

Escalating concerns about someone's financial support



Internal Audit Team

Creative Support is committed to **good practice** when supporting people with their finances. However, sometimes people may have concerns about how a person's finances are being managed.

It's important that all staff members are aware of how to **prevent, identify and report** potential financial abuse.

All support must be **person-centred** and reflect the individual's preferences.

Staff may be **worried** about raising these concerns and think it may be best not to say anything to avoid conflict.

If something is troubling you about the finances of the people we support, and **you think it needs to be escalated**, you must report it to the relevant individuals.

It is the responsibility of **all staff members** to safeguard the finances of the people we support.



Staff must **involve the people we support** with any decisions relating to their financial support.

Where people do not have capacity with their finances, staff should involve their **registered third party** e.g. financial appointee.

Where it is not possible to involve a third party representative, staff should conduct a **best interest meeting**.

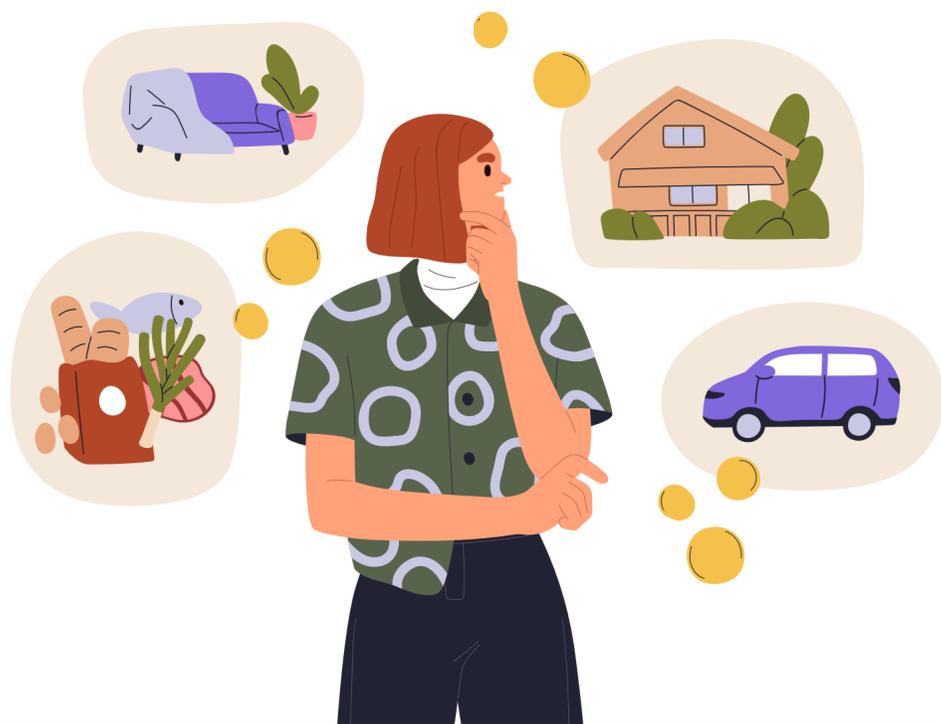


WHAT - establish what is happening

If you have concerns about someone's financial support, the first step is to establish **what exactly those concerns are**.

They may be a sign of potential financial abuse such as:

- Insufficient funds.
- Missing cash or possessions.
- Coercive behaviour or excessive interest from staff or a family member.
- Debt or arrears.
- Lack of documentation, such as receipts.



It's important to **ask the person we support** how they feel about their current financial arrangement, and whether they would like to report any concerns.

You must always respect the wishes of the individual, and act in their **best interest**.

Remember, you do not need to have physical evidence to raise a concern, but we do need to know **who** it is affecting and **where** and **when** it is happening.

Consider the following when gathering the information:

- Who is involved?
- How often is this happening?
- How is this affecting the person?
- What are the implications if this continues?



Acting in the best interests of the people we support

It's important to **include the people we support** when reporting your concerns. If the individual has capacity, you should approach them directly.

