

PRESS RELEASE

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Thousands of people will have spent the Bank Holiday clearing out the clutter in their attics, sheds, garages and spare rooms. But does this mean are we a nation of hoarders?

'Yes' according to one expert who works full time with Clutterholics and Obsessive Compulsive Hoarders worldwide. And that's why 2012 is the year that hoarding is going to be officially recognised as an illness.

Clare Baker, who runs www.clutterclearing.net works all day, every day with hoarders around the world. Whether it's a cluttered spare bedroom that needs to be turned into a home office, a dining room that has never been used for a family meal, an attic full of school books belonging to children who have long since left home, a garage that is storing the boxes of 'stuff' that don't fit anywhere else, or people who are sleeping on their sofa's because they can't physically get into their bedroom, Clare helps people declutter and organise their homes for good.

Over the 9 years that Clare has been working with clutterholics on a full time basis since overcome her own clutter challenge in 2001, she has seen **more and more extreme cases of hoarding.**

'The number of people with extreme clutter and hoarding is **on the rise**' says Clare. 'People have always had a tendency to keep **things 'just in case they come in useful'**, thanks to the habits we learnt from previous generations who lived through the war and post-war rationing. Back then things really did come in useful. My mothers first bike was made by my grandfather out of bits and pieces he collected and assembled in the shed at the end of the garden.

Yet until recently it was quicker, easier and cheaper to replace things rather than repair them. So **we've got used to buying more 'stuff'** rather than recycling the old.

'Now we're in a time of austerity, people are thinking more about the cost saving of repairing their broken items or selling their unwanted belongings to someone who wants them so that they **get some financial return on** their belongings. You only have to look at the increase in people servicing and repairing their cars instead of replacing them to see that people are choosing to repair rather than replace.'

The problem comes, according to Clare, when we keep things because we plan to use or repair them, or believe they might come in useful even when we have no idea when or how we will use or fix them. Clare calls it the **'good intention, poor execution' syndrome**. 'It's because people keep things yet never actually follow through with the intention that we're becoming a nation of hoarders' says Clare, 'so much so that next year, 2012, will see **Obsessive Compulsive Hoarding becoming a recognised illness**. It shouldn't be a surprise given the number of TV programmes purporting to help clutterholics and hoarders deal with the issue - although a lot of my clients come to me as a result of being on those programmes and discovering it doesn't help them in the long term.

'My clients all have at least **one decluttering self help book amongst their clutter**' says Clare. 'They rarely read it, and if they do it never helps them with the decision making, the doing, the procrastination, the fear of letting go or turning the theory into action. It's why I have so far refused to write one myself despite being asked several times.

It's made worse as we start to feel the economic **pressure in our pockets**. We have less disposable income, children are having to wait longer to leave home, we're more inclined to buy things on special offer rather than because we need them, and the justification for keeping things because they '**might come in useful**' is growing, even though we have no idea when the things will actually come in useful. We are hoarding them for fear of not having the cash when we do need them, so it's safer to keep them now for some indefinable point in the future.

'**Off-site self storage** is also now not an option for many people simply due to the cost' Clare continues. 'At an average cost of £35 per week (£1,820 a year) to store the equivalent of a clutter free 1 bedroom flat, the reality is that although people may be able to afford that now, they understandably don't think about it from a practical point of view. They could save that money and put it towards buying new things in the future – and perhaps get some money for the things they would otherwise put in storage by selling them at a car boot sale or through internet auction sites. People haven't yet accepted that this **economic downturn may not be as temporary as they would like** to think and that although they may have paid £x for that thing 3 years ago, it's unlikely to be worth £x in 2 years time, especially if we've spent twice as much storing it in the meantime.'

There are **3 main factors that Clare attributes to the rise** in the new generation of clutterholics and hoarders:

1. **Young people** struggling to get on the property ladder, thus encouraging people to keep things so they can pass them on to friends and family who need to furnish their first home.
2. The fact that our **emotions are involved** with our belongings rather than the more pragmatic factors of need or use. Consequently, we can easily attribute memories and feelings that bring us comfort and hope in a time of austerity when we want to be reminded that it hasn't always been this tough – comfort and hope that we're not ready to let go of.
3. Our natural **need and desire to reflect on our life** as we get older and be reminded of our achievements and memories through our wealth of belongings.

So, what's the secret **to successfully overcoming the compulsion to keep**, hoard or collect stuff?

'**Learning to live in and deal with the present**' according to Clare. 'If it's not adding value – whether that's financial, practical, emotional or tangible value – then let it go to someone who will use it and get all it's potential value out of it. The bonus with letting go is, of course, that you can sell it at a car boot sale or online auction site to someone who will pay you to have it clutter up their home instead of yours!'

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For interviews with Clare Baker, contact Clare Baker on 01295 275030 or 0777 5897955 or email: clare@cdc-uk.net Visit www.clutterclearing.net for more information.

Or click on the following link to book a time slot via her online diary (times are available at short notice):

<https://my.timedriver.com/LNSPG>

Clare is able to travel to BBC Oxford studios for live or recorded links if appropriate.

About clutterclearing.net

clutterclearing.net is a coaching business that coaches and supports people at a Practical Level to Achieve a Permanently Clutter Free and Organised Home using the principles of NLP.

Clare works with people at a practical level in the UK and around the world such as Canada, America, New Zealand and Japan without the need to visit their home.