

WHAT IF... FINANCIAL ABUSE

The What if ...series seeks to provide guidance to aid the identification of an adult safeguarding concern and the action to take.



Immediate Considerations & Actions

- Immediate safety, support and care of individual
- Undertake internal information gathering and response

It is a form of organisational abuse for providers to not have systems to take care of peoples money and possessions when living in residential services.

Immediate Protective Strategies:

- Access to bank card Block / deactivate
- bank card Limits on cash withdrawals
- Freeze accounts Changing passwords
 - on online
 - accounts
- Joint party accounts
- Report to the police
- Report to Office of the public guardian (concerns about LPA) or DWP for Appointees

Things to consider to support the person:

- Was practice negligent?
- Is there evidence of theft or fraud?
- Is there a contract of care agreement?
- What would you want to find in the practice records?
- Are there details of any lasting power of attorney?
- Were any issues identified around finances during pre-assessment?
- Would any notifications be required?
- Have local authority safeguarding been informed?
- Would any partnership working be relevant?
- Is the protection plan person-centred, outcome-focused and proportionate?
- If capacity is in doubt, has a mental capacity assessment been considered?
- Has economic abuse in context of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 been considered?
- Is the case relevant for a multidisciplinary team meeting with the person?
- Has it been indicated when/if a review and monitoring will take place?
- Do staff need additional training to increase awareness and evidence lessons learned and continuous improvement?
- Making safeguarding personal
- Lasting Power of Attorney
- Family/carer as a protective measure
- Appointeeship Deputyship
- Direct Debit /to manage bills / DWP appointeeship for benefits.

Examples of Financial Abuse:

- Theft of money or possessions
 - Preventing a person from accessing their own finances
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money and maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage financial affairs
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in family home
- Person's home being exploited without agreement
- False representation

- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, or appointeeship
- Rogue trading
- Thinks also about self neglect and gambling awareness
- Exploitation of money or assets

Indicators of Financial Abuse:

- Money or possessions not appropriately recorded
- Loss of money or possessions
- No access to money or possessions
- Not routinely involved in financial decisions
- Things bought that are not needed or investments that they do not have capacity to make
- Person managing finances is evasive or uncooperative
- Family or others show unusual interest in assets

Financial and material abuse should be suspected when people...

- Have their money spent or possessions or property used by other people in a way that does not benefit them
- Have treasured personal items constantly go missing
- Get married or enter a civil partnership if they are likely to lack capacity to consent
- Sign a lasting power of attorney when lacking mental capacity
- Have their personal financial information not kept confidential

Additional possible issues:

- Poor governance and/or leadership in registered services
- Absence of relevant capacity assessment and risk assessment Involvement of family members/carers
- Lack of professional curiosity