

WEST YORKSHIRE FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION & ABUSE TEAM (WYFEAT)

Who are we?

The West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) is a co-located specialist, multi-disciplinary team, enhancing collaborative working across a range of partners, investigating financial exploitation and abuse of vulnerable residents in West Yorkshire. Its remit includes protecting victims of scams, frauds, doorstep crime and other financial abuse involving family members, carers, and people in a position of trust. The team comprises of Trading Standards officers, Criminal Investigators, Financial Investigators, Intelligence Analysts, a Detective Constable and Social Workers.

What do we do?

The team was incorporated in 2016 to tackle financial exploitation from Rogue Traders and other Doorstep Crime. From June 2018 the team was expanded to undertake criminal investigations linked to financial abuse of adults at risk on behalf of the 5 West Yorkshire Local Authorities.

The critical element of the team's work includes both criminal and financial investigations and, the identification and confiscation of criminal assets, alongside safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people.

Key Objectives of the team include:

- Protecting vulnerable people from financial abuse, detecting and investigating incidents of financial abuse (including victims of scams, frauds and doorstep crime) leading to successful prosecution and conviction of offenders.
- Providing scam and fraud awareness training, advice and support to victims and those at risk of financial abuse.
- Undertaking effective safeguarding of victims and potential victims.
- Using the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to confiscate assets from offenders and compensate victims.
- Identifying and investigating incidents of fraud relating to direct payments and personal budgets.

What does the role of Criminal Investigator involve?

The overall purpose of the role is:

- To gather and develop evidence and intelligence in accordance with Criminal Procedure & Investigation Act, in order to investigate and disrupt financial exploitation and abuse of vulnerable West Yorkshire residents.
- To conduct investigations into allegations of fraud and to assist the Financial Investigators with the investigation of money laundering, leading to the prosecution of offenders at court, the seizure of assets and recovery of any losses to victims of crime.
- To conduct recorded suspect interviews under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.
- To obtain victim and witness statements, considering the principals of Achieving Best Evidence.
- To ensure appropriate support and referral mechanisms are in place for vulnerable residents and undertake safeguarding of victims of financial exploitation and abuse.
- To undertake fraud awareness and prevention training with partners and key stakeholders.