



An Oifig Náisiúnta um Chumhdach

Ospidéal Naomh Iósaf

Sráid Mulgrave

Luimneach

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Liam Quaide, TD
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Liam Quaide,

Re: PQ No. 32737/25

To ask the Minister for Health the number of reports of alleged abuse, neglect, exploitation or other mistreatment of older adults that were made to adult safeguarding teams in 2022, 2023, 2024 and to date in 2025; and to provide a breakdown of the vulnerable adult cohorts among alleged victims, for instance, older adults, adults with an intellectual disability, and adults with acquired brain injury.

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response. Please accept my apology for the delay in responding.

Elder Abuse notifications to the HSE:

The HSE launched the National Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse, National Policy and Procedures in December 2014. The HSE Adult safeguarding service is delivered by teams of social workers including in some areas clinical nurse managers located across the new Regional and Integrated Care Areas as well as a network of designated officers within services. The data in this responses gives a breakdown by abuse category and age range. Please note that from a person centered perspective, data is not collected as per a person's individual diagnosis or individual disability. Please also note that these figures relate to overall reported notifications per abuse category and that some adults deemed at risk of abuse may have been notified as experienced two or more types of alleged abuse.



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2022 Data:

There were 4,214 notifications to the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams regarding concerns relating to adults aged over 65 years. Within these notifications there were 4,487 abuse types alleged (note some cases reported more than one type of abuse). Table 1 provides a breakdown of the abuse categories by age.

Table 1: Abuse Types (all cases) by age of adult at risk of abuse in 2022

Abuse Types Alleged	18-64 Years		65-79 Years		80+ Years		Total Years	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Physical	3896	37%	708	27%	475	21%	5079	33%
Sexual	507	5%	72	3%	93	4%	672	4%
Psychological	4672	44%	1038	39%	716	32%	6426	42%
Financial	619	6%	401	15%	449	20%	1469	9%
Neglect	636	6%	284	11%	350	16%	1270	8%
Discriminatory	18	0%	6	0%	8	0%	32	0%
Institutional	116	1%	28	1%	24	1%	168	1%
Self-Neglect	113	1%	133	5%	102	5%	348	2%
Total	10577	100%	2670	100%	2217	100%	15464	100%

Source – National Safeguarding Office Annual Report, 2022



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2023 Data:

There were 5,582 notifications to the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams regarding concerns relating to adults aged over 65 years. Within these notifications there were 7503 abuse types alleged (note some cases reported more than one type of abuse). Table 2 provides a breakdown of the abuse categories by age.

Table 2: Abuse Types (all cases) by age of adult at risk of abuse in 2023

Abuse Types Alleged	18-64 Years		65-79 Years		80+ Years		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Physical	4805	33%	1117	26%	809	25%	6731	30%
Sexual	630	4%	135	3%	131	4%	896	4%
Psychological	6867	47%	1660	39%	1048	32%	9575	43%
Financial	769	5%	650	15%	598	18%	2017	9%
Neglect	905	6%	444	10%	475	15%	1824	8%
Discriminatory	30	0%	15	0.35%	11	0%	56	0%
Institutional	432	3%	99	2%	56	2%	587	3%
Self-Neglect	141	1%	144	3%	111	3%	396	2%
Total	14579	100%	4264	100%	3239	100%	22082	100%

Source – National Safeguarding Office Annual Report, 2023

Each safeguarding concern that arises is subject to a preliminary screening. If an elder abuse concern happens in a service setting such as a residential centre or community nursing unit the preliminary screening is conducted by a Designated Officer in the centre. When elder abuse concerns arise in the



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community a social worker within the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams carries out the preliminary screening.

As part of a preliminary screening assessment an outcome is determined. The outcomes are; reasonable grounds for concern, no grounds for concern and additional information required (a holding position until either of the two options above are reached). Designated Officers in service setting include an outcome for each preliminary screening and the outcome will be agreed with the SPT.

Please note that figures for 2024 are awaiting publication and this is planned in Quarter 3 of 2025. Elder Abuse notifications for 2025 will be published in 2026.

For further information please contact me via the Office contact details enclosed

Yours Sincerely,

Tim Hanly

General Manager | National Safeguarding Office