

Identifying abuse and neglect toward older people and adults with disability

Abuse and neglect can take many forms:

- **Financial:** Misuse of another person's money, bank accounts or powers of attorney.
- **Psychological:** Verbal abuse, belittling or name-calling, isolating from others.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide basic needs, such as food, heating or healthcare.
- **Physical:** Assault, shoving or rough handling, physical or chemical restraint.
- **Sexual:** Any unwelcome sexual behaviour or act, including inappropriate washing or handling.

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Some signs to look out for include:

- They tell you they suddenly no longer require needed services.
- The person wears ill-fitting clothes or is underweight.
- There is limited access to money or their bank account.
- There is no food in the house, or many unpaid bills.
- They have poor hygiene or are living in unsanitary conditions.
- The carer always hovers around the person.
- There is evident paranoia or fear about things around them.

How to respond?

1. Talk and listen to the adult you are concerned about.

If needed, and possible, take them away from the setting.

2. Do not just rely on information from family or carers.

Ask the person of concern if they feel safe to talk and arrange for privacy.

3. Respect the right of the adult to decide for themselves.

For example who they live with, and how they live, is their choice.

If you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation, take action.

1. Call an ambulance - a social admission to hospital can prevent further abuse.
2. Consult the ACPO, DO, DVLO or CPO.
3. Record all details on COPS.
4. Contact MyAgedCare or the NDIS for an assessment if appropriate.
5. Call the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline for advice 1800 628 221 (M-F, 9-5) or submit a report to nswadc@adc.nsw.gov.au

