

Physical abuse

- ▶ Injuries such as skin trauma (e.g. bruising, skin tears, burns, welts, unexplained fractures and sprains)
- ▶ Signs of restraint (e.g. at the wrists or waist)
- ▶ Unexplained behaviour changes suggesting under-medication or over-medication
- ▶ Unusual patterns of injury

Sexual abuse

- ▶ Unexplained bruising or infections
- ▶ Reports of threats or coercion of a sexual nature

Neglect

- ▶ Decline in hygiene (e.g. bad odour, urine rash)
- ▶ Malnourishment, weight loss, dehydration (dark urine, dry tongue, lax skin)
- ▶ Bed sores (sacrum, hips, heels, elbows)
- ▶ Being over-sedated or under-sedated
- ▶ Broken or missing aids such as spectacles, dentures, hearing aid or walking frame

Source: The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2014, *Abuse and violence: working with our patients in general practice* (4th edition), Melbourne.

Help is available

Elder Abuse Helpline

If you think someone you know is being subjected to elder abuse, call the **Elder Abuse Helpline 1300 651 192** for free, confidential advice (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm).

A trained operator will talk to you and advise about assistance available for your situation.

Do I need proof?

You don't need to have proof to seek help. Helpline staff will help determine whether the behaviour you're concerned about is elder abuse when you call.

Emergency and support services

If an older person is in clear and present danger of harm, call triple zero (000).

Legal and social support services

Services are available across Queensland to provide legal advice and social support to people experiencing elder abuse:

- ▶ Brisbane: (07) 3214 6333
- ▶ Cairns: 1800 062 608 or (07) 4031 7688
- ▶ Hervey Bay: (07) 4124 6863
- ▶ Toowoomba: (07) 4616 9700
- ▶ Townsville: (07) 4721 5511

Call 1300 063 232 for services at these locations:

- ▶ Bundaberg
- ▶ Gladstone
- ▶ Gold Coast
- ▶ Mackay
- ▶ Rockhampton
- ▶ Sunshine Coast

Office of the Public Guardian

The Office of the Public Guardian is able to investigate allegations of abuse, exploitation and neglect of older people with impaired decision-making capacity to determine if their decision-making arrangements are adequate and appropriate, or whether a decision-maker needs to be appointed or replaced.

For more information about services and assistance, visit the Office of the Public Guardian website or call 1300 653 187.

