

Abuse of Older People



STAYING SAFE AT HOME

This information is from the **Seniors Legal and Support Service** at Caxton Legal Centre. The service is funded by the state government. It offers free, confidential legal and social work services to older people to help them deal with harm or neglect by trusted family members or friends.

HOW TO GET FREE HELP — STEP BY STEP

Abuse can be financial, verbal, emotional, physical or a combination of these. It is often hard to talk about these problems, and it is common to feel shame about what is happening. If you are worried or fearful and want to know about your options to improve your situation, you can call the statewide helpline on 1300 651 192 and ask for help.

A COMMON STORY

Jan's son is living with her

Jan is 76 years old and receives care from her son Paul. Paul separated from his wife 12 months ago and moved in with Jan. Jan loves to spend time with Paul's two children who stay with him on weekends and school holidays. Paul is unemployed, depressed and drinks excessively. Paul receives a carer payment. He drives Jan to her medical appointments and the shops and occasionally cooks dinner. Paul often swears at Jan, grabs her wrists roughly and says that he wishes she would die. Paul pressures Jan to give him money, which he says is for the grandchildren. Jan feels scared and distressed about the living situation, is not sleeping well and her health is deteriorating. She has stopped inviting friends and neighbours to

drop in. Jan does not want Paul to get into trouble nor to be homeless with the grandchildren.

JAN'S RIGHTS

Jan has the right to:

- feel safe and secure at all times
- receive reasonable contributions towards food and bills
- receive reliable help around the house
- enjoy a peaceful and tidy home
- maintain her own routines
- pursue her own interests and hobbies
- maintain her own social activities and friends
- set a time frame for how long the adult child can stay
- decide what belongings can be stored at the home.

WHAT CAN JAN DO TO STAY SAFE?

As an adult, you have the right to make your own decisions, such as where you live and how you manage your money, even if you have a disability or age-related illness. You can choose from a range of supports and legal options to maintain decision-making independence.

<h2>Steps to Gain Support</h2> <p>how our free social worker can help</p>	<h2>Legal Steps</h2> <p>how our free lawyer can help</p>
<p>Speak with the GP (alone) or trusted family, friends or community leaders to gain emotional support.</p>	<p>Call police on triple zero (000) if feeling frightened by the behaviour of others.</p>
<p>Ask the GP for a referral to a counsellor for support to deal with stress and the family dynamics.</p>	<p>Speak confidentially with our lawyer for legal advice to stop the abuse.</p>
<p>Create a safety plan by speaking confidentially with our social worker.</p>	<p>Understand the grandparents' legal rights to see their grandchildren.</p>
<p>Obtain a My Aged Care assessment to receive support services and/or home modifications that increase independence with transport and domestic chores.</p>	<p>Make a written agreement about the living arrangements.</p>
<p>Wear a medi alert device and be prepared to use it.</p>	<p>Apply for a Protection Order in the Magistrates Court, which can include conditions about living arrangements and the behaviours that must stop.</p>
<p>Reconnect with social groups you previously enjoyed, and keep up old habits of inviting friends or neighbours to the house.</p>	<p>Change tenancy arrangements if renting.</p>
<p>Consider a facilitated family meeting to discuss co-living arrangements and to set behaviour boundaries.</p>	<p>Recover unpaid loans via negotiations or an application to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal or other court.</p>
<p>Contact a service that helps parents of adult children with addictions or mental health issues.</p>	<p>If your community or family cannot help you, seek assistance from police to speak with the adult child about their behaviour and living arrangements.</p>
<p>Obtain a referral to services that may be able to help with alternative housing for an adult child living with you.</p>	<p>Make changes to legal documents to maintain decision-making independence such as your enduring power of attorney, Centrelink nominations and bank authorities.</p>
<p>Refuse to give bank account PIN numbers to others and change the number if necessary.</p>	<p>Report stolen money or valuable goods to police for investigation.</p>
<p>For those not using internet banking, inform the bank not to allow internet banking on your accounts.</p>	<p>Apply for a Peace and Good Behaviour Order if the problem is with a neighbour and not a relative.</p>



WHERE TO GET FREE HELP

SENIORS LEGAL AND SUPPORT SERVICE

at Caxton Legal Centre for legal advice and social work support and advocacy

Tel: (07) 3214 6333

ELDER ABUSE HELPLINE

Tel: 1300 651 192

ADA AUSTRALIA

for help to speak up for your decision-making rights or your concerns with aged-care services

Tel: 1800 818 338 or 3637 6000

COMPASS

the national website on recognising elder abuse and how to get help

www.compass.info

DIVERSICARE

for help with quality in-home care services for culturally and linguistically diverse people

Tel: 1300 348 377

FINANCIAL COUNSELLORS

for help with common debt problems

Tel: 1800 007 007

POLICE LINK

Tel: 13 14 44 or 000 for emergencies

PUBLIC TRUSTEE OF QUEENSLAND

for drafting of free wills and EPAs (for a fee)

Tel: 1300 360 044

TELEPHONE INTERPRETING SERVICE

Tel: 13 14 50

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN

for allegations of abuse against an adult who has impaired decision-making capacity

Tel: 1300 653 187

QUEENSLAND ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

for legal advocacy for people with disability

Tel: 1300 130 582

QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY

for contact details for private lawyers

Tel: 1300 367 757

SENIORS ENQUIRY LINE

when you are not sure where to go with a question or problem

Tel: 1300 135 500

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Disclaimer

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