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National awareness day aims to highlight harm risk to adults

Aberdeen City Council is using National Adult Support and Protection Day to call for greater awareness of adults who are at risk of harm.

Today's special day (Mon 20 Feb) is designed to highlight the risk of physical, psychological, financial or sexual harm for adults who may be unable to safeguard themselves.

The theme this year is 'Neglect and Self-Neglect'.

Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee convener Councillor Miranda Radley said: "People are facing so many pressures right now, due to the cost-of-living crisis, rising fuel prices and the knock-on effects of the pandemic.

"The risk of harm to adults is ever present of course – but the dangers may heighten in difficult times when the people responsible for others' welfare, and those finding it hard to take care of themselves, face ever greater challenges in their lives.

"Everyone can play their part in reducing those risks by highlighting their worries about a neighbour or loved-one and reporting their concerns to the professionals who can step in and help.

"The City Council's overarching priority is to keep our communities safe and so we work in partnership with NHS Grampian, the Health & Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland and others to protect adults who may be at risk of harm.

"The National Awareness Day gives the opportunity to draw attention to the tools and resources at our disposal and which can also be used by others to bring potential problems to our attention."

At the start of this month, there were 138 Adult Support and Protection (ASP) cases being progressed in Aberdeen – 24 of those related to self-neglect and 22 to neglect. That is a third of all current ASP cases, demonstrating how significant this issue is.

Neglect is when someone is not being cared for properly, either by themselves or by someone responsible for them. They may not have enough to eat or be living somewhere 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.

A range of information and resources which might be helpful for anyone who is struggling can be found at [Help with cost of living | Aberdeen City Council](#).

Self-neglect is when a person cannot, or loses the motivation to, look after themselves. This might mean they don't recognise unsafe living conditions, for example by hoarding or allowing dirt or waste to build up. Sometimes an adult may find themselves dependent on drugs or alcohol and lose awareness of their situation or the consequences of their decisions.

The city's [Self-Neglect & Hoarding Guidance](#) provides more information about this complex issue and how to respond. You can watch the June 2021 event to launch the Guidance, which includes partners from Health, Housing and Social Work giving their perspectives, at [Lessons from a Case Review - YouTube](#) (86 mins).

The City Council has also produced a [7 Minute Briefing](#) to share information in communities, and a video, "Keith's Story", brings to life a case study [Keith's story: a personal and touching film about hoarding - Bing video](#) (13 mins)

Anyone concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm and needing support can contact Aberdeen City Council's Adult Protection Social Work Team, tel 0800 731 5520 (24 hours). Where there is immediate danger or harm, people should call the relevant emergency services. For more information about Adult Support and Protection, go to the Aberdeen Protects website [Adult support and protection | Aberdeen City Council](#).

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