

GUIDE TO

# FINANCIAL ABUSE

**The vision of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board is that all adults in Surrey live a life free from fear, abuse and neglect.**

## **WHAT IS FINANCIAL ABUSE?**

Financial abuse typically means cheating someone out of their money, possessions or property – or using their money, possessions or property without their informed consent.

People with care and support needs – such as mental illness, learning or physical disabilities, or dementia – may be more at risk of financial abuse than others. Elderly people are particularly at risk, and on occasion the person committing the financial abuse may be a trusted caregiver or family member. Within a family context, financial abuse is also a form of domestic abuse.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FINANCIAL ABUSE?

There are many kinds of financial abuse, and it can happen at home, in a care setting or even in a public place.

### Common examples include:

- » Bank and credit card fraud
- » Theft
- » Controlling or withholding access to money
- » Pressuring someone to change their will
- » Pressuring someone to sign something they don't want to or can't understand
- » Forged signatures on documents
- » Misuse of property, possessions or money
- » Misuse of power of attorney

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF FINANCIAL ABUSE

Whether the incident is minor or major, a one-off or a continuing pattern, financial abuse is a crime and should be dealt with straight away.

### Be on the lookout for:

- » Unexplained withdrawals or unusual activity in a bank account
- » Sudden shortage of money
- » Inability to pay bills or buy food
- » Possessions or cash going missing
- » Poor living conditions that are incompatible with a person's normal income
- » A carer or family member showing unusual interest in a person's finances or assets
- » Unexpected or sudden changes to a will, policy, property title or power of attorney

## GETTING HELP

If you're worried that a person may be a victim of financial abuse or at risk of harm, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- » Call on **0300 470 9100**
- » Email [ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:ascmash@surreycc.gov.uk)
- » Text on **07527 182861**
- » Out of hours, call **01483 517898**

When you contact MASH, rest assured that we'll take your concerns seriously. We'll reach out to the person in question to discuss their wishes and work with them to find a way forward.

**In an emergency**, or if you believe someone is in immediate danger, always dial 999 for the police.