

GUIDE TO

SELF-NEGLECT

The vision of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board is that all adults in Surrey live a life free from fear, abuse and neglect.

WHAT IS SELF-NEGLECT?

Self-neglect means a person is not looking after themselves properly.

Anyone can be affected by self-neglect, but people with care and support needs – such as mental illness, learning or physical disabilities, or dementia – may be less able to understand the impact of their decision to self-neglect than others.

WHY WOULD SOMEONE NEGLECT THEMSELVES?

Typically, self-neglect happens when a person is:

- » Physically or mentally unable to care for themselves, or get the help they need
- » Unwilling to look after themselves, or refusing offers of help
- » Lacking a support network, or not engaging with available support
- » Unable to make reasonable decisions about their own self-care

SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF SELF-NEGLECT

When a person is unaware of the consequences of their self-neglecting behaviour and not able to keep themselves safe from harm, it is important that this is reported.

There are three main signs to be aware of:

1. Ignoring their own physical care

This typically means neglecting personal hygiene, ignoring health issues or not eating and drinking properly. Warning signs include:

- » Dirty clothes, skin, hair or nails
- » Not taking medication
- » Skipping medical appointments
- » Looking hungry
- » Weight loss
- » General lack of interest in themselves

2. Not taking care of their home environment

This may mean the home becomes dirty, unpleasant or may even be unsafe. Warning signs include:

- » Very dirty rooms
- » Rubbish piling up in the house instead of being put out for collection
- » Hoarding and refusing to throw things away
- » General disrepair and lack of maintenance
- » No heating or hot water
- » Mice or other infestations

3. Refusing services that could help them deal with these issues

This involves not accepting offers of help or refusing to engage with support that's available.

GETTING HELP

If you're worried that a person may be neglecting themselves or is at risk of harm, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- » Call on **0300 470 9100**
- » Text on **07527 182861**
- » Email ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk
- » Out of hours, call **01483 517898**

When you contact MASH, rest assured that we'll take your concerns seriously. We'll reach out to the person in question to discuss their wishes and work with them to find a way forward.

In an emergency, or if you believe someone is in immediate danger, always dial 999 for the police.