

1 What is a self neglect?

Self-neglect is included as a category under adult safeguarding in The Care Act (2014) Statutory Guidance. Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour such as neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Local authorities have a duty to make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

2 Signs of self neglect

Characteristics of self neglect can include:

- Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health, hygiene and safety
- Animal collecting with potential insanitary conditions and neglect of animal needs
- Failure to manage personal affairs such as social contact and finances
- Obsessive hoarding creating fire hazards.

3 Causes of self neglect

It is not always possible to establish the root cause however self-neglect can be a result of:

- Brain injury, dementia or other mental disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder or hoarding disorder
- Physical illness which has effect on abilities, energy levels, attention span, organisational skills or motivation
- Reduced motivation as a side effect of medication

People with mental health problems may display self-neglecting behaviours however there is often an assumption that self-neglecting behaviours indicate a mental health problem – this may not be the case.

4 How to help

Safeguarding duties apply where the adult has care and support needs that means they are unable to protect themselves against self-neglect.

In most cases, the intervention should seek to minimise the risk while respecting the individual choices. Research has shown that approaches such as 'deep cleans' can be deeply upsetting and not useful for the individual.



**Are you worried about someone?
Don't sit in silence!**

Please contact Family Connect on 01952 385385 or in an emergency call 999.



Self Neglect

6 Questions to consider

How would you recognise the signs of self neglect and hoarding?

Have you read the [Adult Self-Neglect Best Practice Guidance](#)

5 Good practice

- Work with partners to ensure the right approach for each individual
- Be person-centered to respect the views of the individual and work towards outcomes they want
- Be analytical to identify underlying causes that help address the issue
- Have patience and gain trust from the individual and agree small steps at a time

In terms of practical tasks, risk assessments have effective, multi-agency approaches to assessing and monitoring risk. Professionals should feel competent in applying the Mental Capacity Act in cases of self-neglect or in a minority of cases complete a Mental health assessment.