

National Hoarding Awareness Week 2026

11–15 May 2026 | Empathy in Action – Expanded Edition

Safeguarding Ambassador Bulletin – May 2026



Hello everyone,

I'm **Mariya Stoeva**, I'm really pleased to share our Safeguarding Ambassador bulletin for National Hoarding Awareness Week (11–15 May 2026). This year's theme, **Empathy in Action**, is a great reminder that small, kind steps and joined-up support can make a real difference. **A slightly longer read this month (by design):** we've pulled together the full week's webinar programme, newly updated **Self Neglect and Hoarding (SNAH) resources**, and a detailed partner interview so you can access key information quickly in one bulletin. Please feel free to share this bulletin with colleagues, partners and your communities as this update is for everyone - professionals, residents, families, friends and neighbours. Below you'll find highlights of what's new, free webinars you can join, key learning on fire safety, and powerful lived-experience films. We've included a link to our popular **Safeguarding Ambassadors** webinar from National Safeguarding Adults Week 2023 on **Safeguarding and Self-Neglect** as it brought together a wide range of professionals and shared practical health and wellbeing tips alongside safeguarding learning.

We hope you enjoy this bulletin and find something useful to take into your conversations and practice.

Mariya



[Quick Links \(jump to what you need\)](#)

[Watch](#)

[SNAH Strategy and Hoarding Toolkit Launch Event](#)

[One You: Be Tobacco Free \(smoking cessation\)](#)

What's inside

- New and updated resources: the SNAH Strategy & Pathway and Hoarding Toolkit (plus the launch webinar recording)
- Free webinars, sponsored by Clouds End throughout National Hoarding Awareness Week (11–15 May): topics from treatment pathways to lived experience
- Fire safety and hoarding: key messages, practical steps and a featured learning webinar
- Lived experience films to support reflective, compassionate practice
- A short video and interview from Westminster's **One You** service on smoking cessation as a practical risk-reduction step

First things First - Why this week matters (and what's happening)

- **Hoarding** is the persistent, excessive accumulation of items and the inability to discard them resulting in a significant impairment of living spaces and daily functioning. It is recognised as a mental health condition (hoarding disorder) often linked to anxiety, depression and trauma. The stigma around hoarding can often stop people from seeking help.
- **Risk can escalate quickly**—fire safety, falls, infection, infestation. social isolation, tenancy breakdown and safeguarding concerns.
- **The Safeguarding Adults Executive Board recognises that** sustainable change depends on coordinated, trauma-informed multi-agency support.
- **National Hoarding Awareness Week (11–15 May 2026)** is centering on shaping national guidelines for hoarding support by inviting insights from people with lived experience, families, and professionals. The campaign aims to create a consistent, empathetic, and multi-agency approach to support, following the first-ever UK parliamentary debate on hoarding disorder

National Hoarding Awareness Week (11 – 15 May 2026) Free Webinars



As part of National Hoarding Awareness Week, sponsored by Clouds End there are a range of free online webinars, which aim to raise awareness, break stigma and open up conversations that are all too often avoided, while continuing the discussion around the urgent need for national support guidelines to help ensure people affected receive the understanding and support they deserve.

Webinar timetable and registration links:

Date and time	Webinars (sponsored by Clouds End)
Monday 11 th May 11am – 12pm	The Future of Hoarding Support
Tuesday 12 th May 11am – 12pm	Treatment Pathways and Psychological Support
Wednesday 13 th May 11am – 12pm	Hoarding versus Clutter
Thursday 14 th May 11am – 12pm	Hoarding Support in Practice
Friday 15 th May 11am – 12pm	Learning to Let Go
Friday 15 th May 3 – 4pm	What Effective Feels Like From a Lived Experience Perspective

For more information and learning resources visit the [National Hoarding Awareness Week](#) website

Tools, pathways and learning for practice

What's new – updated partnership tools and online resources

SAEB Self-Neglect and Hoarding (SNAH) Strategy & Pathway – brings together shared principles and approaches to support best practice, including how we balance risk, engagement, mental capacity and multi-agency decision-making in complex cases.

SAEB Hoarding Toolkit – This toolkit accompanies the SAEB Self-Neglect and Hoarding Strategy and Pathway and includes both practical guidance and tools to support day-to-day work, including risk assessments, hoarding assessment templates and guidance to accompany the Clutter Image Rating scale (to help inform actions at different levels of risk).

