



**Hourglass**

Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

Scotland

# KEEPING SAFE FROM HARM AND ABUSE



Scotland

**Hourglass**

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

## Who we are

Hourglass Scotland is the only charity in Scotland dedicated to calling time on the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. We support older people experiencing (or at risk of) harm, abuse or exploitation, and work towards safer ageing and a fairer society for all older people.

We provide a range of services via our Scotland-wide Community Hub, where older people (and those concerned about an older person) can access tailored and comprehensive support and advice around the abuse of older people and safer ageing. Based in Fife, but providing services across the whole of Scotland, we can support with casework, advocacy, information materials and access to our online Knowledge Bank – the UK’s first specialist knowledge bank specifically relating to the abuse of older people and safer ageing.

For those within reach of our Hub in Fife, we also offer a drop-in centre, one-to-one support from volunteers to support with recovery from abuse, and group-based support for older people.

Nationally, we also work to raise awareness of the abuse of older people to encourage those affected to speak up and seek support, and engage in campaigning work to advocate effective prevention and support.

## Hourglass Helpline

Hourglass provides the UK’s only dedicated Helpline for those experiencing (or concerned about) the harm, abuse or exploitation of older people. Our Helpline is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. It’s entirely confidential and free to call from a landline or mobile and will not appear on your phone bill.

**OUR HELPLINE NUMBER IS**  
**0808 808 8141**

## Introduction

Anyone can be at risk of harmful behaviour or abuse. It might take place at home, in a care home, hospital, day care setting, or in public.

Although it can be carried out by anyone, often the person being abused knows their abuser.

**This booklet provides information on:**

- Different types of harm and abuse.
- Tips on protecting yourself.
- What you can do if you're experiencing harm, abuse or neglect.

## What is the abuse of older people?

An estimated half million older people are harmed, abused and neglected every day in their own homes by people they thought they could trust.

Hourglass defines 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 an older person or violates their human or civil rights”.*

It can therefore include many types of harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect.




## It might include:

- **Physical abuse**, e.g. physical force, hitting, pushing, rough handling, force-feeding, improper administration of medication, misuse of restraint, etc.
- **Sexual abuse**, e.g. forcing someone to take part in any sexual activity without their consent, including intentional touching, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment and use of sexual language.
- **Financial harm or abuse**, e.g. stealing money or possessions, having control over someone's money, fraud, forgery or embezzlement. It can also include putting pressure on people to make financial decisions they wouldn't otherwise make around things like wills, financial affairs, property or Power of Attorney.
- **Emotional, psychological or mental abuse**, e.g. bullying, threatening, persistently ignoring, intimidating, humiliating, depriving someone of their right to make everyday decisions, etc.
- **Neglecting an older person, or denying their basic needs**, e.g. help with going to the toilet, eating, getting dressed, medical needs, social needs, etc.

## Some older people may also experience some of the above types of harm and abuse in the following ways:

- **Discriminatory abuse**, e.g. unfavourable treatment because of a person's age.
- **Institutional abuse**, e.g. poor processes or treatment in institutions such as care homes or hospitals, including any of the above forms of abuse, lack of privacy, no access to possessions or money, derogatory care.

You can get more information on the different types of harm and abuse, and how to spot them in the Hourglass Scotland booklet 'Spotting the signs of harm, abuse and neglect'.



"I only found out he'd taken my car when the police came around after the accident."

## How to protect yourself

When thinking about the best way to protect yourself, it's very important to remember you are not alone. Abusers often exploit people who feel isolated or have found themselves detached from other people. Some abusers will try to make their victim feel more lonely and isolated to increase the victim's dependence on them and the control they have over the victim.

To reduce this risk, there are practical things you can do to make sure you maintain as much control as possible over your life and choices.

## Planning to keep yourself safe

You can protect yourself by planning ahead and making decisions about your life now rather than having other people make decisions about you later when you may be more vulnerable. You could consider:

## Legal issues

- You can get general advice about your legal options from Hourglass Scotland, but we suggest you see a solicitor before making any final decisions. Get independent advice before signing anything you're unsure of or making any major decisions about money or housing.
- Decide who you want to take responsibility for your finances, property, care and welfare if you lose mental capacity, and set up a Power of Attorney.
- Think about who you want to sort out your estate after your death and make a will that meets the legal requirements to be valid.
- If necessary, update your will and Power of Attorney when your circumstances change.



