

Exploitation of Adults with Learning Difficulties

A West Midlands Police Perspective

Ch Sup't Kenny Bell, CI Helen Bailey & Insp Bel Sixsmith

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Aims

Understand the types of exploitation of adults with learning disabilities are exposed to.

Enable our services to balance Safeguarding, Risk Enablement and Investigation.



Measuring Demand

Do we understand the **true level** of people with learning disabilities who are being exploited?

Definitions of Learning Disability and Learning Difficulties.

Severity of Learning Disability
(mild, moderate, severe or profound)

Types of Learning Disability



Adults at Risk of Exploitation

Exploitation and abuse can manifest in many forms.

Sexual Financial Physical Psychological/Emotional

Potential signs that may alert you that an adult may be being abused:

A sudden change in their normal behaviour: Inappropriate sexualised behaviour: Self-harm: Anxiety, especially when touched, bathed or medically examined: Incontinence: Unexplained anger or violence: Bruising/physical injuries: Irritation or infection in genital areas: Withdrawal from social interaction: Desperate need for more social interaction: Unexpected Pregnancy

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Types of Adult Exploitation Reported July 2019

Autistic adult
being financially exploited by carer.

Report from a man in his 40's family that he was being exploited by local drug users who were using his property and stealing money from him. He has undiagnosed Learning Disabilities.

Adult male with Learning Difficulties has reported that female on heroin has forced him to give her £10.

Neighbour reporting an adult male (who is believed to have Learning Difficulties) is being taken advantage of and offenders have repeatedly forced way into his address.



Case Study “Edward”

Financial & Emotional Exploitation

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Case Study “Edward”



It is Jan 2018.

Edward is an 83 year old man who lives in Birmingham.

He is blind in one eye and has limited and increasingly reduced sight in the other eye. He has mild learning disabilities



Case Study “Edward”



Edward is befriended by a homeless young woman who is begging outside his local supermarket.

Case Study “Edward”



Edward realises that £200-00 cash has gone missing.

He confronts Louise who admits taking it and promises to return the money. During another visit she leaves something at his address.

So what do we do ?

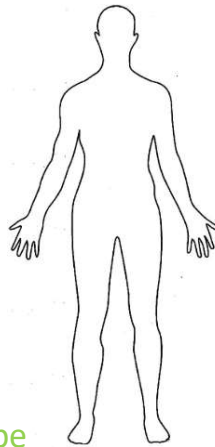
Identify Vulnerable Adults

Work Together

Identify the Person's needs

Look for the warning signs or indicators of Exploitation and if you see them tell someone

Take your time
Communication may be difficult



Ask the person what is happening or why they are behaving that way?

Make Referrals

Get a HCP to assess Mental Capacity if you must, but assume it's there until you know it isn't

Identify the Root Cause of the vulnerability

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Case Study “Edward”



Edward now believes that Louise is a drug user and a prostitute and so reports the theft.



Case Study “Edward”



Brief Incident Details

CONCERNS FOR 83 YEAR MALE WHO IS BLIND IN ONE EYE AND LOSING SIGHT IN THE OTHER AND IS VULNERABLE – HAS BEEN A VICTIM OF TARGETED FINANCIAL ABUSE BY DRUG DEALERS ETC WHO HAVE TAKEN MONEY FROM HIM - HAS BEEN REPORTED TO POLICE

Warning Markers

TREAT ALL CALLS AS URGENT



INVESTIGATION v SAFEGUARDING

PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSION

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1. Definition

- What is your organisational definition of Learning Disabilities and Learning Difficulties?
- Does your response differ to each?
- What effect these have on our responses to members of the public.

2. Intervention & Prevention

- What could your organisation offer to prevent this happening to other people in a similar situation to Edward?
- At what point would your organisation be able to offer support?

3. Risk Enablement

- At what point does Risk Enablement become a Safeguarding issue for a person with Learning Difficulties or Learning Disabilities?

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Thank you for your time and participation.

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