

Case Study

Hoarder house clearance



Client Social housing landlord

Sector Social housing

Location Basildon, Essex

Background

Our client is a social housing landlord faced with a high-risk hoarder house clearance task that needed to be handled urgently and sensitively. Its tenant, a middle-aged man, had collapsed and died in his home and lain undiscovered for a month. A chaotic mix of belongings in the house had to be cleared and the property deep cleaned before it could be prepared for reletting.

SafeGroup comment

“ We always show respect and compassion when we do this kind of work, in fact it’s impossible not to be moved by the conditions people have lived in and the personal challenges they must have.

“We also work closely with social housing and care agency colleagues they are also affected by the work they do. So we do our very best to be supportive for those clients and stakeholders as well.

Debbie Flynn | Business Development Manager, SafeGroup

The Challenge

The biggest challenge for this urgent house clearance project was the presence of substances that presented a biohazard risk, and contaminated surfaces throughout the property.

The tenant had a history of mental illness and hoarding. This made working in the property particularly risky. For example, faeces were found to be smeared over kitchen cupboards. Other areas around the house were contaminated in the same way.

Because of such risks, SafeGroup house clearance teams are specially trained to work in biohazard environments, with clear policies and procedures for managing potentially harmful waste safely, and in accordance with waste regulations.



The Solution

A senior SafeGroup manager surveyed the property. This allowed the client to be given an accurate quote for the work and to scope out special measures needed, based on specific challenges.

SafeGroup drew up a risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) which was approved by the client. This included the need to wear full body PPE to protect against biological hazards and use specified professional disinfectants.

Five days were allocated to clear, decontaminate and clean the property.

Clearance did not just involve removing waste, furniture and personal belongings. The property was stripped back to the floorboards. The kitchen was also stripped out. It was found to be too damaged and contaminated to keep.

SafeGroup personnel hold CSCS cards. They are also trained to understand building structures and to work safely around household utilities.

In this instance, there was no next of kin. SafeGroup took all waste items to an authorised site for safe disposal.

Before and after pictures were taken during the clearance procedure, and uploaded to SafeGroup's digital job management system, forming a key element of a final project report sent to the client.

Where the previous occupant had lain, SafeGroup used specialist chemicals to clean the floorboards. A picture was taken beneath them, to show the client all hygiene risks had been considered.

Outcomes

- The hoarder house was cleared safely, on time and on budget.
- All hazards, including hygiene risks, were eliminated.
- The social landlord's maintenance and fitout teams could work in the property safely to refurbish and redecorate it, ready for reletting.
- Waste was taken to an authorised site for safe and legal disposal.
- Work was carried out in accordance with national health and safety regulation.
- The client received a comprehensive project report.



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



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