Webinars and recordings (watch)

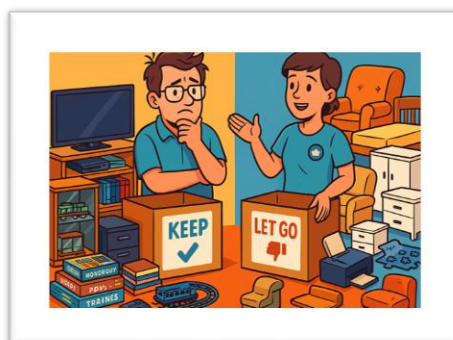


If you couldn't join the launch session, you can watch the recording for an overview of the SAEB Self-Neglect & Hoarding (SNAH) Strategy and Hoarding Toolkit, including key messages on trauma-informed engagement, risk management and shared decision-making: [here](#)

Further learning (watch): SAEB Safeguarding Ambassadors webinar resource "Safeguarding and Self-Neglect" (National Safeguarding Adults Week 2023) – spotting the signs, and when self-neglect becomes a safeguarding issue: **watch the recording** [here](#)

The webinar also included an anonymised case study of how services can build safety through trust and consistency

When professionals first met the Hartley family (*a pseudonym used for anonymity*), it was clear things had been getting harder for some time. Mr and Mrs Hartley were older and coping with reduced mobility and memory difficulties. Their adult son was struggling with his mental health and found it difficult to engage with services. As hospital admissions became more frequent, the home environment became increasingly cluttered and unhygienic—and everyday risks began to stack up.



The turning point was a patient, therapeutic approach: a small core group of consistent workers stayed involved, focused on building trust, and worked at the family's pace. Together, they agreed a simple, shared

plan—starting with what mattered most to the family, not what services wanted to remove. Over time the home became safer and more manageable, with practical changes (storage, shelving and clear pathways) that the family could sustain. The case remains open for light-touch monitoring, recognising that progress can be gradual and needs ongoing support.

The learning: sustainable change was achieved by working at the family's pace, keeping a consistent core team, and agreeing a simple shared plan focused on safety and what mattered most to them.

- Long-term engagement and persistence (not quick fixes)
- A consistent core team to build trust and reduce overwhelm
- Person-centred planning that respected what the family valued
- Practical, achievable changes that improved safety and could be maintained
- Ongoing monitoring and support to help progress stick

Think Fire - Fire safety and hoarding: key messages and resources

Hoarding can significantly increase fire risk by increasing fire loading, speeding up fire spread and blocking escape routes. Our partnership learning—drawing on the Fatal Fires Thematic Safeguarding Adults Review, the [SAEB Multi-agency Fire Safety Framework](#), highlights the importance of:

- Putting fire safety into routine assessment, care planning and reviews (especially after hospital discharge or a change in mobility/functioning).
- Using multi-agency conversations and escalation routes—fire risk is a public safety issue and shouldn't be held by one service alone.
- Considering mental capacity (including executive functioning) when someone repeatedly makes decisions that keep themselves or others at high risk.
- Taking practical prevention steps around common ignition sources (e.g., smoking materials, candles/open flames, unsafe heaters/charging) and ensuring working smoke detection where possible.
- Requesting a Home Fire Safety Visit / using the online Home Fire Safety Checker and sharing outcomes with partners to strengthen the joint plan.
- One of the most effective prevention activities is to use LFB's [Home Fire Safety Checker](#) which provides tailored advice to improve fire safety measures within a person's home. The Home Fire Safety Checker can also be accessed via the following QR code:



- The Safeguarding Ambassadors in conjunction with LFB have produced a [SAEB Bulletin with a focus on fire safety](#) which uses our moto 'Think Fire' to promote the message that fire safety is everyone's business, and to raise awareness of the need to be mindful of the additional vulnerabilities adults with care and support needs may face around mitigating fire risks in their homes.

Featured learning (watch): SAEB webinar on learning from the Fatal Fires Thematic Review - key messages for practice and multi-agency working: [watch the recording](#).