## Relationships

- If you start a new relationship and you have concerns about your new partner's past, you can check with Police Scotland to find out if they have a history of domestic abuse or violent behaviour.
- Think about who you might want to make welfare decisions on your behalf if you lose capacity, and consider appointing someone you trust to be a welfare Power of Attorney.

## Housing and care

- Think about your future housing needs. If you need help to live independently at home ask your local council for a care needs assessment.
- If you employ someone to help you, check their references and whether they are employed or self-employed. You can get more information about this from Self Directed Support Scotland.
- If you need to move into a care home or sheltered housing, research the housing available, the contract and the costs.
- If you are thinking of moving in with family, or they are thinking of moving in with you, you and your family should get separate advice about the pros, cons and financial implications of this arrangement.
- If you need work done to your house, your local Care and Repair scheme may be able to help.

## On your doorstep

- Don't allow anyone into your home unless you know them, can confirm their identity, or you have made an appointment for them to visit – you could arrange a visit at a time when someone you trust can be with you.
- Always ask for identification - if you're in any doubt, call their company before allowing anyone in.

## Local support

- Plan how you would get out and about independently if you were less mobile.
- Find out what support services would help if you were less able to be independent.
- Find different activities which interest you locally.

## Stay connected

- Stay in contact with friends and family who you trust face-to-face, by phone, letter or over the internet.
- Keep up with routine appointments, such as vaccinations, the dentist or health screening. Healthcare professionals are trained to spot signs that someone is being abused and can help you.

“It wasn’t my signature on the cheque, but no-one noticed and she cleared out my bank account.”



## What you can do if you're being harmed or abused

**Abuse can happen to anyone. If you are being harmed or abused you need to know that:**

- It is not your fault.
- You do not deserve to be harmed or abused.
- You have a right to live without fear.
- You have the right to safe, healthy relationships and to have control over your own life.
- You can't change or control the abuser's behaviour.
- Abuse often gets worse over time.
- There are people who can help you.

You have choices about what to do – it is important that you choose actions which you are comfortable with and which are safe for you. Here are some possible options:

### Talk about what is happening...

Talk to someone you can trust. Sometimes just talking about the abuse can help you to decide what to do about it. If you don't want to speak to someone close to you, there are helplines you can call such as the Hourglass Helpline.

If it is safe for you, talk to the person who is abusing you or get someone to speak to them on your behalf. Make it clear that the way they are treating you is not acceptable and that you want it to stop. Sometimes family members or other people who are close to you don't realise that you are unhappy unless you tell them.





## Get support or protection...

Contact the emergency services. If you are experiencing harm or abuse which is serious, violent, or frightening you, you should contact the police or an ambulance. If you need to contact the emergency services urgently, you should call 999. If you want to report a non-urgent incident to the police, you can either call 101 or call or visit your local police station directly.

You should be aware that if the police gather enough evidence from you, and from other sources, to satisfy them that the abuser has committed a crime, they will arrest them – regardless of whether you want to press charges. They may also contact your local social work department who might decide to make an adult support and protection investigation (see below).

Report to the council (adult support and protection referrals). If you're worried about what is happening to you and you'd like someone to help put a stop to it, you can report what is happening to your local council's social work department. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 gives councils powers to take steps to support and/or protect adults who are at risk of harm.

Once the council becomes aware that you might be at risk, they might decide to make inquiries or carry out an investigation to:

- Find out more about what has happened
- Check whether you are at risk of further harm; and
- See if you need any support and/or protection.

The action the council might take will depend on your circumstances, and they will consult with you as much as possible about what to do. If they decide to make inquiries or an investigation, this might involve asking you questions, interviewing the person who is harming you or people who know you, looking at your medical or financial records, or asking a health professional to examine you. They will only take these measures if there is a good reason to, and you can refuse to answer any questions or undergo a medical examination if you don't want to.

