



# Tidy Homes Tidy Minds Hoarding Scheme



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## About Us

Southway Housing Trust is a not-for-profit local housing company established in 2007, working in and around South Manchester. We're a committed and forward-thinking not-for-profit local housing company and are passionate about providing excellent homes and outstanding customer care.

We own and manage almost 6,000 homes across Burnage, Chorlton, Didsbury and Withington.

### **Our Vision**

We will work in partnership with others to make South Manchester a place that people are proud of - a safe place where people choose to live, work and play.

### **Our Purpose**

To provide high quality affordable homes in desirable neighbourhoods where people are happy to live and have the opportunity to achieve their potential. We also have a wider purpose to make best use of our resources to achieve our social objectives.

## Southway Community Support Team

Southway recognises that some individuals living in our homes reach a point where they require intensive support and many have lost the support they have been receiving from other agencies. The Community Support Team provides one to one support to adults and families living in Southway's homes. The Officers dedicate time to resolving a situation, linking across multiple agencies, using specialist knowledge and experience, immersing themselves in a case so that it can be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

Our Support Officers specialise in particular areas, attend training and keep up to date with information, legislation and approaches to working. They provide holistic support to tenants in often complex situations to assist people to live independently, aiming for them to ultimately have less reliance on public services, to manage their homes themselves, to access support in their neighbourhood and live fulfilled lives.

## Tidy Homes Tidy Minds

This project provides a specialist resource to identify and address properties affected by hoarding with the aim of making a real long term difference to the individual's life. The approach equips individuals with skills and coping techniques to maintain their homes in the future alongside providing a better and safer living environment.

### What is hoarding?

Hoarding is defined by the NHS as:

*"Excessively acquiring items that appear of little or no value and not being able to throw them away, resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter".*

Compulsive hoarding can be a distressing and debilitating psychological condition.

Since 2013 hoarding disorder has been recognised as a Mental Health condition. Hoarding is not a condition anyone is born with, it is most often linked to early trauma and circumstances that have happened in a person's life.

A property that is affected by hoarding causes a fire health and safety risk to the occupants, the property, neighbours and neighbouring properties. Some properties affected by hoarding may be clean and tidy but still cause a fire health and safety risk, as exits may be blocked and rooms cannot be used for the purpose they were intended e.g. kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms.

High profile cases have highlighted the need for agencies to work in partnership to tackle poor property condition and in particular hoarding. Many agencies feel powerless and lack the specialist knowledge to intervene successfully, in particular the threat of enforcement can often deter individuals from engaging.

## What are we doing?

Our in-house Community Support Team has particular expertise in engaging tenants who are suffering with a Hoarding Disorder. We have successfully helped 13 tenants over a 2 year period address their hoarding behaviour through practical and emotional support to reduce the amount of clutter in the property.

We apply a holistic approach, using an internationally recognised methodology to classify the extent of the hoard, setting and agreeing a SMART action plan and offering practical support. The Support Officers have been trained in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques, to help the individual understand what makes it difficult to throw things away and the reasons why the clutter has built up.

From the outset we are clear that the property condition must be improved but that practical support will be provided to downsize the hoard. The service has a dedicated vehicle for use in disposing of items to either tips, charity shops or recycling schemes. We place importance on the responsibility of the individual for clearing the clutter from their home, working together with the Officer as well as setting tasks for them to do on their own.

### Partnerships

The Support Officers work in partnership with the Greater Manchester Fire Service when inspecting the property to rate the fire risk. We work together with other involved agencies on case planning, and risk and capacity assessments. Referrals to Adult Social Care and / or Mental Health Services are completed as necessary.

#### Key Benefits:

- Reduction in fire health and safety risks
- Working with people whose health and wellbeing may prevent them from accessing traditional services
- Addressing unmet needs within the community, and working with people who don't have access to other support (family / agency)
- Helping people remain independent and in their own homes
- Reducing pressure on statutory providers where time constraints prevent such intense working.

## Proposal

Southway can offer the following levels of services:

1. Case management includes, but is not limited to:

- Allocated Support Officer
- Case handover including introduction to the individual
- Assessment (risk and needs) visit including inspection of property and establishing whether the individual is ready to engage in practical support
- Determining risk and agreeing an action plan with the individual and / or referral agency
- If engaging, carrying out home visits at a time and duration as agreed with the individual
- Assessing support needs, assisting with low level needs e.g. managing bills and low level debt, applying for grants for white goods or accessing recycling schemes
- Referring to statutory agencies or other support agencies as required
- Provision of basic housing advice if required and referral to local housing options teams
- Record keeping, monitoring progress and full case report.

2. Case Consultancy includes

- Desk top case review
- Written case action plan
- Advice on options available.

