

Elder Abuse Frequently Asked Questions

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 15 June

What is Elder Abuse?



Elder abuse can be defined as 'a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person'.

It is a global social issue which affects the Health and Human Rights of millions of older persons around the world, and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community. Even today, elder abuse continues to be a taboo, mostly underestimated and ignored. Evidence is accumulating, however, to indicate that elder abuse is an important public health and societal problem.

In 2017, 1 in 6 older persons were subjected to abuse. Abuse and neglect does not occur in isolation and an older person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, more than one kind of abuse or neglect. For example, financial abuse may include an element of physical abuse, or neglect may be a feature of coercive control. Take a look at the different types [here](#).

Who commits Elder Abuse?

It is important to be aware that anyone can commit abuse or neglect. The person causing the harm may be a stranger but, more often than not, they are people who are trusted and relied on by an older person and the older person often feels safe with them. They are usually in a position of trust and power, such as a health or care professional, relative or neighbour.

What should I look out for?

There are some tell-tale signs to look for:

- unexplained bruising, fractures, open wounds and welts, and untreated injuries
- the same injuries happening more than once
- poor general hygiene and weight loss
- looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual
- unexplained changes in a person's finances and material well-being
- questionable financial or legal documents, or the disappearance of those documents

Behavioural signs to look for include:

- becoming quiet and withdrawn
- being aggressive or angry for no obvious reason
- sudden changes in their character, such as appearing helpless, depressed or tearful
 - not wanting to be left by themselves or alone with particular people
 - being unusually light hearted and insisting there's nothing wrong.

What should I do if I suspect abuse or neglect?



Anyone concerned about a friend, relative or carer who is being abused needs to take action to prevent further abuse and protect others. It's best not to promise the person that you will not tell anyone what's been said. If an adult is being abused or neglected, it is important to find help for them and stop the harm. If it is possible and safe to do so, it is always best to discuss any concerns you have with the older person and obtain their agreement before you report abuse. Some types of abuse, including assault, theft and fraud, are criminal offences that should be reported to the police.

You can raise concerns by contacting the Oldham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0161 7707777 (8:40-17:00, Monday-Friday) or 0161 770 6936 (Emergency Duty Team, outside of these hours). Find out more [here](#).



You can call the free Age UK advice line on 0800 678 1602 (8:00-19:00) or the free, confidential Hourglass helpline on 0808 808 8141 (9:00-17:00, Monday-Friday).

What is Elder Abuse Awareness Day?

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) happens every year on 15 June. It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations. It was officially recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011, after a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, who first established the commemoration in 2006.

Where can I get more information?

[Age UK](#), and locally [Age UK Oldham](#), provide advice and information for people in later life.

[Action Fraud](#) is the central point of contact for information about fraud and financially motivated internet crime.

[Hourglass](#) works to protect and prevent the abuse of vulnerable older adults and provides information and emotional support.

The [NHS Website](#) provides information about the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.

[Healthwatch Oldham](#) are independent champions for people who use health and social care services and provide practical resources to help with making a complaint.

Website: www.oldhamsafeguarding.org

Email: OldhamSafeguardingAdultsBoard@Oldham.gov.uk

