

# Hourglass

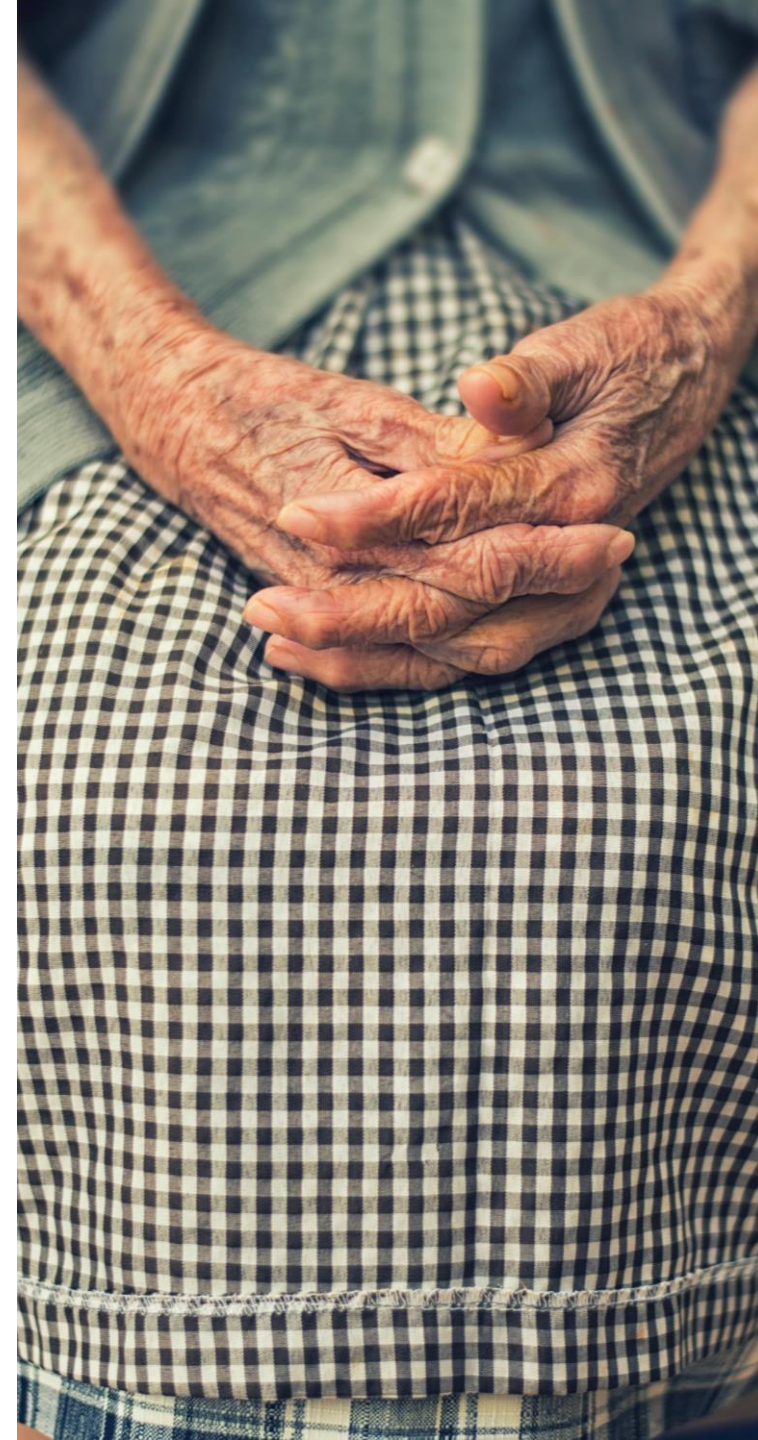
– protecting older people from abuse

*Sarah Billingham*

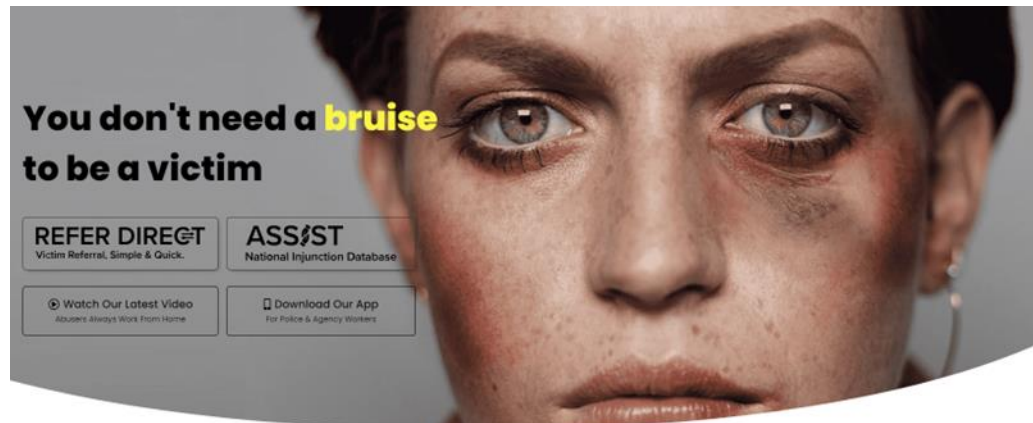
*Community Response Officer, Surrey*



**Hourglass is the  
only charity  
dedicated to calling  
time on the harm,  
abuse and  
exploitation of  
older people  
Nationally.**



