

Elder Abuse



Any older person can potentially become a victim of elder abuse. This is why it is important to consider ways to help people, recognise the different types of abuse and how Radian and other agencies can help.

This leaflet details how to spot elder abuse and how to help.



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” (Action on Elder Abuse, 1993)

Abuse can take many forms, including physical, financial, psychological, sexual, or through neglect.

Physical

The signs of physical abuse are often the most obvious; however, they can be hidden by the victim for reasons such as shame or concern of reprisals. Any unexplained injuries should always be reported. Things to look out for include:

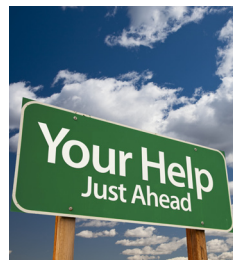
- Cuts, or other wounds; bruises, burns, bone fractures and/or broken bones;
- Poor hygiene;
- Dehydration and/or malnourishment without illness-related cause;
- Loss of weight.



Psychological

Psychological abuse can have an impact on mental health. The victim can feel trapped, threatened, humiliated, used, or a combination of all these. Warning signs therefore relate to mental state, and changes in behaviour, such as:

- Helplessness;
- Hesitation to talk openly;
- Implausible stories;
- Anger without apparent cause;
- Sudden change in behaviour;
- Emotionally upset or agitated.



Financial

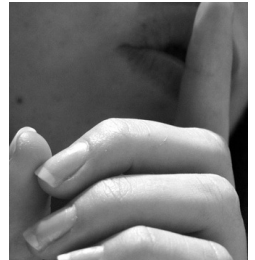


Financial abuse is stealing or defrauding someone of goods and/or property. Examples include:

- Sudden changes in bank accounts, including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by a person accompanying the older person;
- The inclusion of additional names on an older person's bank account;
- The sudden appearance of power of attorney; and
- Numerous unpaid bills, or overdue rent, when someone else is supposed to be paying the bills.

Sexual

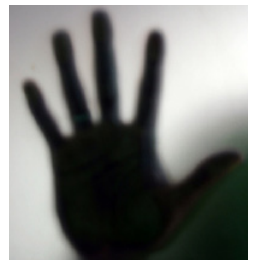
Sexual abuse of older people is a subject that is not often discussed, but it is not a rare occurrence. Abuse can be opportunistic, planned, or even the continuation of domestic abuse.



At Radian, we are committed to dealing sensitively with any abuse situation. However it is unlikely we will be aware that abuse has occurred unless it has been disclosed to us by a care worker, the police or the victim themselves. We will work alongside other agencies to do our best to help victims of sexual abuse.

Neglect

Neglect can have a weighty effect on an older person and should not be taken lightly. Neglect is abuse and, from the victim's perspective, it is important to see it as such. However, not all neglect is intentional and sometimes it happens because a caregiver cannot cope or is not getting enough help. Neglect will often have physical signs such as:



- Rashes or sores;
- Inadequate clothing;
- Malnourishment or dehydration;
- Untreated medical conditions.

Who can be an abuser?

Vulnerable adults may be abused by a wide range of people including:

- Professional staff;
- Other tenants;
- Family members;
- Neighbours;
- Friends and associates.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults

We expect our staff to be able to respond appropriately to reduce risk to a vulnerable adult's safety and wellbeing, and to play a part in the prevention, detection and reporting of neglect or abuse.



Please help to prevent abuse

If you are being abused, it is NEVER your fault. Please remember you are not alone. Abusers very often exploit the fact that someone feels alone and has no one they can talk to. No matter how much you hope that the abuse will stop, it rarely works out that way. Even if there is no evidence for a situation you are uncomfortable with, this shouldn't stop you voicing your concerns. You may wish to discuss this further with your Independent Living Officer. Please report it - you could make a big difference to someone's life - you might even save it.

Useful Contacts

Radian: 0300 123 1567

Action on Elder Abuse helpline: 0808 808 8141

Emergency Services: 999

Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90

National Centre for Domestic Violence: 0800 970 2070