Staff should be **sensitive** when asking questions about a person's finances, and be aware that they may not want to discuss their concerns with staff.

Some people may be **hesitant** to share their concerns, especially if the situation involves a family member or friend.

In some cases, people may be fearful of speaking out because they are worried it **may make things worse**.

Staff must give the individual space and patience to share their concerns without pressure.



You can provide reassurance by:



- **Explaining** they are not to blame for what has happened
- **Advising** them there is help available, and describe the different options
- **Confirming** that whatever action is taken will reflect their wishes (unless there are other people at risk)
- **Agreeing** a safe communication method with the individual (e.g. phone, email, post or in-person)

Remember to utilise any **communication aids** which may be helpful for the person to voice their preferences.

Acting in the best interests of the people we support

When discussing your concerns with the people we support, try to **avoid leading questions**. Instead, keep questions open-ended so the individual can express their thoughts freely.

Here are some questions you can ask:

How do you feel about money?

Do you manage your own finances?

Does anyone else have access to your money or bank card?

Do you have enough money for food?

Are you behind on any bills or payments?

Who else do you talk to about your money?

Have you ever felt pressured to give/lend anybody money?

Do you want to change anything about your money?

WHERE - where you can report your concerns

In the first instance, you must escalate concerns to your **line manager**.

Where this is not possible, for whatever reason, you must raise it with your **service director** instead.

If the concern relates to a member of the Executive Team, you must raise it directly with the **Chief Executive Officer**, Anna Lunts.

If the concern relates to a family member of the individual, you must also consider whether the **local social services team** also need to be informed.

If you suspect a **crime** has been committed, you must report your concerns to the **local police**.

If the person we support does not wish to report any concerns to the police, this decision must also be respected, unless they or others are at risk of harm.

If you are raising a concern out of hours, you should contact the **out of hours helpdesk** at Head Office.

If you are raising a concern about the financial support **your line manager** is providing to someone we support, you must escalate it to your **service director**.

HOW - how to report the concerns

You can report the concerns via:

- Email
- Phone
- Post
- In-person

As long as the message contains **all the relevant information**, any of the above methods can be used.



The same applies for any people we support who wish to report their concerns.

Staff should **encourage the people we support** to share their concerns via a method of their choosing.

For example, if they wish to write a letter, staff should support them to write it and post it to the correct address.

Staff must never pressure the people we support to disclose their concerns via a method which may make them uncomfortable.

For example, if someone prefers to write an email, staff must not impose that they must report their concerns in-person.

If staff, or the people we support, wish to remain **anonymous** when reporting the concerns, they must state this when first reporting it.

From that point onwards, the identity of the person who shared the concerns will remain anonymous throughout the investigation.



To highlight the urgency of your concerns, you can title it '**CODE RED**'.

Frequently asked questions

Can I raise a concern about a family member or appointee of the people we support?

Yes you can, but please consider whether social services also need to be made aware of the concern.

Who will investigate my concern?

It depends on what your concern is about. For example, if the concern relates to financial mismanagement, this will be investigated by the Internal Audit Team. If your concern relates to a family appointeeship, the local social services team and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) may also investigate this.

Will I find out the outcome of an investigation?

If the investigation is being conducted internally, the investigating manager will communicate the findings in writing to the person raising the concern, the individual under investigation and any external authorities who may need to consider whether further action is required e.g. the local police.

If the investigation is being conducted by an external body e.g. the police, it depends on their policies and procedures. They may not share the outcome of the investigation directly with the individual who initially raised the concerns.

Can I share the findings of the investigation with anyone else?

No. It is crucial you do not share the findings of the investigation with anyone else as it is a confidential matter. You must not discuss the concern with your colleagues or friends in the workplace to maintain confidentiality.

Who can I ask for support during the investigation?

Creative Support offers support for any employees who raise a concern. Staff can get in touch with Human Resources directly, or access the 24 hour confidential counselling service provided by Health Assured.

For further guidance, please refer to the following Creative Support policies:

- Whistleblowing
- Supporting people with their finances
- Incident Reporting
- Safeguarding Adults