Once the council has finished its inquiries/investigations, staff will decide what support (if any) you need. This might include making sure you have access to appropriate health care services, personal care support, help with your finances, counselling, support for the person who is caring for you, housing support, or referring you to an independent advocacy organisation.

They may also decide at any point to take measures to protect you if they are concerned about your safety. This might include contacting the emergency services, or applying to the court for a banning order (banning the abuser from coming near you for a certain time period), or a removal order (taking you to a safer place for a short period).

Ask someone else to report the harm. If you want to report what has happened to someone who can help, but you don't want to contact the council, you could tell someone else who can help, e.g. a doctor or other health professional, a carer, or someone at your church. They can make a referral to the council on your behalf. If you'd rather speak to someone you don't know, you can ask helplines such as Hourglass to make a referral for you.

Ask the council for an assessment of your needs. Not all cases of harm, abuse or neglect will be treated as adult support and protection referrals. This is because the Act only covers vulnerable adults at risk of harm (the law includes criteria for deciding who might be vulnerable). It's usually best to let the council decide if you meet this definition - but even if you don't, the council may still be able to help in other ways. If you haven't already had one, you should ask for an assessment of your care needs to help the council decide what support you need.

## Take legal advice

You may need legal advice to set up or change your will or Power of Attorney, to try to recover money or property or to untangle a legal arrangement you have been tricked or bullied in to. It may be possible to get legal aid to help with the costs.

If you're not ready to seek help that is your choice. But it may help to get more information about your options in case you want to do something about the abuse later.

## Contact a regulatory body...

If you are being harmed, abused or have concerns about a paid carer or healthcare worker (or the services provided by a health or care provider), you could report them to the relevant regulatory body. It's usually best to speak to the worker's manager first, but you can also go through the organisation's complaints procedure or formally report them to a regulatory body. Here are the agencies you can contact:

- Concerns about individual care workers - the Scottish Social Services Council.
- Concerns about social care services – the Care Inspectorate.
- Concerns about social work services – your local council.
- Concerns about individual healthcare workers – the relevant professional body.
- Concerns about NHS healthcare – the NHS complaints procedure.
- Private healthcare services – directly with the provider, or via the relevant professional body.

## Support for black and minority ethnic (BME) groups

BME groups may experience specific issues in relation to harm and abuse, and some people may find it harder to access information and support due to language or cultural difficulties. For some ethnic groups, a traditional reliance on family can leave them particularly vulnerable to various types of harm and abuse.

Trust Housing Association run an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme for older people which offers leaflets on elder abuse in various languages, including:

- Chinese
- Punjabi
- Bengali
- Arabi
- Urdu
- Hindi

You can download the booklets at [www.equalityscotland.com](http://www.equalityscotland.com) or call them on **0131 444 4942** to request one.



## Organisations who can help

### SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

#### Abused men in Scotland (AMIS) helpline

A national organisation dedicated to supporting men who are experiencing, or who have experienced, domestic abuse.

Helpline: 0808 800 0024  
Email: [contact@amis.org.uk](mailto:contact@amis.org.uk)  
Website: [www.abusedmeninscotland.org](http://www.abusedmeninscotland.org)

#### Hourglass Scotland

A specialist organisation that focuses exclusively on the abuse of older people. If you phone this number it will not appear on your telephone bill.

Helpline: 080 8808 8141  
Email: [scotland@wearehourglass.org](mailto:scotland@wearehourglass.org)  
Website: [www.wearehourglass.scot](http://www.wearehourglass.scot)

#### Alzheimer Scotland 24 hour Dementia helpline

A service for people with dementia, carers, relatives, professionals, and anyone concerned about dementia.

Helpline: 0808 808 3000  
Email: [info@alzscot.org](mailto:info@alzscot.org)  
Website: [www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org)

#### Carers Scotland Advice Line

A helpline to support people who care for an elderly, sick or disabled family member or friend.

Helpline: 0808 808 7777  
Email: [adviceline@carersuk.org](mailto:adviceline@carersuk.org)  
Website: [www.carersuk.org/scotland](http://www.carersuk.org/scotland)

#### Citizens Advice Bureau

Call Citizens Advice Direct or visit the Citizens Advice Scotland website to find your local bureau.

