

### About Henry

Henry is a white male in his forties who lives alone. He has had support from his local advocacy service for many years on and off, ringing them every now and again and attending coffee mornings. This support has been enough for him to manage independently. He experienced financial abuse several years ago which has affected his confidence in managing his money.

When his mom died, Henry moved a lot of her belongings to his flat to sort through them, and as a result, his flat started to get quite full. His advocate and health facilitation nurse from the Learning Disability Service were concerned as the quantity of items regularly increased. They had conversations with Henry about their concerns, and things would improve, but then become quite full of items again, and Henry shared that he didn't know where to start.

His health facilitation nurse developed some easy-to-read information about the risks of a very cluttered home e.g., risk of fire as well as health and safety risks more generally. Henry also felt quite stressed about the condition of his flat and wanted to change things, and so the clutter often triggered a decline in his mental health and physical health. The health facilitation nurse helped him to understand the link between improving the condition of his flat and improving his overall wellbeing which served as positive motivation for Henry.

Henry had sufficient savings that he would have to fund any support around managing his flat and initially was reluctant to pay. This was linked to his previous experience of financial abuse and his worry about the risks involved in financial matters. His health facilitation nurse and advocate supported him to see the benefits of removing some of the items from his flat and the positive effect this would have on his wellbeing, and Henry agreed to fund some support. His advocate recognised the benefit of bringing in some support from a service specialising in working with people who hoard and referred to a local service with Henry's consent. They also referred to a local support provider who can provide ongoing support to help Henry keep on top of maintaining his home.

His advocate has also supported Henry with setting up a support network of individuals that Henry can call on for support when he needs it. Henry has felt safe and able to share what is worrying him and to lead meetings with his support network.

# What Enabled Effective Practice in This Case?

**Building a trusting relationship** which will take time and is not quick fix, but knowing Henry made it easier to identify the best ways to support him.

**Having a non-judgemental approach** – Henry felt bad about his flat and it caused him significant stress, but if he felt he was being criticized he would lose trust in the person and progress would be impacted.

**Give choices** – Henry was reassured that no one would *make* him tidy up or set a deadline to have things done by. Instead, professionals would talk with him about what he felt needed to be done and would help him understand ways to do that and to reach a preferred choice.

**Make sure the person always feels in control** of the situation. In Henry's case he previously had some funded support and felt the staff told him what to do, he lost trust in professionals, and this had to be built back up.

**Give the person time** to sit with new ideas and options for support so they can come to a decision they are comfortable with. Henry would take time in between support visits to think about what he had discussed with professionals and what choices he wanted to make. He was always in control but the support gave him the opportunity to talk through his options and what was important to focus on at any given time.

**Don't give up** if you cannot see progress straight away and resist the temptation to take over and do things for the person, it's important they remain in control of their own life and decisions.

**Provide information in a format the person can understand** and that is meaningful to them – in Henry's case this was using easy-to-read resources and drawing the links between the condition of his home and his mental and physical health.

**Try to build in activities that the person finds enjoyable**, take your cues from them. Henry enjoyed looking through some of the old items he found in his home, and professional made time for this and went at his pace.

**Be flexible and move at the person's pace** and adapt to their individual needs, a kind approach also goes a long way.

**Support the person to develop a support network** e.g., 2-3 people involved with the person who can communicate consistent messages and who the person trusts to go to for support when they need it.

**Clear and effective communication** between those supporting the person so that everyone is clear on what the person needs and how to provide this.

## Resources

- **[Safeguarding Adults in Solihull – What Does Good Practice Look Like](#)**  
This brief guide is intended for both practitioners and the public and explains what safeguarding adults means and what good practice looks like.
- **[Engagement - An Overview for Practitioners](#)**  
This short briefing provides information on the key messages for best practice when engaging with someone and links to further resources.
- **[Guidance on Professional Curiosity and Persistence](#)**  
This guide explains what professional curiosity is, why it is important to understand what is happening within a family or with the individual rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value and how to develop skills.
- **[West Midlands Self-Neglect Guidance](#)**  
This document outlines guidance for dealing with issues and concerns of self-neglect in relation to adults with care and support needs and should be read in conjunction with the [West Midlands Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures](#)
- **[Self-Neglect Poster](#)**  
This poster provides links to lots of resources on self-neglect including videos, articles, webinars and guidance documents.
- **[Clouds End](#)**  
Clouds end is a Social Enterprise working with people with hoarding issues, they are based in Solihull.