

## **30% of adults have experience of Financial Abuse** **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/112030>)**

### **81% of Financial Abuse carried out by someone well-known to the victim**

#### **Call for all adults to keep in control of their money as much as possible**

Almost a third of adults in Ireland have experience of Financial Abuse (30%) – with the vast majority (81%) of the abuse carried by someone well-known to the victim rather than online, or anonymously.

In new RED C research launched today on Financial Abuse – 11% of adults surveyed said they had personally experienced financial abuse, while 20% said they were aware of someone else who had suffered this abuse.

Among those who had personally experienced financial abuse, 85% of the abuse situations were identified as involving a person known to them, while among those who had witnessed financial abuse the abuser was known in 78% of instances (the level was 81% combining both cohorts).

A known person includes a family member, a carer, a neighbour, social welfare Agent, or worker.

The RED C research involved a national representative sample of 1,000 adults and was launched today to mark Adult Safeguarding Day 2024 (8/11/24) – an annual initiative coordinated by Safeguarding Ireland and supported by the HSE.

Safeguarding Ireland Chairperson Patricia Rickard-Clarke said financial abuse is particularly prevalent among older people who are frail and also people with an intellectual or physical disability, an acquired brain injury, or mental challenge.

“While the majority of people are honest, it has been estimated internationally that one in ten people are dishonest in how they manage another person’s money, property, or benefits.

“The RED C survey has clearly established that the vast majority of financial abuse is person-to-person. We know that it often involves coercion of a vulnerable person. It can happen when someone is dependent on another person for help, and that person subtly misuses their money. This can start small and escalate into serious crime, but all financial abuse at any level is wrongdoing and must be called out.

“The message for Adult Safeguarding Day is to encourage all adults – including those with decision-making and capacity challenges – to keep in control of their own money as much as possible, to be very careful about who to trust and to plan for the future.”

The most common instances of financial abuse among those who experienced or witnessed it were:

- Cash taken from around the house (60%)
- Change not given back or returned (57%)
- A bank card misused (54%)
- Property or possessions used without knowledge or agreement (49%)
- An online scam or fraud (48%)
- Online banking was misused (40%)
- Social welfare payments misused (40%)
- Undue pressure to change a property deed, Enduring Power of Attorney or Will (29%)

Ms Rickard-Clarke said Safeguarding Ireland’s message for Adult Safeguarding Day is:

- Avoid sharing a bank card and pin number, account number, or access to online banking
- If help is needed – first ask for advice from the bank, An Post or Credit Union
- If help is needed with day to day spending – choose carefully a highly trusted person and limit their access
- Ask for receipts
- Get monthly account statements
- Make an Enduring Power of Attorney.

HSE National Safeguarding Office General Manager Tim Hanly said financial abuse is a serious crime and he urged people to report it if they have concerns: “If there is a serious and immediate danger, call the Gardaí at 999 or 112.

“For an ongoing financial safeguarding issue contact the HSE Safeguarding Team. There are regional teams covering all areas of the country. See [www.hse.ie/safeguarding](http://www.hse.ie/safeguarding) (<http://www.hse.ie/safeguarding>) or email [safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie](mailto:safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie) (<mailto:safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie>).

“For a better understanding on how to keep money, property and benefits safe people can also contact their financial provider – the bank, An Post, or Credit Union branch. There is good information and supports available.”

In conclusion, Patricia Rickard-Clarke urged all adults to make an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). An EPA is a legal document which gives authority to the person we choose to manage our money, property and benefits in the future if we did not have decision-making capacity.

Adult Safeguarding Day is an initiative of Safeguarding Ireland and supported by the HSE. More information, and the RED C survey, are at [www.safeguardingday.ie](http://www.safeguardingday.ie) (<http://www.safeguardingday.ie>)

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**Region**

Nationwide

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