Helpline: 0808 800 9060  
Website: [www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux)

#### Money Advice Service

A free and impartial service to help people manage their finances directly, and make the most of their money.

Helpline: 0800 138 7777  
Website: [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk)

#### Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

Telephone information and support to anyone affected by domestic abuse or forced marriage. It is open 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Helpline: 0800 027 1234

#### Silver Line Scotland helpline

A confidential, freephone helpline for older people, available every day of the year. It provides information, friendship & advice to older people and those seeking advice on how best to support older friends and family.

Helpline: 0800 4 70 80 90  
Website: [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

#### Trust Housing Association (THA)

THA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme offer a range of support and information for older people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Tel: 0131 444 1200  
Website: [www.equalityscotland.com](http://www.equalityscotland.com)

#### Victim Support Scotland

Provides support and information services to victims and witnesses of crime.

Helpline: 0800 160 1985  
Website: [www.victimssupportsco.org.uk](http://www.victimssupportsco.org.uk)

#### Women's Aid helpline

A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

Helpline: 0808 2000 247  
Email: [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)  
Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

### STATUTORY SERVICES

#### Council Social work departments

Look in the phone book/internet or call Hourglass Scotland or Silver Line Scotland who can find the number for you.

#### Police Scotland

Emergency calls: 999  
Non-emergency calls: 101

## Regulatory bodies

### The Care Inspectorate

Regulates and inspects care services in Scotland to make sure that they meet the right standards.

Tel: 0345 600 9527  
Email: [enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)  
Website: [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

### The Mental Welfare Commission

Protects and promote the human rights of people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, dementia and related conditions.

Advice line: 0800 389 6809  
Email: [enquiries@mwscot.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mwscot.org.uk)  
Website: [www.mwscot.org.uk](http://www.mwscot.org.uk)

### Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

Registers and regulates key groups of social service workers, promote and regulate education and training.

Tel: 0345 60 30 891  
Website: [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com)

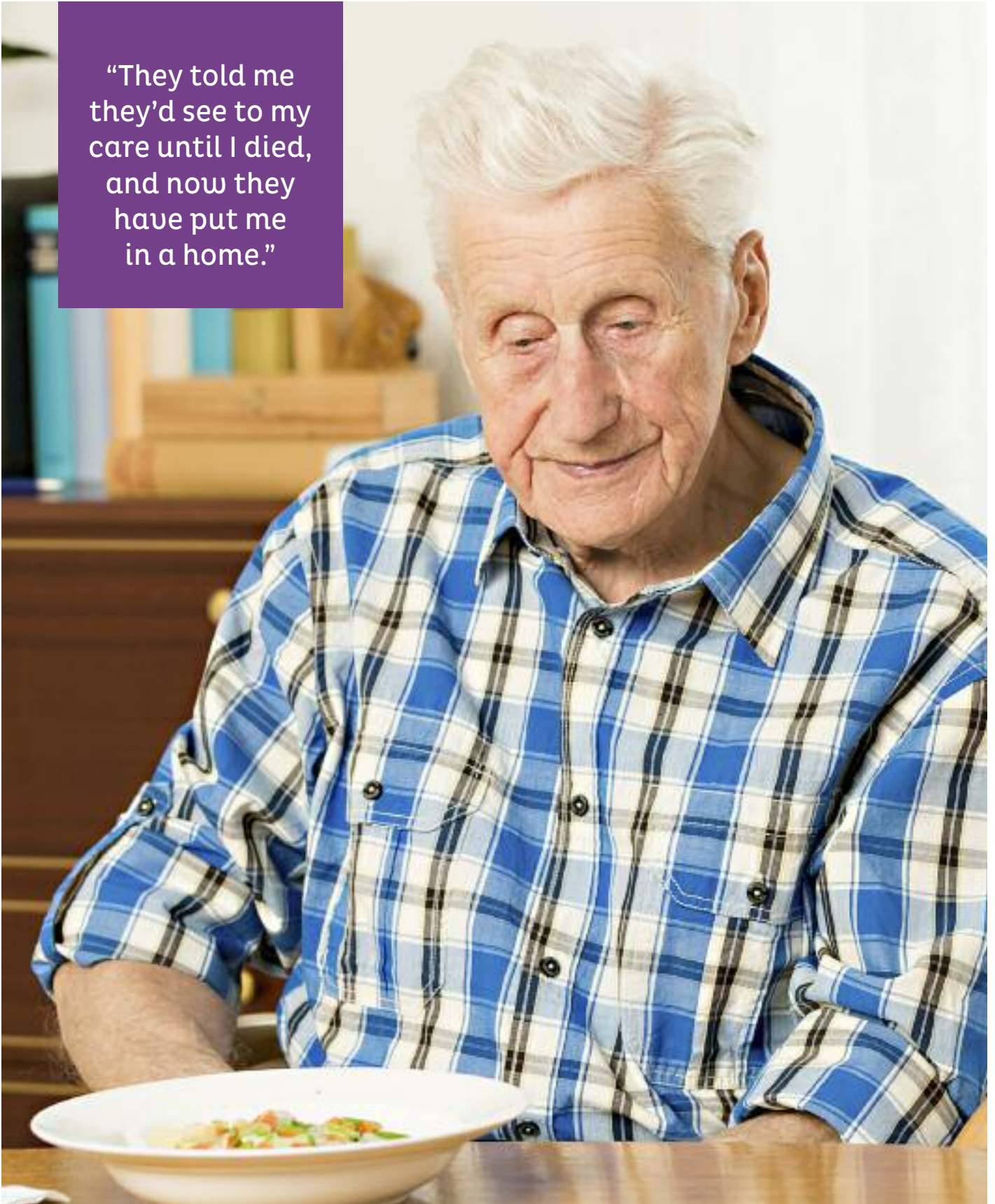
### Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland)