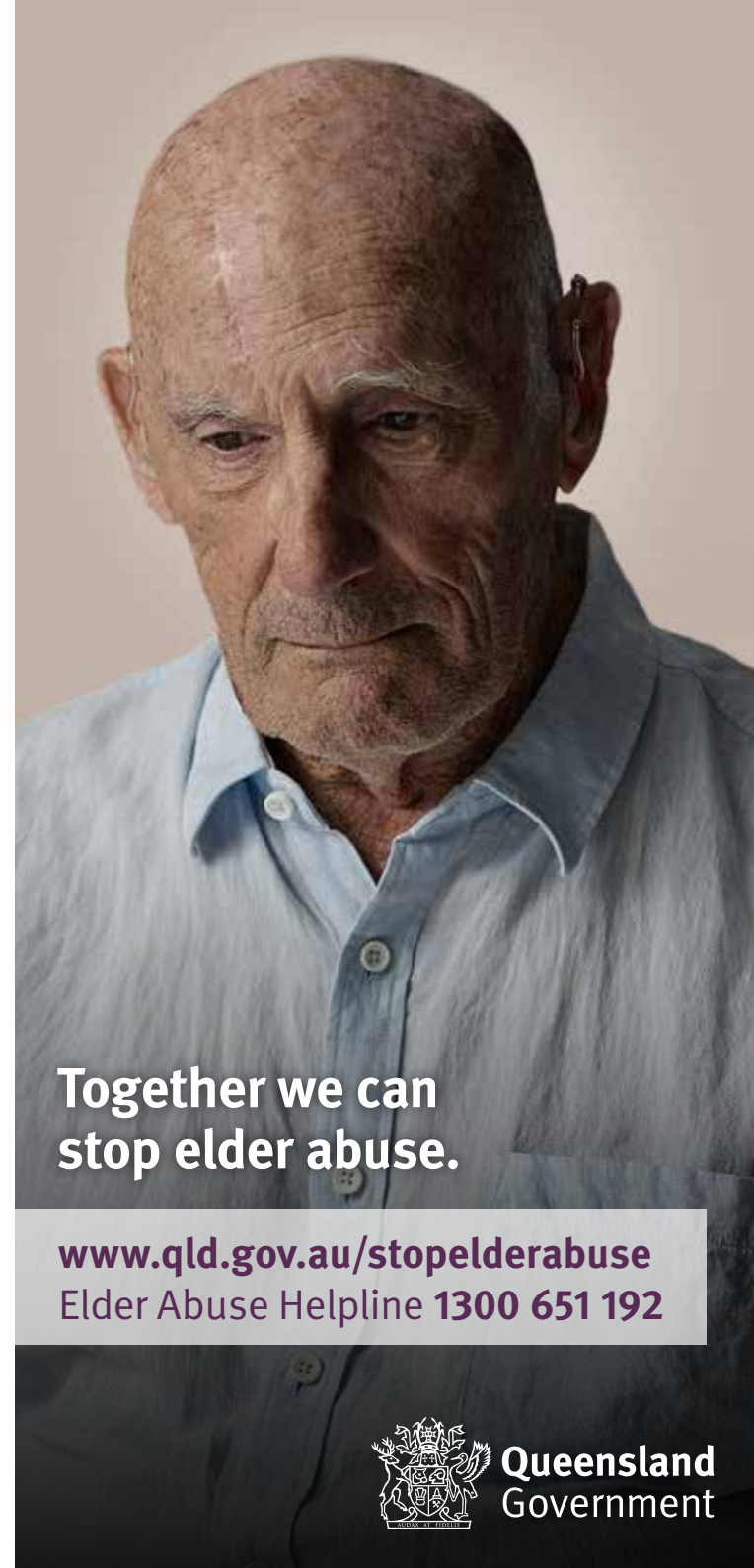
Public Trustee

The Public Trustee provides a range of services to Queenslanders, including will making, enduring powers of attorney, executor and financial administration services at 15 offices across the state.

To make an appointment, visit the Public Trustee website or call 1300 360 044.

Other advice and support services

- ▶ Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24-hour crisis support line)
- ▶ Legal Aid Queensland: 1300 651 188 (8.30 am to 4.30 pm)
- ▶ DVConnect Womensline: 1800 811 811 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- ▶ DVConnect Mensline: 1800 600 636 (9.00 am to midnight, 7 days a week)



**Together we can
stop elder abuse.**

www.qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse
Elder Abuse Helpline **1300 651 192**



**Queensland
Government**

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act — or lack of appropriate action — occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

People often believe elder abuse is mainly committed by paid carers or other workers but sadly, most reported cases of elder abuse occur within family relationships.

The right to be safe from abuse

Everyone has the right to be safe and free from violence and abuse.

We can all play a part in preventing elder abuse in our community. To do this, we need to be alert to the signs of elder abuse, understand that it can happen to any older person regardless of their background, culture or lifestyle, and know where to get help and support.

Together we can stop elder abuse.



Forms of abuse

► Psychological abuse

Psychological or emotional abuse includes any act that causes emotional pain or injury to an older person. It can include, but is not limited to, insults or threats, humiliation or disrespect, and controlling behaviours such as confining or isolating the older person.

► Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the misuse or theft of an older person's money or assets. It can include, but is not limited to, using finances without permission, using a legal document such as an enduring power of attorney for purposes contrary to the interests of the older person, withholding care for financial gain, and selling or transferring property against the older person's wishes or without the person's knowledge.

► Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any act that causes physical pain or injury to an older person. It can include, but is not limited to, actions such as hitting, pushing and kicking. Inappropriate use of medical or physical restraints is also an example of physical abuse.

► Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse includes any sexual behaviour performed without an older person's consent. It includes sexual contact and non-contact acts of a sexual nature that cause an older person to feel uncomfortable or threatened, or cause physical hurt.

► Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a carer, or other responsible person, to meet an older person's basic needs such as food or medical care. It can include, but is not limited to, providing inadequate food, drink or supervision, isolating the older person, allocating medication inappropriately and failing to meet physical needs (e.g. in relation to hygiene and skin care).



Some signs of elder abuse

Recognising the signs of elder abuse is a key step in prevention. These are some signs that an older person might be experiencing abuse.

Changes in general behaviour

- Fear of one or many persons
- Irritability or being easily upset
- Worry or anxiety for no obvious reason
- Depression, apathy or withdrawal
- Changes in sleep patterns or eating habits
- Rigid posture and avoidance of contact
- Avoidance of eye contact or continuous darting of eyes
- Contradictory statements unrelated to mental confusion
- Reluctance to talk openly

Psychological or emotional abuse

- Reluctance to talk
- Anxiety, nervousness, fear, apathy, resignation
- Withdrawal, avoidance of eye contact
- Rocking or huddling up
- Loss of interest in self or environment
- Insomnia or sleep deprivation

Financial abuse

- Lack of money to purchase medication, food or personal items
- Defaulting on payment of rent
- Removal of assets from the family home or unauthorised use of assets