



**Diogelu Gwent  
Gwent Safeguarding**



**Be alert to attempts to  
exploit or defraud you**



**Don't be afraid to say 'no'**



**Report potential  
financial abuse/scams**



**Better to be rude than be  
scammed or exploited**



# **FINANCIAL ABUSE**

**It's more common than you think.**

**Financial abuse is when someone tries to take or control what belongs to you for their own benefit, not yours. Financial abuse is more common than people think. Most financial abuse goes unreported, which is something that we need to try and change.**

Financial abuse can include theft of money, fraud, scams, taking advantage of someone they know, stopping someone from having their own money, threats or putting pressure on someone in relation to money or property.

Other examples include misusing someone's personal allowance, benefits or direct payments, for example arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance. It could also mean denying someone assistance to sort out their finances, to access benefits, or putting pressure on someone to take out loans, credit cards in their name.

Fraud and scams are rife these days, even more so since the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, with criminals finding increasingly creative ways to defraud, scam people, and take advantage of people's increased isolation.

 **70% of financial abuse is perpetrated by family**

**While fraud and scams are on the rise, someone is still more likely to be financially abused by someone they know, who they thought they could trust.**

 **60–80% of financial abuse takes place in the home**

### **Possible signs financial abuse could be taking place:**

- Disparity between living conditions and financial resources
- Missing money or possessions
- Rent arrears and eviction notices, or bills not being paid
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds
- Unusual bank activity
- Changes to a will, or sale/transfer of a house
- Substantial 'gifts' to a third party
- Slight changes to signature
- Forced isolation from friends and family

### **Looking after your affairs:**

- Regularly review your finances, including bank statements and bills
- If you see an unusual transaction no matter how small, report or query it with your bank, it could be a test run before larger transactions are made
- If your statements are dealt with by someone else, ask to see copies of statements or request routine copies to be sent to you also. Are you certain you can place total trust in the other person?
- Be cautious if asked for money or possessions by family, friends or even carers. Your long term financial needs must be considered, and there is little to be gained by encouraging dependency and/or greed in others
- Don't delay applying for Power of Attorney, and appoint someone who you can trust

### **How can we keep safer...**

#### **At home?**

- Keep doors, windows locked
- Don't give anyone access to your key safe unless they are known to you and are trusted
- Never keep large amounts of cash in the house
- Keep valuables safe inside a lockbox/personal safe, hidden from view

#### **In the community?**

- Keep your valuables safe when in public i.e. don't advertise where you keep your purse or wallet, or mobile phone (if you have one)
- Take care to shield pin numbers when using cashpoints
- Avoid giving your bank card or pin number to anyone and always get receipts if this is unavoidable

### **Organisations that can help:**

Police: 999 or 101  
Citizens Advice Bureau: 0808 2231133  
Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040  
Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit: 0300 1233311  
Supporting People  
Connect Gwent (Victim Support)  
Age Cymru  
Office of Public Guardian  
Dewis  
[www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk](http://www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk)

### **Social Services:**

Blaenau Gwent: 01495 315700  
Caerphilly: 0808 1002500  
Torfaen: 01495 762200  
Newport: 01633 656656  
Monmouthshire: 01873 735492

### **Trading Standards:**

Torfaen: 03454 040506  
Monmouthshire: 0808 2231133  
Caerphilly: 01443 866222  
Blaenau Gwent: 01495 357813  
Newport: 01633 656656



## Scams: if you can spot a scam you can **stop a scam**

- S**eems too good to be true
- C**ontacted out of the blue
- A**sked to give your personal details
- M**oney is requested



## Practical tips to help you stay ahead of those who set out to **exploit or defraud you**

### Be alert to **cold callers, doorstep & telephone scams**

- Do not open the door to cold callers who attend your address, and always if possible verify and photograph any identification offered
- Don't engage with cold callers who ring or call at your home – it's okay to say 'no'
- Bank/HMRC/Utility companies won't ring you to ask for payment (they will always write to you first), or ask to collect your bank card or cheque book
- No bank or other genuine organisation will ever ask for your pin code so don't give it to them. Ask them to write to you if you're not sure
- If you didn't request a quote, consultation or work to be carried out, this could be an attempt to exploit or defraud you. Always get an independent second opinion
- Be cautious if you receive calls from an area code or country you wouldn't expect

### How can we **stay safer online**?

- Be cautious when using chat rooms or online dating
- Don't send intimate photo's of yourself... you could be blackmailed
- Change passwords regularly and don't use the same password for everything. Don't give others your online passwords
- Change your email address if it becomes compromised
- Use secure trusted websites when buying items, and be alert to copycat sites, we advise double checking the web address to ensure 'co.uk' or '.com' is present and if not do not use
- Treat any requests to log into an online account with extreme caution, always take 'time out' and verify this
- It's wise to avoid using social media to obtain loans, many are not licenced
- If it seems too good to be true it probably is... if in doubt do not click or open links
- Take nothing at face value, cross check details using other sites...and keep in mind that reviews can be faked