

YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT ELDER ABUSE ANSWERED

How widespread is elder abuse in the UK?

It's estimated that up to half a million older people are being abused at any one time in the UK.

Why is elder abuse such a hidden problem?

As with any type of abuse much of elder abuse thrives in secrecy. This is not helped by the fact that a great deal of older people live isolated lives making it easy for abusers to target their victims. There is also still an element of disbelief about the subject, it 'couldn't possibly be happening'.

If an older person is being abused, why are they reluctant to report what is happening to them?

Older victims are often too frightened, ashamed or embarrassed to speak out.

Are there any obvious signs of abuse that someone can look for if they are worried about an elderly relative?

Sudden changes in behaviour and character can be an indicator that someone is being abused. Although it may be obvious that a usually happy person who becomes withdrawn or morose for no obvious reason suggests that something may be amiss, concerned friends and relatives should be vigilant and consider the possibility that their friend's behaviour could indicate something more sinister than just personal distress.

Elder abuse has been a hidden problem for a long time but more and more organisations are campaigning against elder abuse

For example Action on Elder Abuse has been campaigning on the issue since 1993. Lately organisations have invested more time into raising the profile publicly of elder abuse collaboratively with other charities and organisations.

For the first time ever elder abuse has been marked by a global 'World Elder Abuse Awareness Day' in 2008.

Abuse can occur anywhere

someone's own home
a carer's home
day care

residential care
A nursing home
Hospital

Both older men and women can be at risk of being abused. The abuser is usually well known to the person being abused. They may be:

a partner, child or relative
a health or social worker, or
other professional
a paid or volunteer care worker

a friend or neighbour
older people may also be abused
by a person they care for

Often, the people who abuse older people are exploiting a special relationship. They are in a position of trust, whether through family bonds, friendship or through a paid caring role, and they exploit that trust. Very rarely is the abuser someone who provides a family caring role.

500.000 older people are believed to be abused at any one time in the UK

A quarter of those who abuse are sons and daughters

PREVENTION Things you can do right now!

- Look** Prevent Secrecy and opportunity
- Listen** Hear the whispers, Encourage disclosure and whistle-blowing, challenge the 'professional' cloak

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT!

Our Wardens are trained to help you and will treat anything you tell them in the strictest confidence. If you, or someone you know is suffering abuse, let your warden know.

Elder Abuse Helpline 080 8808 8141
10.00am - 4.30pm
Monday - Friday

Action on Elder Abuse 020 8765 7000

WEBSITE: WWW.ELDERABUSE.ORG.UK

Two thirds of abuse is committed at home

If you would like this information in any other format, including large print, audio CD/tape, Braille or translated into another language please telephone 0113 2141942 and speak to the Equality Officer

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse can take many forms, from the occasional rough tug to the using of an elderly persons money without permission.



Elder Abuse doesn't have to be committed by someone you don't know — it could be your carer, or your son or daughter. They may lose patience with you because you are a bit slower to react than they think you should be.

We define elder abuse 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 has defined five different types of abuse

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| Physical | Slapping, Hitting, Inappropriate administration of medicines, etc |
| Psychological | Threatening, using what someone loves or values against them, etc |
| Financial | Stealing or defrauding someone of goods or property, etc |
| Sexual | Forcing someone to participate in sexual actions or conversation against their wishes, etc. |
| Neglect | Failing to provide food, or heat or clothing, or needed aids for living |

Aire Valley Homes Leeds, Navigation House,
8 George Mann Road, Leeds LS10 1DJ
TEL: 0800 915 6660