# Set aside how you conventionally think about domestic abuse ...



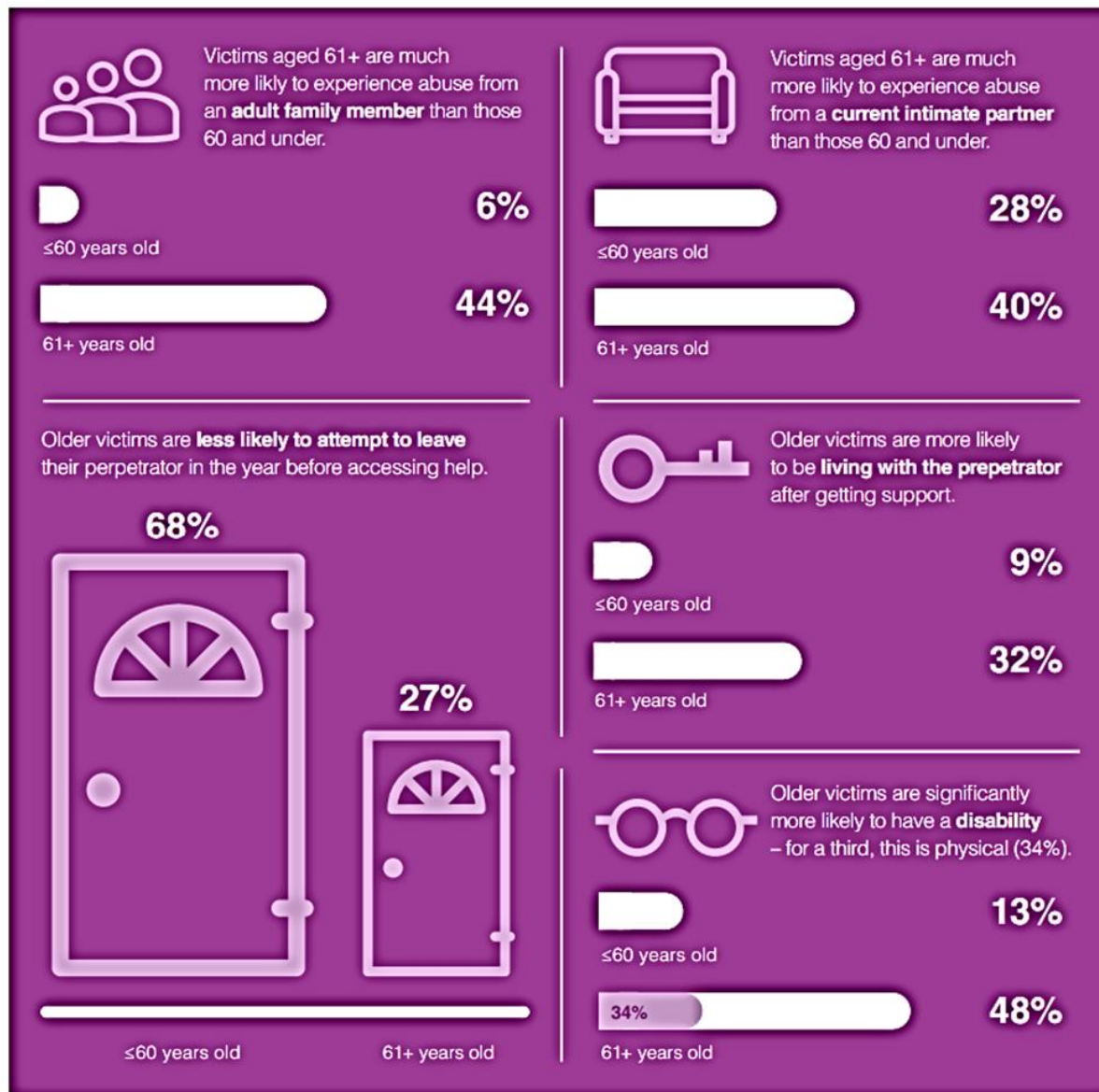






# **Spotlight on domestic abuse with older people**

<https://safelives.org.uk/spotlight-1-older-people-and-domestic-abuse>



# Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—

A and B are each aged 16 or over and **are personally connected to each other**, and there is any of the following ...

physical or sexual abuse;

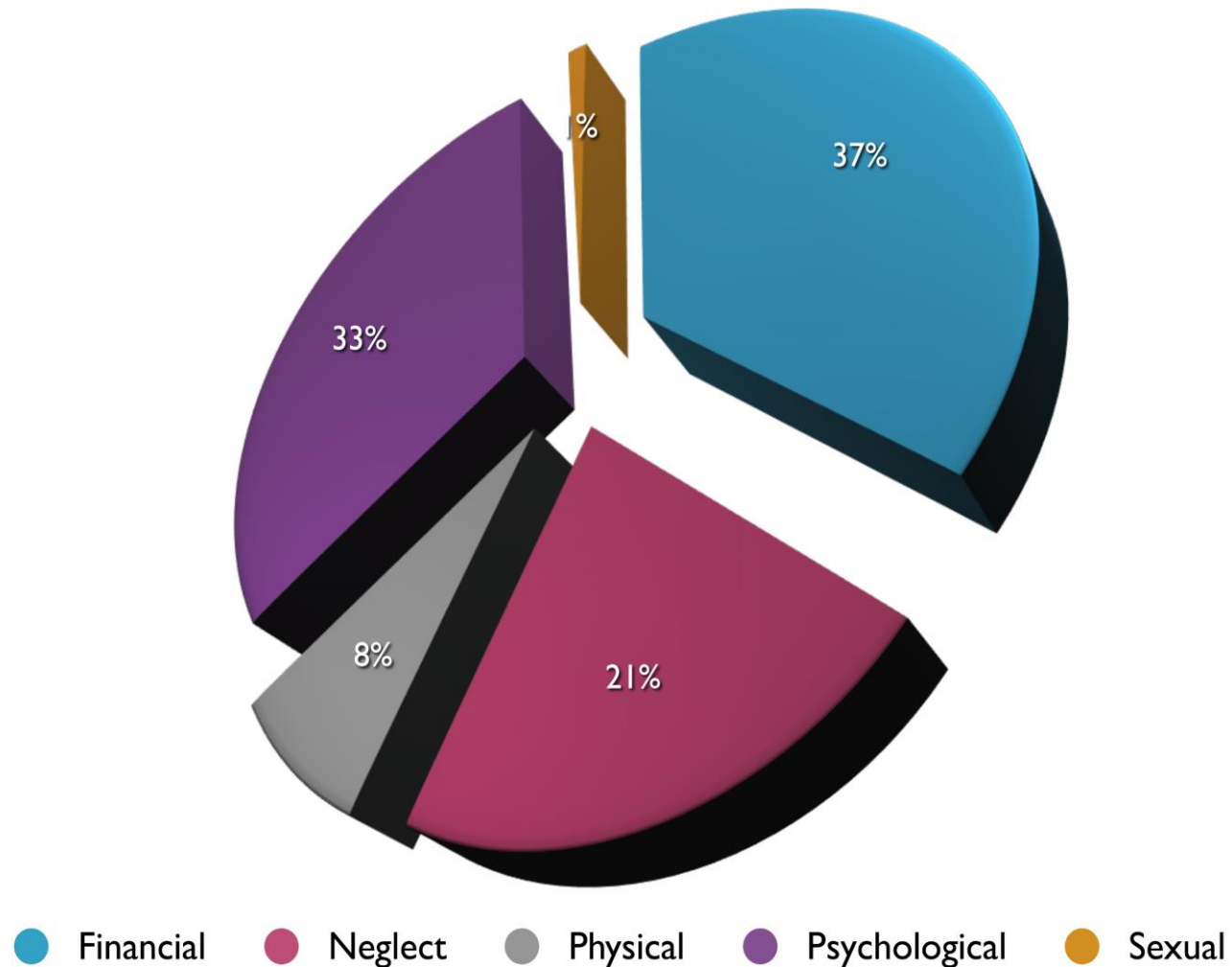
violent or threatening behaviour;

controlling or coercive behaviour;

economic abuse;

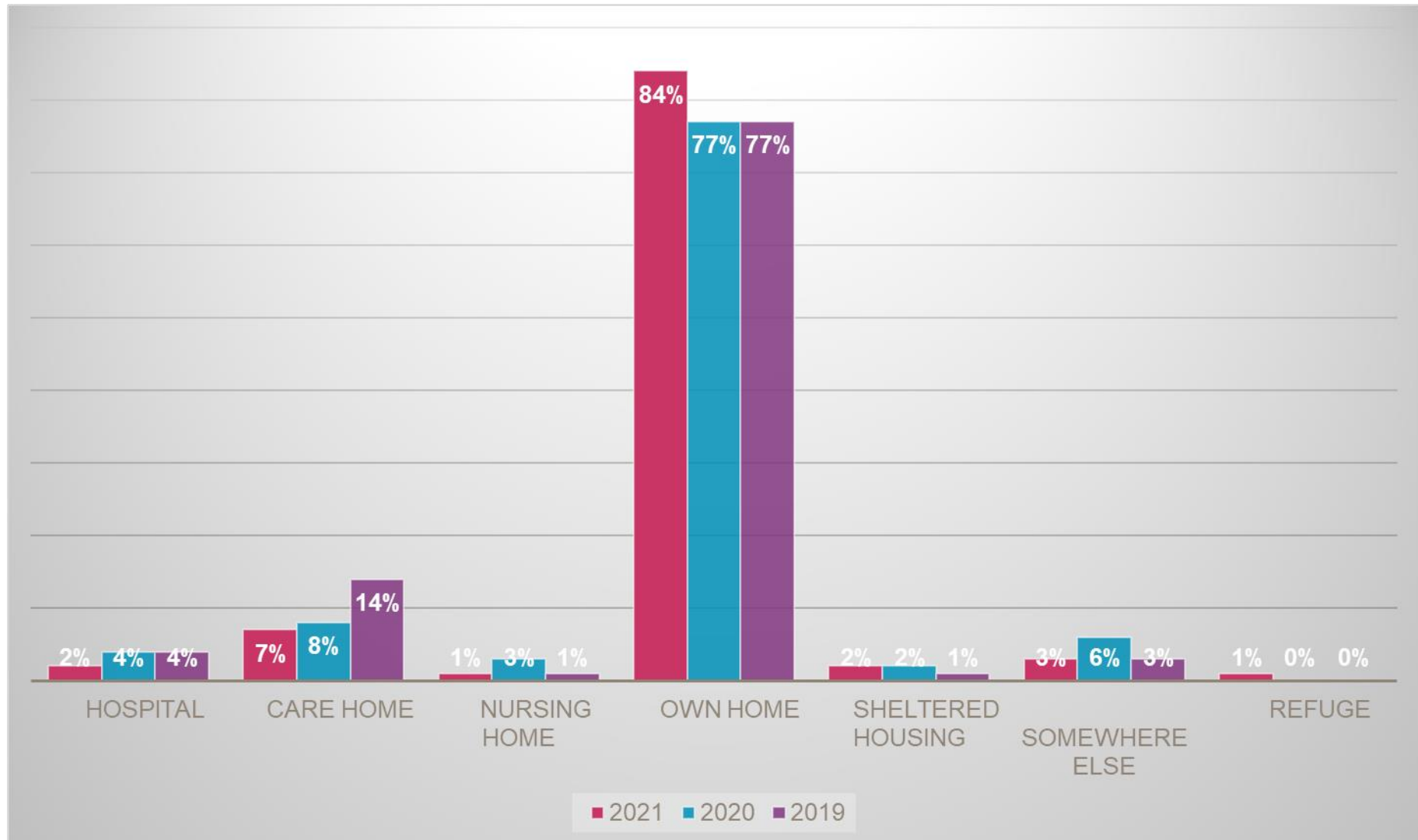
psychological, emotional or other abuse.

# Types of abuse 2021/22





# Location of abuse



# Christina

Husband is alcoholic and  
has dementia

Wants to stay  
'It's the dementia'  
Unable to cope  
Abuse for decades



# David

Adult daughter  
Pressure to change will  
Wife with Huntington's  
disease diagnosis



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# Helpline caller

Father

Dementia

Mother 'hates him'

Won't leave

Abuse of carers

Neglect

Covert camera



## Older people and abuse characteristics

- Older victims might not recognise what's happening as abuse
- They may be reluctant to talk about it
- They don't know about the help that's available
- Or have been let down in the past
- They may have health or mobility needs
- Family and friends unsupportive
- They may think it's too late
- More isolated
- Caring leads to additional layer of stress
- Dynamics rapidly change
- Easier to manipulate
- Decline of vitality/mental capacity
- Statistics not readily available



# Barriers to Seeking Support

- No idea what to do, so do nothing
- Frightened (may have never lived alone)
- Lifetime of keeping the peace
- Chosen perspective of concerned parent/spouse
- Shame
- Deflection of blame to other people
- Reliance on perpetrator for care (or they care for perpetrator)
- Reluctance to criminalise beloved family members
- Lack of confidence as they become more frail
- Fears over not being believed (fluctuating capacity)
- Inability to access services due to disability/confidence/digital literacy
- Victim does not see harm as 'abuse'
- Victim can't leave own family home
- **SERVICE PROVIDERS**

# Common examples of Abuse

- ▶ Perpetrator portrays being an attentive family member
- ▶ Taking advantage of short term memory difficulties/frailty
- ▶ Care home care is cheaper than 24 hour home care
- ▶ Misuse of LPA
- ▶ Unauthorised withdrawal from current account/sale of home
- ▶ Attending personal appointments without consent
- ▶ Removal/imposition of care or support
- ▶ Gatekeeping family contact /isolation
- ▶ Cost considerations prioritised above wellbeing
- ▶ Medication abuse linked to mental capacity
- ▶ Dementia issues around perpetrator behaviour
- ▶ Service providers are gaslit by AP (disguised attentiveness)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a vertical line that curves into a bracket shape, colored in a gradient from orange at the top to purple at the bottom.

# **What to do if you suspect abuse or neglect?**

**(They often want a solution around help for their family member)**

# If there is a disclosure...

- Reassure (fears of being 'put in a home')
- Immediate risk? Police or specialist service
- Give advice around safe place etc
- Raise a safeguarding concern with SCC

<https://www.surreysab.org.uk/concerned-about-an-adult/>

# Concerns and enquiries to Adult Social Care

## Section 42 of the Care Act

adult in Surrey with care and support needs

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect;

and

- as a result of their care & support needs, is unable to protect themselves against that abuse or neglect



# How you can help if thresholds not met...

- Reassure and consider measures to 'bring the temperature down'
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference?
- Carers assessment or care needs assessment? (consent)
- Advocate for client
- Refer to specialist services for injunctions/safety planning
- Other services may be preferable – GP or social prescribers?
- Respite care/community support?
- Befriending
- Resolve simple issues (police, housing, online accessibility)
- Consider GP referral for AP
- HOURGLASS referral especially if complex issues (consent)

# Professional and/or social barriers

- Pandoras box/volatile situation
- Own personal reluctance to discuss any concerns
- Own belief that 'they won't want to leave'
- Another family member may support perpetrator (disagreement among siblings)
- Younger people don't see older victims as being 'in a relationship' and discount domestic abuse
- Rape within marriage has only been illegal in recent years
- Counter-allegations/complex scenario
- Frequently say they only want help for loved family member but that does not mean they are not being abused
- Assumptions – don't assume they want to stay, or leave
- Unintentional abuse is still abuse (dementia)
- Requests not to 'report to services' "Will mum be taken into care?"
- AP is frequently attentive and well-intentioned – status quo easier

# What can I do in my day to day work environment?

- Call Hourglass 24/7 helpline
- Seek advice (DA lead?)
- Be mindful of your language to victim/survivor ('perpetrator')
- Consider care needs – can things be improved easily with respite/niche expertise
- Open up a non judging conversation
- Don't assume a solution is being sought
- HEALTH referral can have transformative effect
- ***Don't assume the abuse is due to the care needs it may have been abusive relationship for years***

# Dementia and Domestic Abuse

- 10% Surrey residents provide unpaid care
- Language around the DA ('it is the dementia, not abusive behaviour')
- Victim often wants AP to stay at home and so will 'soak up' the abuse willingly
- Dementia may be root cause of the DA in either victim or perpetrator
- Victim has dementia (look out for AP seeking to be in the room when talking to professional, changes to LPA or will, house suddenly up for sale, access to bank accounts, isolation, change of demeanour/hygiene, unexplained injuries/scenarios)
- Frequently co-caring involved
- Extended family not in agreement about situation



# Economic abuse

**SURVIVING  
ECONOMIC  
ABUSE**

- <https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/i-need-help/banking/directory/>
- <https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/i-need-help/banking/how-banks-can-help/>
- [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig05\\_avoiding\\_scams\\_inf.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig05_avoiding_scams_inf.pdf)



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## National – Helpline + Online

### Helpline

- 24/7 telephone helpline service
- Instant messenger and text
- Email
- Open to service providers

## Local – Community Response

### Casework

- 1-1 support with a dedicated worker
- Advocacy and tailored advice
- Region specific expertise
- Training
- Awareness Raising / Pop Ups

**1 in 5 older people  
are abused in the  
UK every year.**



**SAFER  
AGEING**

**Hourglass is the only charity in  
the UK dedicated to calling time  
on the harm and abuse of older  
people and we are here to help.**

## HOW TO GET IN TOUCH



Call our 24/7 helpline  
**0808 808 8141**



Text message our helpline  
**07860 052906**



Email us

**helpline@wearehourglass.org**



Talk to us live on our **INSTANT MESSENGER** at  
**www.wearehourglass.org**



Get information from our **CHATBOT** at  
**www.wearehourglass.org**



Get information from our **KNOWLEDGE BANK**  
**knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org**

Our Helpline is entirely confidential and free to call from a landline or mobile. The number will not appear on your phone bill. Our lines are open 24/7 – including weekends and bank holidays. Texts from outside the UK will be charged at their standard international rate which will differ depending on location and service charges of your phone provider. The number will appear on your bill and in your phone records but will not be identified as Hourglass.

Hourglass is the working name of Hourglass (Safer Ageing), a charity registered in England and Wales (reg. no: 1140543), and also in Scotland (reg. no: SC046278). Hourglass (Safer Ageing) is registered as a company in England and Wales under number 07290092.



**Hourglass**  
Safer ageing · Stopping abuse



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## Links to key reading

- <https://www.wearehourglass.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/lastinline-research.pdf>
- <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s43409/Item%207%20-%20Annex%205.pdf>
- [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/age\\_uk\\_no\\_age\\_limit\\_sept2020.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/age_uk_no_age_limit_sept2020.pdf)
- <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-03-2021-ageism-is-a-global-challenge-un>
- <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Later%20Lives%20-%20Older%20people%20and%20domestic%20abuse.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-care-at-home-review/safe-care-at-home-review-accessible>