

# **Get help Stay safe**

**Information and support for  
older people experiencing abuse**

**Where can I go  
for help and  
support?**

**What signs of  
abuse should I  
be looking  
out for?**

**What if I'm  
concerned  
about someone  
else?**

**You Are Not Alone**

This leaflet has been produced by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. The Commissioner protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

**Phone:** 03442 640 670  
**Email:** [ask@olderpeoplewales.com](mailto:ask@olderpeoplewales.com)  
**Website:** [www.olderpeoplewales.com](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com)

This booklet was developed in partnership with key organisations working together as part of an Action Group to protect older people from abuse and ensure they can get the help and support they may need.

For further information about the work of the Action Group, visit:  
<https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/stopping-abuse/action-group.aspx>

The quotes in this booklet are based on older people's real experiences of living with abuse.

**#GetHelpStaySafe**

**#YouAreNotAlone**



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru  
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

# **Please Remember: You Are Not Alone**

**If you're reading this booklet, we know you may be scared or hurt. You may be feeling isolated and alone. You may be worried about someone you care about.**

You may be desperate for help and support, but not sure where to turn.

But please remember: You are not alone. Help and support is available.

We know that seeking help can be incredibly difficult, but it is important that you get help if you need it. Please don't suffer in silence.

If you are experiencing abuse, or think you might be at risk, or if you are concerned about someone else, please contact one of the organisations below, who will be able to provide you with information, advice and support.

## **Hourglass Cymru**

The Hourglass Cymru Helpline offers support specifically for older people and can provide information, help and support, whether you are experiencing abuse or are concerned about someone else.

**0808 808 8141**

**<https://www.wearehourglass.cymru/wales>**

# **Live Fear Free Helpline**

Live Fear Free provides help and support to people experiencing abuse, and those who are concerned about others. You can contact Live Fear Free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

