



**Hourglass**

Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

Scotland

# SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF HARM, ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Scotland

**Hourglass**

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

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

## 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**

## what is the abuse of older people?

Hourglass defines the abuse of older people 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 or violates their human or civil rights”.***

We also recognise Scotland’s unique adult safeguarding framework which highlights that older people may also experience a wide range of harmful behaviours, as well as the more obvious types of abuse.

## Who can abuse?

Abuse can be carried out by anyone, but often the victim knows their abuser. They may be:

- A partner, relative or other family member.
- A service or care provider.
- A neighbour or friend.
- A health or social care worker (including volunteers).

## Where can abuse take place?

Abuse can occur anywhere, including someone’s own home, a carer’s home, a day care setting, a care home, or a hospital.

## Types and signs of harm and abuse.

There are many different types of harm, abuse and neglect, and many people may be subject to more than one at the same time. The main types are:-

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual violence and abuse.
- Financial harm/abuse.
- Emotional, psychological or mental abuse.
- Neglect / denial of basic needs.

## Physical abuse

This is the injury or mistreatment of an older person, and may include spitting, hitting, pinching, pushing, inappropriate use of restraints, over-medicating, force feeding or rough handling.

### Signs of physical abuse may include:

- Cuts, burns, bruises and scratches.
- Injuries that don't match the explanation given for them.
- Injuries and wounds in concealed places.
- Injuries in protected areas, e.g. underarms.
- Untreated injuries.
- Under or over use of medication.

## Sexual violence and abuse

This is the form of abuse which is least likely to be talked about in relation to older people - but it does happen. It can include forcing someone to take part in sexual activity without their consent, including touching, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment and use of sexual language.

### Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain/injury or itching in the anal, genital or abdominal area.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear.
- Venereal disease or recurrent bouts of cystitis.
- Unexplained problems with catheters.
- Difficulty sitting/walking due to discomfort in genital area.



## Financial harm/abuse

This can include stealing, having control over someone's money, fraud, or embezzlement. It also includes 'doorstep crime', such as bogus tradesmen or postal, phone or internet scammers.

Sometimes carers, friends or family put pressure on older people to make financial decisions they wouldn't otherwise make. Often this can be around money or possessions, wills, power of attorney, etc

### Signs of financial harm/abuse may include:

- Lack of money for basic necessities such as food, heating or clothes, despite an adequate income.
- Inability to explain what is happening to their income.
- Unexplained withdrawals, or changes in patterns of withdrawals, from bank accounts.
- Reluctance from the person controlling funds to pay for things.
- Disappearance of possessions, or financial documents.

## Emotional, psychological or mental abuse

This can include persistently ignoring someone, bullying, threatening, intimidating, insulting, and humiliating. It may also include depriving someone of their right to make decisions, choose where to go, when to eat, when to get up, when to go to bed and who they spend time with. It is often intended to undermine the victim's self-worth.

### Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- The victim may feel or appear depressed, withdrawn, frightened, agitated, anxious or aggressive.
- The older person feels or seem isolated.
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour.

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



## Neglect / denial of basic needs

**This is a form of abuse, and can include:**


- Lack of help going to the toilet, eating, dressing or washing.
- Not seeking medical help or following a care plan.
- Giving too much medication or withholding medication.
- Leaving someone malnourished or dehydrated.
- Failing to provide opportunities for social contact or doing enjoyable things.

**Signs of neglect may include:**

- Deterioration in appearance or personal hygiene.
- Unhygienic and unsafe environment.
- Rashes, sores and ulcers.
- Inadequate food, drink or medical care.
- Lack of social stimulation.

## What to do if you're worried about harm or abuse.

If you are affected by any of the issues discussed in this booklet it is important to know this is not your fault, and there are ways to get help. It is vital you talk to someone.



“She took all my money and property, and left me with nothing.”

## 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)



## 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.”







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E: [scotland@wearehourglass.org](mailto:scotland@wearehourglass.org)

W: [www.wearehourglass.scot/scotland](http://www.wearehourglass.scot/scotland)

 @HourglassScot

 [facebook.com/HourglassScotland](https://facebook.com/HourglassScotland)

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