

# Care home elderly 'targeted for their cash'

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CARE home managers have reported almost 13,000 cases in just four years where it is suspected elderly residents have been targeted for their money.

Data collected from a Freedom of Information request to the Care Quality Commission showed there were 12,968 investigations of potential financial abuse between 2013 and June last year, prompting experts to call for a government inquiry. Financial abuse involves

someone persuading a vulnerable person to hand over money, pressurising them to sign over property or other assets, or using cheques, credit or debit cards without their permission.

In some cases family members who have a lasting power of attorney agreement take advantage. Ann Stanyer, of law firm Wedlake Bell, made the FOI request and said the data showed there was a "very real problem in the care home sector".

In 2016, 503 people named as abusers were care home employees, and

458 were relatives of the victim. Experts have now called for a parliamentary inquiry into the issue to establish the extent of the problem and how it can be tackled.

Stephen McCarthy, of the charity Action on Elder Abuse, believed the figures were the "tip of the iceberg" and pushed for criminal charges to be pressed, especially against care home employees. Dismissing staff was not enough, he said, adding: "There has to be the genuine deterrence that only criminal prosecutions can provide."

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