

Tenant welfare statements and policies

Our approach to tenant welfare during cleaning and clearance work in council and housing association properties. These statements apply to directors, employees and anyone working on our behalf. They sit alongside our risk assessments, method statements and existing health and safety and data protection policies.

Our mission

Safe Sterile Solutions aims to restore safer, healthier homes while protecting each person's dignity. We work sensitively with tenants affected by hoarding, mental health difficulties or drug and alcohol use, involving them in decisions and working with housing officers and support professionals to achieve practical, lasting improvements.

Hoarding and sensitive clearance

We recognise that possessions can carry deep personal meaning and that clearance can cause distress. Our approach is patient, respectful and focused on reducing risks.

- Agree a clear plan with the tenant and referring officer before work, including what will be kept, removed or set aside. Prioritise safe exits, essential facilities and immediate hazards.
- Use manageable stages where possible. Avoid criticism, pressure or describing valued possessions as rubbish. Pause disputed removal and seek guidance.
- Set aside money, identification, paperwork, medication and sentimental items for agreed handling. Record significant items and handovers. Do not donate or dispose of belongings outside the agreed authority.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

We treat tenants with compassion and do not judge their circumstances or assume a diagnosis from their behaviour or home.

- Introduce ourselves, explain each stage in plain language and ask what would help the person feel comfortable. Offer breaks, extra time and an agreed support person where appropriate.
- If someone becomes overwhelmed, pause and contact the director or agreed support professional. Do not argue about unusual beliefs or attempt to provide treatment or counselling.

Working with tenants safely

Drug and alcohol use

We provide a respectful service to people affected by drug or alcohol use. Decisions about continuing work are based on actual safety and consent concerns.

- If a person appears intoxicated and cannot meaningfully agree to the work, or conditions are unsafe, pause and contact the director and referring officer to arrange a safe next step.
- Do not touch unidentified substances or handle needles by hand. Isolate the area where safe and follow the sharps and hazardous waste procedure using trained staff and appropriate equipment. Do not dispose of medication as ordinary waste.
- For suspected overdose, collapse or another life threatening emergency, call 999 and follow the call handler's instructions. Give first aid within your training when safe. Staff must be fit for work and must not work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Consent and tenant involvement

We involve tenants in decisions about their home and belongings and explain the scope of work before it starts.

- Confirm and record permission for entry, cleaning, removal and any necessary photographs separately. A council instruction alone does not automatically authorise every action affecting a tenant's belongings.
- Presume capacity; a mental health condition, hoarding or an unwise choice does not by itself mean someone cannot decide. Support understanding and allow time. If capacity or authority is unclear, pause the affected work and seek guidance from the responsible council or care professional.
- If permission is refused or withdrawn, pause the affected work. Any proposed action without consent must have a documented lawful basis and clear authority confirmed before proceeding; staff must not force entry or threaten tenancy consequences.

Safeguarding and self neglect

We take concerns about abuse, exploitation, self neglect and the welfare of children or adults seriously. Staff report concerns; they do not investigate them.

- Listen calmly and do not promise secrecy. Record factual observations, the person's own words, the date and actions taken. Raise concerns promptly with a company director and the appropriate safeguarding authority, as relevant to the concern.
- For immediate danger or a life threatening emergency, call 999 without waiting for management approval. For other safeguarding concerns, use the appropriate local authority safeguarding route; do not rely solely on informing the housing officer.
- If the director is unavailable or the concern involves them, staff should contact the appropriate safeguarding authority directly. Respect the adult's wishes and seek their agreement where possible; explain any necessary information sharing unless doing so would increase risk.

Privacy and team responsibilities

Confidentiality and photographs

We protect tenants' privacy and handle information discreetly, sharing only what is needed for the job or a safeguarding purpose.

- Handle records and photographs securely and limit access to those who need them. Keep only information needed for the work, safeguarding or applicable record keeping requirements, and securely dispose of it when it is no longer required. Avoid unnecessary images of people or private documents.
- Never use identifiable tenant stories or property photographs for personal posts or marketing. Do not discuss a tenant's circumstances with neighbours or other unauthorised people.
- The director must ensure an appropriate lawful basis for information handling, including any additional requirements for sensitive health information. Record the reason and recipients when sharing safeguarding information. Do not delay an emergency response while seeking consent.

Respect and safe working

We provide a fair service and take reasonable steps to meet communication, disability, cultural and practical needs while maintaining safe working conditions.

- Assess each job before entry and review risks as conditions change. Agree staffing, protective equipment, exits, communication and check in arrangements; avoid lone working where the assessment requires support.
- Use calm communication. If threats, violence, unsafe substances or other serious hazards arise, withdraw to safety and contact the director; call emergency services when necessary.
- Brief staff on this policy before relevant work and provide training appropriate to their role in safeguarding, hoarding awareness, mental health awareness, de escalation and sharps safety. Offer a private debrief after distressing jobs.

Adoption and review

The directors are responsible for communicating and implementing these policies and ensuring staff know how to raise concerns. Job specific reporting arrangements should be agreed with the commissioning council or housing association before work begins. Review these policies annually and after a significant incident or change in contract requirements.

Supporting guidance

NHS guidance on hoarding disorder

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/hoarding-disorder/>

NHS guidance on the Mental Capacity Act

<https://www.nhs.uk/social-care-and-support/making-decisions-for-someone-else/mental-capacity-act/>

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board on raising a concern

<https://www.norfolksafeguardingadultsboard.info/protecting-adults/abuse-and-neglect/raising-a-concern>

ICO guidance on data sharing

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/>