Hoarding: A Social Housing Provider’s Perspective

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Hoarding and Self Neglect Conference
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Overview of the session

• Perspective from an RSL

• A priority for livin following the death of a tenant

• Development and implementation of a robust procedure

• Case studies

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A bit about you…

• What is your background?

• What is your experience of dealing with hoarders? Key challenges from your perspective?

• What is the main thing you would like to get out of this session/the day as a whole?
TRIBUTES have been paid to a pensioner who died in a house blaze, as firefighters said the amount of items hoarded at the property hampered their rescue attempt.

John Walkden, of Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue, said: “The crews which tried to get into the front of the house couldn’t actually open the front door.

“There was debris behind the front door, we had to smash our way in and try to get up the stairs and rescue the female occupant. In 17 years’ experience in the fire service, I have seen hoarding, but not to this extent.”

Taken from Northern Echo, 16.05.12
Severe hoarding case

The Coroner reported:

- Items piled against the door delayed access to fire crews who rescued the son through the window
- There was 18 months of accumulated human waste stored in the property
- There was a gap of less than one foot to the ceiling in some rooms where items were piled so high
- The son of the deceased said it took 2 hours to get to the door to do the shopping
- There was a ‘staggering’ amounts of goods being hoarded
- Heat from an exposed copper cable caused surrounding items to ignite and spread quickly
Severe hoarding case

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The Coroner reported:

“..an urgent review needs to be undertaken to ensure that all tenanted properties are in a fit and proper condition to be occupied (so far as hoarding is concerned) and immediate steps are taken to rectify problems where they exist and remove the risk of similar fatalities in the future”.

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Urgent Action Required

- Research undertaken for best practice
- What were others doing??
- Robust procedure produced – has been adapted as more cases are ‘put through’ it

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Case Studies

Read the background to the 3 case studies:

• What information do you think is key for informing the approach to dealing with the case?

• What key actions might you take?

• What do you envisage the challenges to be?
Case Studies - feedback

From the action livin took:

• Would you have done anything different?
• Does anything surprise you/challenge the way you thought before?
• What key aspects of the case stand out?

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In Summary

• Procedure not a panacea

• Long process – very time-consuming (cannot be rushed)

• Complex

• Requires partnership working

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Any Questions?