Financial Abuse Prevention: A Practical Guide for Family Carers

Recognise possible financial exploitation, protect dignity and know how to seek appropriate safeguarding support.

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⚠ **IMPORTANT**

This guide provides general information and practical organisation support, not personal legal, financial, safeguarding or medical advice. Rules, fees, eligibility, service arrangements and legal requirements can change. Verified against current official sources as of August 2026.

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Safety, dignity and financial independence

Financial abuse can involve stealing money, misuse of an account or legal authority, pressure to spend, coercion, scams or restricting a person’s access to their own finances. The person responsible may be a stranger or someone known to them.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Take concerns seriously while respecting the person’s wishes and safety. Do not assume a dementia diagnosis removes a person’s right to be involved in financial decisions.

Signs worth noticing

- ☐ Unexplained withdrawals, transfers, debts, missing valuables or unusual subscriptions.
- ☐ Pressure to share PINs, passwords or security codes, or to make an urgent payment.
- ☐ New people seeking money, sudden changes to legal documents or isolation from financial information.
- ☐ The person seeming worried, confused or unable to access money they usually control.

Respond calmly and safely

If there is immediate danger, a crime in progress or urgent medical risk, contact emergency services. For non-urgent concerns, use a safe method of contact and avoid confronting someone if this could increase risk.

Understand the options

Different concerns may need different responses. Banks, councils, police and specialist support organisations each have distinct roles.

Option or question	What to check
Bank or building society	Can help secure an account, investigate suspicious transactions and discuss appropriate support or authority arrangements.
Adult safeguarding	The local authority can receive concerns about an adult at risk and consider safeguarding action.
Police	Can be contacted if a crime may have happened or is happening.
Formal authority	An LPA, deputyship or appointeeship may be appropriate in some circumstances, but each has defined legal limits.

Avoid informal workarounds

Do not take control of another person’s money, card, PIN or online account without appropriate consent and authority. Ask the provider about the right arrangement.

Practical next steps

A simple, proportionate response can protect both the person and the evidence. Seek advice early if you are uncertain.

If something does not look right

- ☐ Speak to the person privately if it is safe and ask open, non-judgemental questions.
- ☐ Use a trusted bank number or official app/website to report a suspicious transaction or account concern.
- ☐ Keep messages, letters, dates, transaction details and names used as evidence.
- ☐ Contact local adult safeguarding or the police if there is concern about abuse or a crime.
- ☐ Seek specialist support if the person is being controlled, pressured or isolated.

Questions to ask safely

What has changed, who has access to information or money, what immediate safety step is needed, and what does the person want to happen next?

Safeguards and boundaries

Safety planning should not expose the person to further pressure. Keep information secure and avoid sharing concerns with anyone who may be involved in the harm.

Practical safeguards

- ☐ Use unique passwords and do not share verification or security codes.
- ☐ Review statements and direct debits with the person where appropriate.
- ☐ Check formal authority arrangements are current and being used properly.
- ☐ Keep important documents, cards and identity information secure.

Do not promise secrecy

If you believe someone is being abused or neglected, it may be necessary to seek help even if they are unsure about reporting it. Explain honestly what you can and cannot keep confidential.

My preparation record

Use this page to prepare for a conversation with the person, a public body, provider or qualified adviser. Keep personal documents and financial information secure.

Changes or incidents noticed

Immediate safety or account-security action

Evidence, dates or documents to keep securely

Safe people or services to contact

The next action, who will do it and the review date

Sources and support

1. NHS — *Abuse and neglect of adults at risk*; financial abuse, signs and safeguarding route.
2. MoneyHelper — financial abuse: spotting signs and getting support.
3. GOV.UK — economic abuse information and public-sector toolkit.
4. GOV.UK / OPG — formal authority and managing another person’s account.

Checked against these sources August 2026. Confirm the current position directly before acting because rules, fees, processes and local arrangements can change.

This guide is not a substitute for professional advice. Seek appropriate legal, financial, tax, clinical, safeguarding or benefits advice for the individual situation. Call 999 in a life-threatening emergency.

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