

## Appendix 16: Definitions of Abuse – Adults at Risk of Harm – Scotland

Adults may be at risk of harm from anyone, anywhere. What constitutes abuse or neglect can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

### Financial harm

Placing an individual under pressure to hand over money or possessions. Exploitation of property or welfare benefits or stopping someone getting their money or possessions; stealing, cheating or fraud. Being under pressure to re-write a will.

### Psychological harm

Being humiliated, intimidated, shouted at, threatened, bullied or constantly criticised. It can also mean being controlled by someone, ignored or left alone.

### Sexual harm

Any sexual activity that a person doesn't feel comfortable with, want or understand.

### Neglect

Neglect involves denying medical or physical care, access to a doctor or other services. It could be denying someone medication, food or heating, privacy or dignity. It can also mean self-neglect.

### Physical harm

Slapping, punching, biting, hitting, shaking and kicking are all forms of physical harm.

## Further Help

### Action on Elder Abuse

Astral House  
1268 London Road  
London  
SW16 4ER

Tel: 020 8765 7000  
Helpline: 0808 808 8141  
Fax: 020 8679 4074  
Email: [enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk)  
Website: [www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

Action on Elder Abuse runs a telephone helpline to give confidential advice and information to older people who are being physically, mentally or financially abused. A relative or friend of the person being abused can contact the helpline on their behalf. The helpline can be used by older people who live at home, in care homes or who are in hospital.

Age Scotland runs the helpline, Silver Line Scotland, on 0800 4 70 80 90, to help older people in Scotland with a wide variety of issues. It is a 24-hour, free and confidential service that you can phone for advice. Telephone interpretation is available.

### Silver Line Scotland

Tel: 0800 4 70 80 90  
Textphone: 0845 226 5851  
Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland)