

7-minute briefing: Economic abuse

1. What is economic abuse?

Financial abuse is the term used to describe harming someone by taking or defrauding them of their money, goods or property.

Financial abuse is never acceptable, no matter how minor it may seem.

Economic abuse is a crime.

2. Why it matters

Adults at risk of harm are people aged 18 or over who are unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to learning or physical disabilities, sensory impairment, frailty or mental health problems.

7. What to do?

- risk assess the situation
- signpost and/or refer to support services as necessary including:

- Bexley Solace Women's Aid
- Adult social care
- Children's social care

Complete a referral to MARAC if the risk is high.

3. Information

Economic abuse can happen to people anywhere and at any time and affects people from all types of backgrounds. It can happen in a person's home, care home, day centre, hospital or in a public place.

4. Information

Economic abuse is the use of a person's property, assets, income, funds or any resources without their informed consent or authorisation. It includes theft, fraud, exploitation, undue pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits, the misuse of an enduring power of attorney or a lasting power of attorney, or Appointee ship or Deputyship.

5. What are the signs of economic abuse?

- Unexplained withdrawals from the bank
- unusual activity in the bank accounts, unpaid bills, unexplained shortage of money
- reluctance on the part of the person with responsibility for the funds to provide basic food and clothes etc
- an unusual interest from a family member, friend, carer or salesperson.

6. What to look for:

- an unexplained inability to pay for household shopping or bills
- personal possessions which go missing from the person's home
- living conditions are low compared to the money the person receives

