



2.5 Elder Abuse

The purpose of this policy/procedure is to:

- Ensure that appropriate action is taken in cases of elder abuse or suspected elder abuse.
- Maintain the dignity and safety of older people utilising Redcliffe Community Bus (RCB).
- Achieve an integrated and standardised approach to the management of elder abuse, while respecting rights of older people to make their own decisions.

Elder abuse is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse may occur as a result of ignorance or negligence or it may be deliberate. Some forms of abuse are criminal acts, i.e. sexual and physical abuse. Abuse is typically carried out by family members, in particular adult children, upon whom the older person is dependent for care and/or accommodation. Elder abuse can take many forms including:

- Physical abuse is an act that causes physical pain or injury to an older person. It includes, but is not limited to, actions such as hitting, pushing or kicking.
- Inappropriate use of drugs or physical restraints is also an example of physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse is any sexual behaviour performed without an older person's consent. It includes sexual interactions and non-contact acts of a sexual nature that cause an older person to feel uncomfortable or threatened or cause physical hurt.
- Psychological abuse or emotional abuse is an act that causes emotional pain or injury to an older person. It includes, but is not limited to, insults or threats, humiliation or disrespect and controlling behaviours such as confining or isolating a person.
- Financial abuse is the misuse or theft of an older person's money or assets. It includes, 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.
- Neglect is the failure of a carer to meet an older person's basic needs such as food, housing and essential medical care. It includes, 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).



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Procedure if you suspect abuse

- Staff should report any suspicion of abuse to the Business Manager.
- The Business Manager where possible will discuss concerns about elder abuse with the older person and gain their permission to act or refer to other agencies.
- Exceptions exist in cases where emergency responses are called for, or where self-neglect is leading to serious ill health or public safety issues.
- In the case of an emergency which poses an immediate threat to human life or a serious risk of physical harm or serious damage to property, staff should respond in the most appropriate manner. This may involve the following;
 - Calling emergency services (i.e. ambulance or police)
 - Medical treatment (i.e. referral to local doctor or health service)

Capacity

- If an older person is competent but refuses help, effort should be made to provide the older person with appropriate information about services available to them and (i.e. emergency services or Elder Abuse Helpline).

Consideration of carers of older people

- People caring for an older person, particularly with dementia, are often the recipients of verbal and physical abuse and may be experiencing high levels of carer stress, which can lead to elder abuse over time. It may be necessary to consider support for the carer as well as the older person.

People from Cultural and Linguistic Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

- Cultural factors can influence how elder abuse is perceived, and specific strategies and responses to elder abuse should address these differences. It is important that support is provided with an understanding of the cultural background. People from different cultural backgrounds may require interpreter services. In these instances, family and friends should not be used as interpreters, but an independent interpreter should be sought.



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people

- If appropriate, advice should be sought from specific indigenous agencies with acknowledgement that cultural difference may require special sensitivity in relation to neglect and abuse

I have read and understood this policy

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____