Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
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TO:	MHA Board
PREPARED BY:	Chris Chalk (Director of Housing & Community Initiatives) Mark Smith (Director of Asset Management)
SUBJECT:	HOARDING MANAGEMENT POLICY
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APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)
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HOARDING MANAGEMENT POLICY

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

If you have difficulty with reading this policy, including any difficulties with sight or hearing, or if you require this document translated into another language, please contact us and we will be happy to provide this information in a format that suits your needs.

MS/JULY.2026/REF

HOARDING MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1 MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2 MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3 LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. The Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standard 6 states that the governing body must identify and mitigate risk to the organisations purpose. Hoarding with properties presents risks to the Associations assets as well as tenant safety and therefore is a risk that must be nullified as far as reasonably possible. MHA adheres to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy.

4 POLICY INTRODUCTION

Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) is committed to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and live safely within their homes.

This management policy sets out how MHA will respond when hoarding behaviour is identified within a tenant's home.

The strategy aims to:

- Safeguard the health and wellbeing of tenants
- Protect neighbours, staff and property
- Promote tenancy sustainment
- Ensure appropriate multi-agency support
- Manage risks associated with hoarding behaviour.

MHA will take a supportive, non-judgemental approach and recognise that hoarding behaviour is often linked to mental health, trauma or other vulnerabilities.

Enforcement action will only be considered as a last resort where serious risks remain unmanaged.

5 DEFINITION OF HOARDING

Hoarding is the excessive collection and retention of items to the extent that it:

- restricts normal use of living space
- creates health and safety risks
- affects the condition of the property
- poses risks to the tenant, neighbours or staff.

Items may include:

- household goods
- papers and magazines
- food
- clothing
- furniture
- animals.

Hoarding behaviour is recognised as a mental health condition and should be approached with sensitivity.

6 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This management policy reflects relevant Scottish legislation including:

- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998

Under the Adult Support and Protection Act, MHA has a duty to raise concerns where an adult may be at risk of harm due to self-neglect.

7 IDENTIFYING HOARDING BEHAVIOUR

Hoarding concerns may be identified through:

- tenancy visits
- repairs visits
- gas safety inspections
- neighbour complaints
- reports from partner agencies
- welfare checks.

Common indicators include:

- restricted access to rooms or exits
- excessive clutter
- strong odours
- pest infestations
- visible fire hazards
- inability to use kitchen or bathroom facilities
- accumulation of waste

- blocked ventilation.

Staff should always approach the issue sensitively and without judgement.

However, staff must raise concerns as soon as hoarding is identified or concerns raised in order to action as early as possible.

8 HOARDING RISK LEVELS

Where hoarding is identified, staff should assess the severity of the issue.

Level	Category	Indicators	Response
Level 1	Low Risk	• Minor clutter • Property still functional • No immediate safety risks	• Advice and guidance • Monitoring through routine visits
Level 2	Medium Risk	• Clutter affecting use of some rooms • Hygiene concerns • Potential fire risk	• Support plan agreed with tenant • Referrals to support agencies • Regular monitoring
Level 3	High Risk	• Significant clutter • Fire hazards • Health hazards • Structural or access issues	• Multi-agency intervention • Fire Service referral • Intensive support plan • Emergency decanting from property as a last resort

9 STAFF SAFETY

Hoarding properties may present hazards including:

- trip hazards
- fire risk
- unhygienic conditions
- pest infestation
- aggressive animals.

Staff must:

- complete a risk assessment before visiting
- avoid entering unsafe environments
- use PPE where necessary
- conduct joint visits if required.

Staff must ensure that their own safety and welfare is paramount and takes priority.

10 INITIAL RESPONSE

Where hoarding behaviour is identified, the Housing Officer will:

1. Arrange a home visit to assess the situation.
2. Discuss concerns with the tenant in a supportive and non-judgemental manner.
3. Assess potential health and safety risks.
4. Identify any support needs.
5. Record the findings.

Where risks are identified, the Housing Officer should consult with the Senior Housing Officer and/or Director of Housing & Community Initiatives.

11 SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

MHA will prioritise support to help tenants address hoarding behaviour.

This may include:

Internal Support

- increased housing visits
- tenancy sustainment support
- referrals to MHA support services where available.

External Support

Referrals may be made to:

- Social Work
- Health services
- GP
- Mental health services
- addiction services
- support charities
- Environmental Health
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

Referrals will normally be made with the tenant's consent, unless there is a safeguarding concern.

In the cases where animal hoarding is a factor, the SSPCA should be contacted on 03000 999 999

12 MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

Hoarding cases often require a multi-agency response.

The Housing Officer may work with:

- Social Work
- Health & Social Care Partnership
- Fire Service
- Environmental Health
- Support providers
- family members or advocates.

Multi-agency working helps ensure:

- appropriate support
- risk reduction
- sustainable outcomes.

13 ACTION PLANNING

Where hoarding has been identified, an action plan will be agreed with the tenant.

The plan should include:

- gradual decluttering
- waste removal
- cleaning support
- support service engagement
- property access improvements.

The plan should:

- set realistic goals
- include clear timescales
- identify support available.

Progress will be monitored through recorded follow-up visits.

14 FIRE SAFETY

Hoarding significantly increases fire risk.

Where concerns exist, MHA may request a Home Fire Safety Visit from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

Tenants should be advised to:

- maintain clear exit routes
- avoid storing items near heat sources
- avoid overloading sockets.

15 PROPERTY CLEARANCE

Where necessary, arrangements may be made to assist the tenant with clearing items from the property.

This may include:

- waste removal services
- support from charities
- specialist cleaning.

Where possible the residing tenant should organise clearance work. Should there be no option but for the work to be undertaken by MHA or contractors, costs may be rechargeable to the tenant, depending on circumstances and each case will be considered individually.

In certain circumstance MHA may consider, as part of a managed solution to the problem, moving the tenant responsible for hoarding to alternative accommodation to provide a 'clean start', but only in situations where there is no alternative solution.

16 ENFORCEMENT

MHA's priority is tenancy sustainment; however enforcement action may be necessary where:

- significant risks remain
- the tenant refuses support
- the condition of the property continues to deteriorate.

Enforcement options may include:

1. Written warning
2. Further intervention and support
3. Legal action under the tenancy agreement.

Eviction will only be considered as a last resort where all other options have been exhausted.

17 RECORD KEEPING

Housing Officers must record:

- concerns raised
- inspections
- risk assessments
- referrals made
- action plans
- progress updates.

Accurate records are essential to ensure appropriate case management.

18 REVIEW OF CASES

Hoarding cases should be reviewed regularly to ensure:

- risks are being managed
- support remains appropriate
- progress is being made.

Cases should remain open until risks have been reduced to an acceptable level.

19 EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

20 DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

21 POLICY MONITORING & REVIEW

The Hoarding Management Policy will be reviewed by the Management Board on a triennial basis in line with EVH updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary due to legislative or operational changes.