

Psychological, Emotional or Mental Abuse

Examples of psychological, emotional or mental abuse can include:

- Blame, insults, humiliation
- Controlling, intimidation, bullying, harassment
- Being stopped from seeing other people or using services or supportive networks
- Being locked away
- Verbal abuse, swearing, threats, using tone and volume of voice to intimidate, body language
- Denial of cultural and language needs or restricting their right of access to their culture and language
- Denying the person the right to make their own decisions.

Signs and symptoms of psychological, emotional or mental abuse include:

- Inability to sleep or a tendency to spend long periods in bed
- Loss of appetite or overeating at inappropriate times
- Anxiety, confusion or just giving up
- Choosing to spend lots of time alone, away from others
- Appears fearful and shows signs of loss of self esteem

Background

Leonard is physically disabled and lives in a housing association ground floor flat adapted for wheelchair use. Leonard asked a young neighbour, Gary, if he could fetch some medication on his behalf. Gary agreed and they became friends.

Gary began bringing his friends round to Leonard's home and they were soon staying overnight drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis, even though Leonard had severe bronchitis. They also started damaging and stealing Leonard's property. His neighbour Surita became increasingly concerned about Leonard following late night music and loud shouting.

What happened next?

After the front door was damaged by one of these 'friends', Surita called the housing association and a repair team attended. The team were shocked by the general condition of the flat with damage visible throughout. They noticed Leonard became nervous when one of the group of friends came into the flat. As a result, he contacted the manager of the lettings team who called the Adults and Communities Access Point on 0121 303 1234 to raise a safeguarding alert.

The flat was deemed to be uninhabitable by the housing association and a social worker visited Leonard. The social worker arranged alternative emergency accommodation while repairs were carried out. A care management assessment (CMA) also took place as part of the safeguarding review to examine any additional support that could be put in place for Leonard.

What was the outcome?

It could not be proven that the group of friends had caused the damage as Leonard would not provide a witness statement or testify in court. As a result of the CMA, a support plan was developed that included a volunteer visiting Leonard for four hours a week. The volunteer was accredited by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly known as a Criminal Records Bureau), helping to reassure Leonard. Leonard was also issued with a 24 hour panic alarm that went directly through to the police. Leonard moved back into the flat once the repairs had been made and was much happier with the new arrangements.