

CLUTTER, DISORGANISATION & HOARDING BEHAVIOURS

Ice-Breaker Form

Empowering people to start a conversation with their GP/doctor, clinician, professional or other trusted person, and get practical advice, treatment, and support to feel better

Dear:

I have a problem which is affecting my health & wellbeing

The problem applies to:

Me	Someone I live with	A family member	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I / they have:

(Tick all the boxes that apply)

A difficulty stopping acquiring things and accumulating them.	
Persistent difficulty or distress discarding or parting with personal possessions.	
Strong urges to save items.	
Areas full of possessions (eg. living areas, gardens, sheds, vehicles, etc.)	
Areas where normal use of the space is difficult or impossible (eg. access to or use of toilet, kitchen, boiler, radiators, heating, hot water, lights, etc).	
Safety risks* inside or outside the home; Please explain your answer on the next page. (eg. slip/trip/fall hazards; fire risks; blocked doors/windows/stairs; mould; faulty/broken electrical or gas equipment; rats/mice; overgrown garden, etc).	
Children, adults and/or animals that are not being looked after properly.	
Become overwhelmed and find making progress to reduce the problem difficult.	
Been reluctant to talk to people who say they want to help, and/or not permitted them to enter the property or the areas affected.	
Severe difficulty with things like timekeeping, prioritising, planning, organising (eg. paperwork or paying bills on time), making phone calls; making decisions.	
Been told to make changes and that action will be taken if nothing is done by a certain date. (eg. by a family member, landlord, Environmental Health Officer, etc),	

Safety Information

The Clutter Image Rating (CIR)** shown here is a scale used to give an approximate measurement of levels of “clutter” in a room (1 to 9). Images to assist can be found [HERE](#)

What number (level) on the Clutter Image Rating Scale is the most cluttered area that is affected, or you are concerned about?

Please show your trusted person photos or videos of the areas affected, so they can advise you better.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

In what year did you first realise it had become a problem, and why?

***What safety risks are there?**

Who or what else is affected or involved and how?

(eg. young children, adult relatives, pets, friends, neighbours, Police, local authority, etc)

**I'm now at the stage at which I need to
appeal to you to help me because:**

(Tick all that apply)

I feel unwell because of this situation.	
I feel distressed, and/or indecisive about what to do to make things better.	
It's hard for me / them to talk about this.	
I feel alone and need support.	
Other people don't seem to understand.	

Information for Professionals

Not everyone who owns lots of possessions exhibits **hoarding behaviours** or has the diagnosable mental illness **Hoarding Disorder** (see the diagnostic criteria in ICD-11 for details). For many people, living in a **chronically disorganised** home or where the **Clutter Image Rating (CIR) level is 1 - 4 can be as upsetting, overwhelming, incapacitating and disabling as CIR level 5 and above.

It's important to note that **safety issues and self-neglect** can occur at **ALL** levels.

In England **The Care Act 2014** recognises **hoarding behaviours** as one of the manifestations of **self-neglect** and requires all public bodies to **safeguard people at risk**. To achieve the most sustainable and cost-effective results, managing hoarding behaviours and clutter-related issues usually requires a **person-centred, collaborative and integrated approach** between multiple agencies.

Various factors can result in "clutter" accumulating, someone becoming "**Chronically Disorganised**" or exhibiting **hoarding behaviours** – often a **COMBINATION of MULTIPLE factors** (such as, but **not restricted to**):

- Anything likely to impair **Executive Functioning and/or cognition** – ie. hinder a person's ability to plan; organise; prioritise; start/finish tasks; make decisions; be flexible with their thinking; remember things; control their impulses; self-monitor; manage their timekeeping and regulate their emotions, such as:
 - **Neurodevelopmental conditions** – often undiagnosed - eg. **Learning Disabilities; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Autism; Dyslexia; Developmental Coordination Disorder** - DCD, also known as **Dyspraxia**, etc.
 - **Acquired conditions** - eg. Acquired Brain Injury – ABI; viral infections – eg. COVID-19; Long COVID
 - **Diseases of the nervous system** - eg. Migraine; Motor Neuron Disease; Multiple Sclerosis; Cerebral Palsy
 - **Neurocognitive Disorders** - eg. Dementia; Parkinson's Disease; etc.
 - **Mental ill-health** - eg. Anxiety; Depression; **PTSD/CPTSD**;
 - Self-neglect; OCD; Bipolar Disorder; Schizophrenia; Hoarding Disorder
 - **Misuse** of drugs, alcohol, etc.
 - **Other** – eg. Chromosome disorders (Klinefelter's; XXX; Down's Syndrome, etc)
- **Trauma** - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); adult trauma; abuse; neglect
- **Life/World events** and/or **changes in circumstances affecting self, family, others** - eg. bereavement; redundancy; relationship changes; domestic abuse, etc
- **Physical ill-health** - eg. mobility issues; **Fibromyalgia; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME**; heart condition; hypermobility; cancer; etc.
- **Overwhelm & exhaustion** - eg. due to carer responsibilities; Age/infirmity; family issues; too much pressure; too many people to deal with; too much going on to cope with effectively, etc.