Lived experience and practical prevention

Lived experience: voices that change practice



We recommend the KinoBino short film **“Hoarding Was a Way to Protect Myself From the World”**, produced in collaboration with the BBC, The Open University and Hoarding UK. The film provides insight into the emotional drivers behind hoarding and supports reflective, empathetic practice across services – to watch click [here](#)

Watch again: the moving short film we shared at our SNAH launch webinar in February—an honest, personal story that underlines the importance of compassionate, coordinated support: [Keith’s story: a personal and touching film about hoarding](#)

Practical prevention: smoking cessation and fire risk



Learning from the [Bi-Borough Thematic Safeguarding Adults Review](#) on fatal fires highlights how quickly fire risk can increase when people’s circumstances change—particularly where smoking sits alongside reduced mobility, self-neglect or hoarding, and risk plans are not refreshed. In hoarding situations, a higher fuel load and blocked escape routes can make even a small ignition source catastrophic. This short film from the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster [One You service](#) promotes smoking cessation as a practical step that can reduce risk: watch here: [One You KCW Be Tobacco Free - Christopher: My Finally Moment](#)

This month’s interview: **One You Be Tobacco Free (KCW)** supporting residents to quit smoking

This month we also interviewed the **One You Be Tobacco Free Team** to share practical tips, referral routes and how community partners can get involved.



At a glance

Who it's for: Age 12+ living in Kensington & Chelsea or Westminster

How support works: 1:1 or group, in person / online / phone, up to 12 weeks

What's included: Quit plan, cravings support, free aids (NRT/vapes), and help accessing medication where appropriate

Extra support: Pregnancy and shisha

Referrals: Self-refer online, call, or professional/pharmacy referral (no GP needed)

Phone: 0808 175 6385

Very Brief Advice Training

This one-hour training supports voluntary and community sector staff and volunteers to have brief, non-judgemental 30-second conversations that help people who smoke feel supported and aware of local stop smoking services. It is the most cost-effective way to encourage quit attempts and is delivered flexibly, in person or online, to fit around VCS settings and community delivery.

[Get in Touch | One You Kensington & Chelsea Westminster](#)

Interview Q&A (with One You KCW – Be Tobacco Free) Team

Q1. What are the key features and benefits of the Be Tobacco Free service for residents in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster?

A: One You KCW – Be Tobacco Free is a **free** stop smoking service for people aged **12+** who live in Kensington & Chelsea or Westminster. With specialist support and stop-smoking aids, people are **up to three times more likely to quit** than if they try on their own.

Support is designed to fit around your life and what feels realistic right now. You can either **stop in one go** or **cut down gradually before quitting**. Most people receive:

- **One-to-one or group** support with a Health & Wellbeing Coach (in person, online or by phone)
- **Up to 12 weeks** of structured sessions to set a quit date, manage cravings and stay smoke-free
- **Free stop-smoking aids** (including NRT and vapes) and help to access prescription-only stop-smoking medication where appropriate
- Extra support for people who are **pregnant** and for people who smoke **shisha**

Q2. How does your service tailor support for different groups, such as people with mental health conditions?

A: We know **one size doesn't fit all**. If someone is living with mental health needs (or other pressures), we tailor the pace, frequency and type of support so quitting feels achievable and supportive rather than overwhelming.


- **More time and contact** (longer sessions or more frequent check-ins)
- **Earlier or adjusted treatments** to reduce withdrawal symptoms and build confidence
- **Joined-up working** with local community and mental health services so support fits the whole person

Q3. What role does cultural competence and community engagement play in the effectiveness of your smoking cessation programmes?

A: Community engagement helps us build **trust** and offer support that feels relevant and respectful. By understanding how culture, family traditions and social norms can shape tobacco use (including shisha), we can tailor conversations and quit plans so they're practical and realistic for each person.

Q4. How can someone make a referral to your service, and do they need to go through their GP?

A: No GP referral is needed. People can access Be Tobacco Free in the way that works best for them:

- **Self-refer online** via the One You KCW sign-up form  [here](#)
- **Call** the team on **0808 175 6385**
- **Professional or pharmacy referral** (including GPs, midwives, voluntary and community sector staff)

This open referral route makes it easier to get support quickly—especially when someone is ready to make a change. If you work with residents, please consider **signposting or referring** to [Be Tobacco Free](#) as part of everyday wellbeing and risk-reduction conversations.

Get in touch — we'd love to hear from you

Please send your news, updates and comments to share in upcoming bulletins to:

makingsafeguardingpersonal@rbkc.gov.uk

The SAEB Safeguarding Ambassadors



[Home - Safeguarding Adults Executive Board](#)