# Elder Abuse happens.

# Know the signs, make it stop.

## What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act occurring within a relationship of trust with an older person, which causes them harm or distress. It can take different forms including financial, emotional, sexual and physical abuse, as well as neglect.

## 2019 Elder Abuse Campaign

Elder abuse is a global problem, but it can have local solutions.

We know the issue is wide-spread and under-reported. We also know there are barriers that prevent older people from reaching out for help themselves, and that’s why it’s up to us to help them to access support when they need it.

That’s why the Queensland Government funds an Elder Abuse Helpline. If you suspect someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, don’t wait for proof, call the Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 651 192 for free confidential information and referrals. Helpline operators are available between 9am and 5pm weekdays.

Raising awareness of and preventing elder abuse remains our priority. This year’s campaign ‘Elder abuse happens. Know the signs – make it stop’ highlights the most common signs of elder abuse, and encourages Queenslanders to call the helpline if they suspect an older person in their life is being abused and needs help.

Visit [www.qld.gov.au/knowthesigns](https://www.qld.gov.au/knowthesigns) for more information.

## Why a campaign?

Raising awareness about elder abuse gives people the information they need to reach out for help for a family member, friend, neighbour, loved one or themself. The Queensland Government elder abuse campaign 2018 saw calls to the helpline increase by 35.5 per cent.

## Five types of elder abuse:

1. **Financial abuse** — the misuse or theft of an older person’s money or assets
2. **Psychological abuse** — threats, humiliation or isolating an older person
3. **Neglect** — failure to meet care needs i.e. provide food, housing or medicine
4. **Sexual abuse** — any sexual behaviour without a person’s consent
5. **Physical abuse** —any act of violence that causes pain or injury

## Know the signs. Is an older person in your life:

* Expressing fear of someone close to them?
* Deferring to another person to speak on their behalf?
* Worried or anxious but unable to articulate why?
* Showing unusual bruises or other injuries that they struggle to explain?
* Struggling to pay for bills, medication or other necessities when they didn’t previously?
* Showing significant changes in their appearance in ways that make you worry for their health or wellbeing?

## Key statistics

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit data suggests elder abuse occurs predominantly within families. Of the 1,946 notifications of elder abuse in 2017-18:

* 72.3 per cent of perpetrators were sons or daughters
* 45.1 per cent of perpetrators lived with the victim
* In 20.8 per cent of cases, the victim was dependent on the perpetrator
* Perpetrators are almost equally men and women
* The most common age group for perpetrators was 50 – 54 years.

## Elder Abuse prevention:

### Seniors Financial Protection Services:

Annual funding of $400,000 was committed to a new Seniors Financial Protection Service by the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors The Honourable Coralee O’Rourke in May 2019. The service provides free, independent, financial information, tailored to seniors via community legal centres in Townsville, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay and Cairns and through Relationships Australia in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Mackay, Gladstone and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts.

### 2019 Queensland Budget:

Eliminating elder abuse is also a key focus of the Queensland Government’s 2019-20 Budget. $3.5 million has been allocated for Seniors Legal and Support Services across the state. The Government will also continue to support UnitingCare’s Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, including their Helpline. (Budget highlights, 2019-20).