

## The case of Mrs Jarvis

### Background

Mrs Jarvis is a 76 year old customer who has come into the branch and asked to see you to discuss long term investment options for her savings. When talking to Mrs Jarvis she tells you that she has been promised three million pounds from a company in the United States, who have been writing to her regularly. She shows you one of the letters, which says she has won a prize draw, but an administration fee has to be paid before it can be claimed. She has been sending amounts ranging between £20 - £50 at a time for the last five weeks, and says she has received at least 30 letters from the same company.

Mrs Jarvis asks you to transfer £5,000 from her savings account to her current account so that she can continue to send money. She has no contact details for the company who sent her the letters but is convinced she is going to receive the prize money at some point. She believes that she must be entitled to the prize win as otherwise she would not still be receiving her letters. She is anxious to make the extra money available in her account as soon as possible so that she does not miss out on the prize.

### Questions

*Would you have any concerns about the situation? Do you think Mrs Jarvis has won a prize draw?*

*What would you do next?*

Harries, P., Davies, M., Gilhooly, M. & Gilhooly, K. (2012). Case example of elder financial abuse involving a scam cash prize win. Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies, London, UK.

### The financial advisor began by gathering more information and consulting internally with colleagues

You voice your concerns to Mrs Jarvis that this may be a scam and that she was not likely to receive any money. She does not believe you though, and is confused why it would not be true. She tells you that she needs the money so that she can help her son put down a deposit to buy a house. You ask her what her family think about the situation, and she tells you that her son has also told her it is a scam, so she no longer discusses her financial affairs with him. She has not talked about the situation with anyone else as the letters she has received told her to keep it a secret and to be careful who she told about it due to the amount of money involved.

Mrs Jarvis currently manages her own finances as she is fully mentally aware. She is also physically still very active, and is able to visit the bank independently to draw out cash and pay her bills. All the accounts are in her name only, so it is difficult to speak to any of her family about the situation without committing a breach of confidentiality. After reviewing her account history it also seems that whereas in the past she tended to withdraw small amounts of cash on a regular basis, the amounts she is withdrawing are becoming larger and more frequent.

### Questions

*Why do you think Mrs Jarvis believes so strongly that she has won a prize?*

*Is there anything else that can be done about the situation?*

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### The financial advisor also consulted with the police

Because there was no information about who or where the money was being sent to follow up with Trading Standards, you speak to the local police to ask for advice and to see if they could carry out a home visit. They say that they cannot visit based on a phone call from the bank - Mrs Jarvis would need to report the situation herself. They also said that because she did not think she was being scammed and did not see that the situation was a problem it was unlikely that their involvement would help.

### Question

*How do you think the situation was left?*

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The situation is currently being monitored

Even though you are very sure Mrs Jarvis is being scammed, because she is totally convinced that the prize is legitimate and that she wants to withdraw the money it is very hard to refuse her. Because she is willingly sending the money you know that is unlikely that she will be reimbursed even if in the future she realises there is no prize win.

At this point the only option is to monitor the situation, and keep speaking to her about it when she come into the branch in case she can be convinced further down the line.

Question

*Why does Mrs Jarvis' reaction make the situation difficult to deal with?*