

# Guide to reducing the risk of financial abuse

2025

A large, light blue curved shape, resembling a thick arc or a partial circle, is positioned in the bottom right corner of the cover, extending from the edge towards the center.

# What is financial abuse?

Housing 21 is committed to ensuring you have the correct information regarding your financial wellbeing. We also want to make sure you know where to go to get support on these issues.

Here are some of the behaviours and signs that might suggest financial abuse is happening:

Unexplained money loss



Lack of money to pay for essentials such as rent, bills and food

Abrupt changes to or the sudden establishment of wills



Numerous unpaid bills, or overdue rent, when someone else is supposed to be managing the finances

Inability to access or check bank accounts and bank balance



Large volumes of 'junk' mail



Changes or deterioration in standards of living

Unusual or inappropriate purchases in bank statements



An adult not receiving their benefits

Isolation and withdrawal from friends and family



Payment of adult's contribution towards services suddenly stops

Disparity between assets and satisfactory living conditions



Reluctance on the part of family, friends or the person controlling funds to pay for replacement clothes or furniture

Financial abuse can involve exerting control over another adult by controlling their ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources. This is one of a range of controlling behaviours used by perpetrators of domestic abuse. Whilst not an exhaustive list, these behaviours can include:

- Interfering with employment and/or education
- Destroying property
- Stopping or controlling access to finances including benefits, savings or wages
- Forcing an adult to take out credit
- Forcing an adult to commit fraud
- Transferring financial liability into an adult's name
- Refusing to contribute to household or other costs
- Prolonging legal proceedings
- Stealing

# Who may financially abuse someone?

Financial abuse is most frequently perpetrated by a person acting in a trusted capacity. This includes family members, friends, neighbours, care workers and other professionals. In 2021/22 69% of adults at risk who were the subject of a section 42 enquiry into alleged financial abuse were being abused by someone they knew – a family member, friend, or someone else they held in their confidence (NHS Digital, 2022).

## Family members and friends:

May have a substance misuse or gambling problem, or financial difficulties



Are due to inherit money but feel justified in taking it before it is due

May have a negative relationship with the adult and feel a sense of 'entitlement'



May have negative feelings towards other family members and want to prevent them from acquiring or inheriting the adult's assets

Are acting with the adult's consent but not in their best interest. Some families may have a view that the income of individual family members, including benefits for disabled adults, should be pooled into the family income



## Professionals may:

Overcharge for services or products



Find adults who are isolated or alone, or contact the recently bereaved, in order to financially abuse them

Move from community to community to avoid detection



Seek employment, such as care workers or personal assistants, and then gain adults trust and take over their finances unlawfully

Use a position of trust or respect to gain compliance



# Protecting yourself from financial abuse

Here are some of our top tips to help keep you safe from financial abuse and protect yourself in the digital world.

If other people do your shopping, keep an eye on receipts and what is spent



Only let people you trust have access to your accounts, money or any benefits or pensions

Beware of phone and internet scams, do not send money or information before confirming identities. People may pretend to be celebrities or in a relationship with you online, they can ask for you to send money due to an emergency, they may ask you to send vouchers, if this happens speak to someone



If people you do not trust are coming to the door, remember you do not have to answer

Consider getting an intercom or peephole installed for safety



Check your bank statements regularly or ask someone to trust to support you

Keep important documents and valuables safe and out of sight



If someone is asking for money and making you feel uncomfortable, you can say no and end the call and ask for support to call them back or report the concerns

Ensure you choose secure passwords for online banking that only you know and if you need to write them down keep them in a safe place



Think about who you might want to make decisions on your behalf if you lose capacity to do so and consider giving someone you trust Power of Attorney

Do not keep large amounts of money in your property, if you do keep cash it is best to keep this in a safe



Always seek professional advice when considering Power of Attorney

Banks play a vital role in supporting victim-survivors to regain control of their money and rebuild their lives. Surviving Economic Abuse have launched a Banking Support Directory, a one-stop shop where victim-survivors can see what support their bank offers and how to contact them



This may include de-linking a victim-survivor's finances from those of the abuser and suggesting ways of ensuring that the abuser cannot access banking information. Find the directory on their website at this link

# Support organisations

There are many different organisations that you can contact for further information and advice.

## Useful contact details:

### Citizens Advice Bureau:

Call: 03444 111 444

### Age UK:

Call: 0800 678 1174

### The Alzheimer's Association:

Call: 0300 222 11 22

- Your own bank or building society
- Your solicitor

### Trading Standards:

Call: 03454 04 05 06

### The Office of the Public Guardian Contact for information about Power of Attorney:

Call: 0300 456 0300

Your Court Manager can help you to find local telephone numbers for these organisations.

### Action Fraud:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk>

Call: 0300 123 2040

### Banking Protocol:

[www.ukfinance.org.uk/news-and-insight/blogs/fighting-fraud-through-banking-protocol](http://www.ukfinance.org.uk/news-and-insight/blogs/fighting-fraud-through-banking-protocol)

### Department for Work and Pensions:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions)

### MoneyHelper:

<http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>

### Office of the Public Guardian:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-public-guardian](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-public-guardian)

Call: 03004560300

[customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk)

### Reporting a concern to OPG:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/how-we-deal-with-safeguarding-concerns](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-we-deal-with-safeguarding-concerns)

### Stop Loan Sharks:

(England Illegal Money Lending Team)

[www.stoploansharks.co.uk/](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk/)

Call: 0300 555 2222

### Hourglass:

[wearehourglass.org](http://wearehourglass.org)

Call: 0808 808 8141

Or text phone: 078 6005 2906

### Surviving Economic Abuse:

[Surviving Economic Abuse: Transforming responses to economic abuse](#)

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