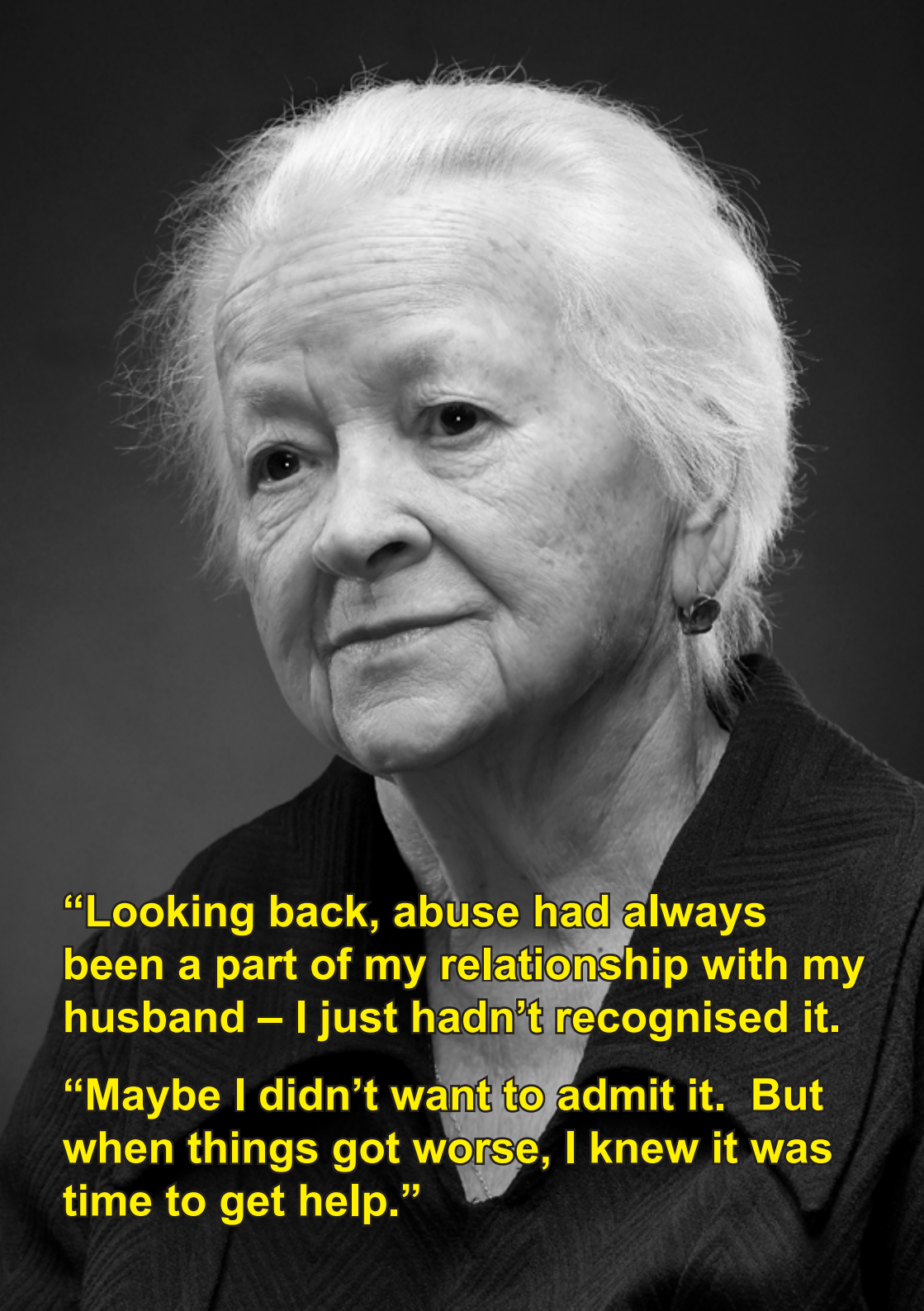
**0808 8010 800**

**<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>**

Full contact information for these organisations is included on the final pages.

If you believe that you or someone else are at significant risk of imminent serious harm, contact the police without delay by dialling 999.

Read on to find out more about signs of abuse and why getting help if you need it is so important.



**“Looking back, abuse had always been a part of my relationship with my husband – I just hadn’t recognised it.**

**“Maybe I didn’t want to admit it. But when things got worse, I knew it was time to get help.”**

# **Recognising Abuse**

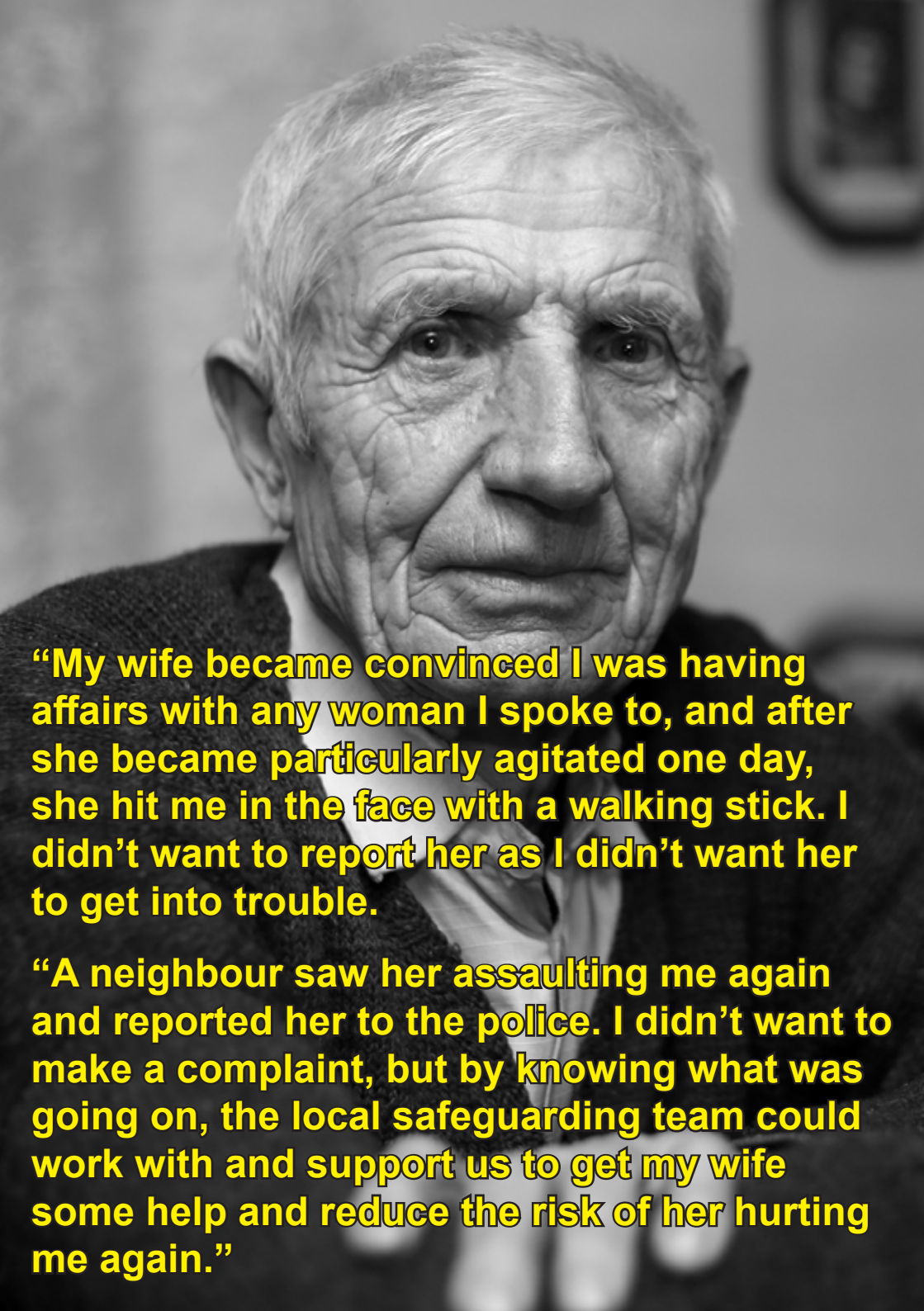
Abuse can take many forms and is about an abuser (or abusers) exerting their power and control over another person.

