

## 7 minute briefing: Self-neglect

- 1. What is self-neglect?** Self-neglect is the neglect of your own personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and can include behaviour such as hoarding. Examples of self-neglect can include lack of self-care (hygiene, nutrition, hydration), lack of care for your environment (squalor or hoarding), or a refusal of services that would lessen the risk of harm.
- 2. Why it matters.** Without early intervention, existing health problems may be made worse. Neglect of personal hygiene may mean that the person suffers social difficulties and isolation, physical and mental health breakdown. Dilapidated property or excess rubbish can become infested and can be a fire risk, which is a risk to the adult, family, neighbours and others.
- 3. Information.** Self-neglect has been linked to physical health problems, mental health issues, substance misuse, psychological and social factors, diminished social networks, personality traits, traumatic histories and life changing events.
- 4. What self-neglect includes.** Living in grossly unsanitary conditions, suffering from an untreated illness, disease or injury, suffering from malnutrition to such an extent that without an intervention, the adult's physical or mental health is likely to be severely impaired, creating a hazardous situation that will likely cause serious physical harm to the adult or others or cause substantial damage to or loss of assets.
- 5. Reporting concerns.** Self-neglect is a safeguarding issue when the person who self-neglects has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result is unable to protect themselves. It may also be a concern if the adult who is self-neglecting is a carer for an adult at risk. In these circumstances always discuss the concerns with Stockport Adult Social Care on 0161 217 6029. If there is an immediate serious risk to the person or others, please call 999.
- 6. What to do.** Understanding and assessing the adult's mental capacity is crucial. A mentally competent person who understands the consequences of their decisions may make a conscious and voluntary decision to engage in acts that threaten their health or safety as a matter of personal choice. A person without capacity may not understand the consequences of their actions and we have a duty of care to support them. Try and find out what the adult wants, and share any concerns with other professionals involved. Remember to 'think family'.
- 7. Links and more information.**
  - [Self-neglect multi-agency practice guidance](#)
  - Read Martin's SAR [here](#)
  - Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) [Self-neglect resource](#)