

1. Background

The Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance brought financial abuse into focus and defines financial and material abuse as including:

- (a) Having money or other property stolen
- (b) Being defrauded
- (c) Being put under pressure in relation to money or other property; and
- (d) having money or other property misused.

Financial abuse includes fraud, theft, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adults financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

2. Why it matters

Whilst the definitions may be broad in its approach it does not limit who an abuser may be (strangers, family member, worker, carer etc.) nor does it specify the nature of the relationship between the victim and the abuser.

Financial abuse is the main form of abuse investigated by the Office of the Public Guardian amongst adults at risk. It can occur in isolation but research has shown where there are other forms of abuse, there is likely to be financial abuse. In many cases the adult at risk can be persuaded to part with large sums of money and even their life savings.

Most financial abuse is capable of amounting to theft or fraud and would become a police and/or Trading Standards matter to investigate as well as safeguarding the adult from further abuse.

If the abuse is perpetrated by a person in a position of trust (e.g. a practitioner) the Adult Local Area Designated Officer must be informed and their regulatory body (as appropriate)

Blackburn with Darwen



Financial Abuse

3. Information

Financial abuse is complex and more likely to occur in settings where there is little external scrutiny. Potential indicators include, a change in living conditions, lack of heating, clothing or food, inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money, unexplained withdrawals from an account, unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents, sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.

We should not underestimate the potential impact of financial abuse as it could significantly threaten an adult's health and wellbeing and their ability to live independently. Victims may not recognise they are being abused which adds to the difficulty in recognising and addressing it. Legislation including the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act promote people's rights to make choices, even unwise choices.

Financial Abuse Resources are available on:
www.lsab.org.uk/financial-abuse-resources/

4. What to do

How could you recognise the signs of financial abuse?

Have you read the Pan Lancashire Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and BwD's Adult Safeguarding Continuum to help inform your decision making for financial abuse: www.lsab.org.uk/policies

Do you have a good working knowledge of how to apply MCA principles?

Adult Safeguarding Team: 01254 585949

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) 01254 587547

Adult LADO please contact: 01254 585949

BwD Trading Standards: 01254 585904