



Recognising and reporting crimes against older people

What are crimes against older people?

The Welsh Government defines 'older people' as anyone aged 50+. Whilst there is no legal definition of crimes against older people, Diverse Cymru's Age of Justice report recommended the following: **Any crime where older people are specifically targeted. This includes crimes motivated by prejudice or hostility against older people (ageism) and includes where older people are targeted because they are thought to be more vulnerable.**

Crimes against older people include, but aren't limited to:

- Scams and rogue trading
- Threats and verbal insults
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Violent crimes
- Burglaries
- Mate Crime
- Vandalism
- Sexual abuse
- Anti-social behaviour

Recognising the signs

Due to the range of crimes against older people the signs and indications vary wildly. It is important to understand that the following signs of abuse are only indicators that abuse may be occurring. Behaviour and injuries of the sorts listed below may be present for other reasons, and the list is far from exhaustive.

Physical abuse

- Cuts, burns, bruises and scratches
- Injuries that do not 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

Psychological abuse

- The victim may feel or appear depressed, withdrawn, frightened, agitated, anxious or aggressive
- The older person feels or seems isolated
- There is an unexpected or unexplained change in mood or behaviour

Financial abuse

- Lack of money for basic necessities such as food, heating or clothes, despite an adequate income
- Unexplained withdrawals from a person's bank accounts
- A person's inability to explain what is happening to their income
- Disappearance of possessions, bank statements or other documents

Neglect

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

What can you do?

1. Record and report all incidents and crimes against older people to help identify issues and target resources.
2. Train staff in communicating with and supporting older people and identifying and reporting potential abuse.
3. Work with other organisations to develop multi-agency processes and share information to tackle crimes against older people and support those affected. This should look at criminal and civil justice options, restorative justice, mediation, social care, housing, health and wellbeing, support, and community group and third sector organisation services.
4. Develop a local list of organisations that provide support for older people. This should include counselling, access to day centres, dementia-friendly schemes, befriending, and comprehensive advice and advocacy services.
5. Engage older people in developing local processes and support. Engagement must include accessible face-to-face methods and telephone contact.
6. Develop targeted accessible, clear and simple information raising awareness of crimes against older people, local reporting processes and tackling ageism.
7. Involve older people in their cases and ensure they receive regular progress updates.

Reporting crimes against older people

Crimes against older people can take many forms and can have a profound effect on anyone. No one should have to go through it alone, no matter what the situation. Different people want different outcomes. Some people want to prosecute. Others just want it to stop. Some don't want to report at all, but you have a duty to report neglect and harm in safeguarding situations.

You can report crimes against older people to:

Police: **999** (emergency) **101** (non-emergency)
Age Cymru advice line: **08000 223 444**

Victim Support: **victimsupport.com** **080 8168 9111**
Action on Elder Abuse advice/helpline: **080 8808 8141**

For more information on the help and support that's available or to read the **Age of Justice** report go to:

diverse.cymru.org.uk/ageofjustice