

Adult Protection Committees in Scotland are calling for greater awareness of adults who are more at risk from all kinds of harm, made worse by the cost of living crisis. National Adult Protection Awareness day on 20th February is aimed at drawing attention to the risk of physical, psychological, financial or sexual harm for some adults who may be unable to safeguard themselves. The Committees are particularly concerned about the harm from neglect or self-neglect.

1

Neglect is when someone is not being cared for properly, either by themselves or by someone responsible for them. A neglected person may not have enough food to eat, be living somewhere that's cold, dirty or unsafe, they may not be appropriately dressed or might not seem to have washed recently. They may be being denied the important medical and social care that would keep them safe and well. It is important that everybody gets the professional help they need, especially if they take medication.

2

Self-neglect is when a person is either unable to, or loses the motivation to, look after themselves. The person isn't able to carry out the basic activities of daily living, even though they understand the need to do them. This might mean they don't recognise unsafe living conditions, for example hoarding possessions, or allowing dirt or waste to build up over time. Sometimes an adult may find themselves dependent on drugs or alcohol and lose awareness of the situation they are living in, or the consequences of decisions they make.

3

7 Minute Briefing
ASP Day 20 February 2023
Neglect and Self-Neglect

Harm can happen to anyone, anywhere: in someone's home, where they work, in a public place – often caused by the people closest to them. It can even happen in places responsible for keeping someone safe, such as a care home or day centre. If you have concerns or need further help and guidance information can be found at: [Act against harm website link](#)
Don't let someone suffer in silence – if you see something – say something!

#ASPDaY2023
#SeenSomethingSaySomething

7

Signs and symptoms of **self-neglect** can include:

Dehydration, malnutrition	Untreated medical conditions
Inadequate self-care, personal hygiene	Unclean living conditions such as animal/insect infestation
Lack of medical aids such as hearing aids, glasses, dentures.	Unsafe living conditions such as improper wiring, no water or heating

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Adults who experience neglect or self-neglect are more likely but not always to be an older person, experience mental ill health or have drug and or alcohol problems. They may have a history of personal trauma and this may impact their ability to care for themselves. Whatever the reason for their neglect it is important for staff to recognise, report and support adults who may experience this form of harm. [Click here to watch the ASP Day 2023 film.](#)

4

Signs and symptoms of **neglect** can include:

Avoidable pressure ulcers and sores	Unkempt/dirty appearance
Hunger, malnutrition or dehydration	Inappropriate dress for the conditions or time of day
Delayed or denied access to medical care	Isolated and out of sight

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