Encompasses a wide range of behaviour – neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Professionals can find working with people who self-neglect very challenging. The key to effective interventions in self-neglect is building relationships to effectively engage with people without causing distress and reserving use of legal powers to where they are proportionate and essential. Safeguarding processes may be required when working with people that self-neglect, but much of the work will be long-term work, which happens under other frameworks, such as the care management framework.

The pandemic has resulted in there being less opportunities for contact with people who may be struggling. It is therefore even more important that we are aware of the possible signs of self-neglect and how we can support individuals who self-neglect.

SPOTTING SELF-NEGLECT, some possible signs may include the following:

- ❖ A person who self-neglects may live in a very unclean environment, which may be hazardous, for example living with a rodent infestation or living with a completely blocked toilet.
- ❖ A person who self-neglects may have a poor diet and nutrition that may impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, there is little or no fresh food in the fridge, or food is mouldy and very out of date. There may be a financial reason for this.
- ❖ A person who self-neglects may fail to attend important appointments. It is important to consider if the person failed to attend or was not brought.
- ❖ A person who self-neglects may decline necessary support from health and/or social care staff in relation to personal hygiene and care. They may have poor personal hygiene, poor healing of sores, or long toenails.
- ❖ A person who self-neglects may neglect household maintenance, and therefore create hazards or fire risks. For example: rotten floorboards creating trip hazards or lack of boiler or electrical maintenance.
- ❖ Hoarding is associated with self-neglect. 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. When hoarding is identified, risks to both the individual and the public are to be assessed and the appropriate risk management plans put in place.

Working virtually can make identifying self-neglect more difficult, consider if are there other agencies going into an individual’s home that could provide information?

Alongside having a dedicated webpage to [Self-Neglect](#), the partnership have produced a number of tools to support professionals in identifying and supporting individuals that or are at risk self-neglect:

Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policies and Procedures: <https://www.berkshiresafeguardingadults.co.uk/> (Section 2.6 self-neglect)

The West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board has a localised risk management framework (MARM) which may be appropriate where self-neglect is known or suspected. The risk framework was reviewed and relaunched in October 2022 and can be found here:

<http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/practitioners/supporting-individuals-to-manage-risk-and-multi-agency-framework-marm/>

[Self-Neglect and Hoarding Safeguarding Pathway Toolkit](#), launched in November 2022 the toolkit has been produced to support professionals in decision making where self-neglect is know or suspected.

In October 2022, our SAB independent chair delivered a presentation on Self-Neglect and the Mental Capacity Act, a recording of this session is available [here](#).

The partnership have published six Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) where learning in regard to Self-Neglect has been identified the practice learning notes can be found here: [Louise](#), [Ken](#), [Henry](#), [Carol](#), [Paul](#), [Aubrey](#).