3. Staff training

- What is hoarding
- Why it is important to tackle hoarding
- Good practice and options for working with individuals with hoarding disorder.

In addition Southway has an Advice Team offering budgeting, benefits checks, welfare rights advice including Tribunal representation, debt management including negotiation with agencies, and applications for Debt Relief Orders and Bankruptcy.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to the Case Management service, Southway will provide:

- Monthly progress meetings
- Home fire risk assessments (where Fire Service engaged locally)
- Written assessment of hoard / property condition before and after intervention
- Written case studies
- Individuals' feedback and testimonials

## Rates

| Task                        | Estimated Cost  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Assessment (30 mins)        | Free            |
| Per Hour                    | £35             |
| Per 3 hour session          | £105            |
| 8 weeks ( 1 x 3hr weekly)   | £840            |
| 16 weeks (2 x 3hr weekly)   | £1680           |
| 24 weeks (2 x 3hr weekly)   | £2520           |
| Consultancy Work (per hour) | £40             |
| Hoarding Training           | Price on asking |

Costs inclusive of 10% Management Charge and VAT

Price for Advice Team services provided on application

For further information please contact Claire Davies Community Support and Age Friendly Manager on 0161 448 4212 or [c.davies@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:c.davies@southwayhousing.co.uk).

## Tidy Homes Tidy Minds Case Studies

### Case Study 1

X was referred to the project following a gas safety inspection during which X broke down in tears and said she had had enough and wanted to harm herself. After a short hospitalisation we contacted X and arranged an assessment visit. X is 60 years old and works full time, as well as caring for her severely disabled adult daughter. The house is a 3 bedroom parlour and has been adapted to meet the needs of her daughter. X had been in an abusive relationship and since that ended she was finding it hard to cope with life and the house, and had turned to alcohol to cope. The house was very cluttered and X and her daughter were sleeping on the sofa in the living room. X agreed to engage in the project and we made an action plan, to go through a room at a time. With this new focus X soon got in the mind set of clearing out items she had no attachment to. Over a period of 4 months we successfully cleared every room so it could be used for the purpose intended. We arranged for security measures to be fitted to the house so that X felt more secure and could move back upstairs to sleeping in the bedroom. X gave up alcohol and we reported that her wellbeing had improved so much she didn't require referring to statutory agencies. X's daughter also started attending local day care.

### Case Study 2

X had lived with his mother until her death after which he struggled to manage the flat and was referred to the project by the Housing Officer. X hoarded musical instruments; access to the bedrooms was blocked so X slept on sofa cushions in the lounge. On top of this X's dog wasn't house trained so frequently urinated in the living room on the floor, rug and couch. The property was in very poor condition, having not benefited from improvement works due to X refusing access. X agreed to work with the project and to consider moving to a smaller property in an age friendly new development. Before X could move we set about downsizing his hoard, X proactively decided to donate a lot of his musical instruments to local community groups and the Music and Arts College. X said that if it hadn't been for the project he probably would have abandoned the property with no plan of where to go next. A few months later X moved to the new development, hasn't increased his collection of instruments and regularly attends a gospel church where he donated a large electric piano that they have refurbished.



### Case Study 3

On our first visit to X's home with the Housing Officer we found a property in very poor condition, with old wooden framed windows; curtains permanently closed old front door and an overgrown garden. X presented poorly, often not dressed when she answered the door. X said that she very depressed, her mum was seriously ill and she had to care for her everyday. Every room in the house was full of clutter. The Housing Officer's solution was to get a skip and clear everything out, to which X visibly recoiled, we were able to win her round by explaining about the project and that we would start with a corner of one room. Some time elapsed before we were able to start the project with X as her mum had passed away. When we did get started X was keen to be set her tasks and work on her own, although X was still very anxious decluttering and neighbours complaining about her bin overflowing and her garden filling up with rubbish. By taking time with X to talk through her anxieties, she completed tasks, often exceeded the planned actions and enlisted her adult sons to paint the walls. We saw positive changes in X over this time, but unfortunately she suffered another family bereavement which adversely affected her mental wellbeing. We supported X to contact her GP to ask for her medication to be reviewed and to arrange counselling. In addition we involved our in-house Advice Team to support X's Personal Independence Payment which was successful. Overtime X's mood was much improved, along with the property condition.

## Our Values

We are:



We are committed to achieving our goals and delivering excellent services, and care about our customers and their communities.



We work in partnership with other like minded organisations to benefit our communities and deliver greater shared outcomes.



We are forward thinking and innovative and make a big impact in our neighbourhoods.



We take responsibility for our actions, are open with our stakeholders and can be trusted to do the right thing.



We support an environment that fully promotes equality and respect of diversity to all groups of customers and staff.



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