An abuser could be an intimate partner or former partner, another family member, friend or someone else in a position of trust such as a carer.

Abuse can affect you whatever your age – it is not something that only younger people experience.

For some people, abuse may have been part of their lives for many years, while for others it will start when they reach older age.

Abuse can also affect you regardless of your gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.



**“My wife became convinced I was having affairs with any woman I spoke to, and after she became particularly agitated one day, she hit me in the face with a walking stick. I didn’t want to report her as I didn’t want her to get into trouble.**

**“A neighbour saw her assaulting me again and reported her to the police. I didn’t want to make a complaint, but by knowing what was going on, the local safeguarding team could work with and support us to get my wife some help and reduce the risk of her hurting me again.”**

# **Abuse can take many forms**

**It's really important to understand the different forms that abuse can take.**

Recognising the signs of abuse is often an important first step towards seeking help and support.

**Physical abuse** This includes punching, kicking, biting, pinching or scratching.

**Sexual abuse** This includes rape, touching someone in a sexual way against their will, making someone do something of a sexual nature which they are not comfortable with.

**Psychological/Emotional abuse** This includes being insulted, called names or sworn at, being threatened, undermined, belittled, excluded or repeatedly ignored, threats to harm others you care for, prevented from seeing others that you care for.

**Neglect** This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs; failing to provide access to appropriate care and support; or withholding necessities such as medication, nutrition and heating.

**Financial abuse** This includes stealing money or possessions; being made to give money, possessions or property against your wishes; the use of fraud to take money, possessions or property; applying pressure to alter a Will; or the abuse of a lasting power of attorney.



**Coercive control** Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten someone. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Recognising abusive or controlling behaviour can be difficult, particularly if you've lived with it for a long time. But if you've experienced any of the things described above, please seek advice and support from the organisations listed below.**

If you are concerned you are in immediate danger of harm, dial 999 and contact the police without delay.



**“He controlled what I was allowed to do and where I was allowed to go. I became isolated from my friends and felt trapped in my home.**

**“I wasn’t allowed out of my bedroom after 6pm, and he often wouldn’t allow me to make any food if I was late back, even a few minutes. The control got worse and there were days when I had to stay upstairs all day, even when my grandchildren visited.**

**“I was reluctant to leave, as I had had a bad experience when I had tried to escape a number of years ago. But things were much better this time. I was in a safe place and got support to help me with my confidence and self-esteem. I also made some really good new friends.”**

# **What if I'm concerned about someone else?**

**We can all play a role helping to protect older people from abuse, so it's really important that we know the kinds of things we need to look out for that could indicate that someone is experiencing abuse:**

- Physical signs, such as unexplained bruising or injuries
- Changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming withdrawn)
- Not leaving the house
- Changes in contact with family or friends
- Changes in the way someone uses social media
- Changes in spending (e.g. not paying bills, not buying food, not using heating could indicate financial abuse)

If you are concerned that a person is experiencing abuse, or is at risk, you should contact your Council's Safeguarding Team, or contact the Police on 101.

You can also get advice and support by contacting one of the organisations on the back pages.

**In an emergency, or if you are concerned that someone is at imminent risk of harm, dial 999 and contact the police immediately.**

## **Get help, stay safe**

We know that it may be incredibly difficult to seek help if you are experiencing abuse or are concerned you may be at risk of abuse, but it is important you get help if you need it. There is no need to suffer in silence – help is available to protect and support you.

### **Hourglass Cymru (formerly Action on Elder Abuse Cymru)**

The Hourglass Cymru Helpline offers support specifically for older people and can provide information, help and support, whether you are experiencing abuse or are concerned about someone else.

**Tel:** 0808 808 8141  
**Text:** 07860 052906  
**Email:** [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org)

A live online chat service is also available via the Hourglass website:

<https://www.wearehourglass.cymru/wales>

## **Live Fear Free Helpline**

Live Fear Free provides help and support to people experiencing abuse, and those who are concerned about others. You can contact Live Fear Free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Tel:** 0808 8010 800

**Text:** 07860 077333

**Email:** [info@livefearfreehelpline.wales](mailto:info@livefearfreehelpline.wales)

A live online chat service is also available via the Live Fear Free Website:

**<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>**

## **999 Silent Solution**

In an emergency, it's crucial to contact the police for help. But in some cases, speaking to a 999 operator may put you in even greater danger.

In situations where you need help but are unable to talk, you should dial 999 and press 5 5 when prompted by the operator. Help will be sent to your location.



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