

Self-Neglect

Briefing Note

What is self-neglect?

Self-neglect is any failure of an adult to take care of themselves which causes, or is reasonably likely to cause, serious physical, mental or emotional harm or substantial damage to financial security or a loss of assets.

How may someone who self-neglects present?

Often people who are deemed to be self-neglecting show the following characteristics:

- Very poor personal hygiene;
- Unkempt appearance;
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter;
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration;
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions;
- Neglecting household maintenance;
- Hoarding;
- Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions;
- Non-compliance with health or care services; and
- Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

It is important to note that this isn't always the case with people who self-neglect.

Are certain people more at risk of self-neglect?

Age-related changes that result in functional decline, cognitive impairment, frailty or psychiatric illness can increase vulnerability for self-neglect. Whilst self-neglect can occur at any age, it is more common in older people. Self-neglect may be linked to an underlying mental illness or psychological distress.

Risk factors are:

- Advancing age;
- Mental health problems;
- Cognitive impairment;
- Dementia;
- Frontal lobe dysfunction;
- Depression;
- Chronic illness;
- Nutritional deficiency;
- Alcohol and substance misuse;
- Functional and social dependency;
- Social isolation; and
- Delirium

Further information can be found in the [West Midlands Adult Self-Neglect Best Practice Guidance](#).

What happens if someone I know self-neglects?

If you are concerned about someone who has care and support needs and may be self-neglecting then, please call Family Connect on 01952 385385. The team will take the details of your concerns and advise you on the next steps.

For further information contact the Partnership Management Team on 01952 383924 or via email partnerships@telford.gov.uk