Supervises those individuals who have been appointed to manage the financial or property affairs of adults who lack the capacity to do so for themselves.

Tel: 01324 678300  
Email: [opg@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:opg@scotcourts.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk)



“They told me they’d see to my care until I died, and now they have put me in a home.”



## How Hourglass can support you

**Hourglass is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to stopping the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people and promote safer ageing.**

The Hourglass confidential helpline provides information and support to anyone concerned about harm, abuse or exploitation of an older person. This might include physical, financial, psychological, sexual or neglect.

The helpline is available in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to provide a tailored service to callers from across the UK. Our trained Information Officers can provide information, advice and support and put you in touch with appropriate local agencies.

## Our Helpline is available from 9am to 5pm every Monday to Friday, offering:

- support for older people who have experienced, or are at risk of, any kind of harm, abuse or exploitation.
- support for anyone concerned about an older person, e.g family, friends, neighbours, carers or health professionals, etc.
- information and advice relating to safer ageing and prevention.

**The Hourglass helpline is entirely confidential, free to call from a landline or mobile, and the number won't appear on the phone bill.**

# 0808 808 8141

"I only found out he'd taken my car when the police came around after the accident."





# Hourglass

Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

You can contact us in many ways:

**24/7 Helpline: 0808 808 8141**

Our helpline is entirely confidential and free to call from a landline or mobile, and the number will not appear on your phone bill.

**Text message: 07860 052906**

Texts from outside the UK will be charged at their standard international rate which will differ depending on location and service charges of your phone provider. The number will appear on your bill and in your phone records but will not be identified as Hourglass.

**INSTANT MESSAGING service: [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our CHATBOT - [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our KNOWLEDGE BANK - [knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org](http://knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org)**

**Email: [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org)**

## Hourglass England

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E: [enquiries@wearehourglass.org](mailto:enquiries@wearehourglass.org)  
W: [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)

 @wearehourglass\_  
 [facebook.com/wearehourglass](https://facebook.com/wearehourglass)

## Hourglass Cymru

C/o - Office 8, Unit 5,  
Stour Valley Business Centre,  
Brundon Lane, Sudbury,  
Suffolk, CO10 7GB.

T: +44 (0) 20 8835 9280  
E: [cymru@wearehourglass.org](mailto:cymru@wearehourglass.org)  
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