

# Elder Abuse Statistics In Queensland

YEAR IN REVIEW 2024-25



Funded by



**Queensland  
Government**



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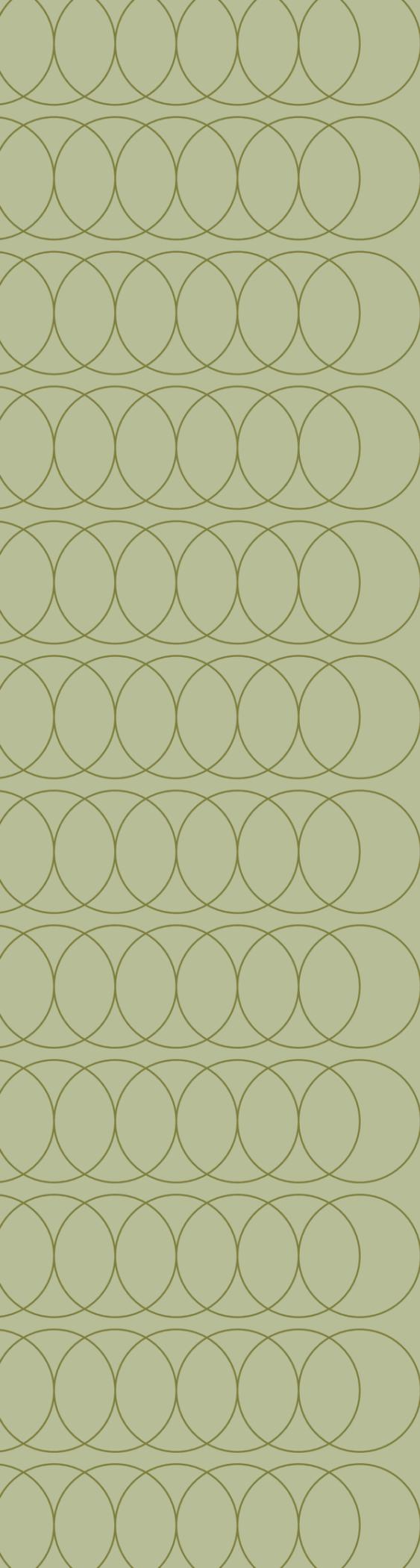
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# Executive Summary

The *Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland: Year in Review* report presents analyses of data collected from calls to the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) Helpline in Queensland.

The EAPU is funded by the Queensland Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety to respond to elder abuse. Progressing towards a society in which older people live free from abuse and neglect requires greater understanding around experiences of elder abuse and factors associated with victimisation. Statistics presented in this report provide insight about elder abuse reported to the Helpline and may benefit prevention and intervention efforts. The report contains data about individual factors (victims and perpetrators), relationship factors, community factors, abuse presentation, impact of the abuse, and barriers to change.

Further information about the data contained in this report is available in the *Elder Abuse Statistics in Queensland: Companion Document*.

## KEY FINDINGS



**4,828**  
Calls



**2,794**  
Abuse  
Notifications

Abuse types  
(close or  
intimate)

**80.1%**  
PSYCHOLOGICAL

**69.1%**  
FINANCIAL

**31%**  
SOCIAL

**26.4%**  
NEGLECT

**12.1%**  
PHYSICAL

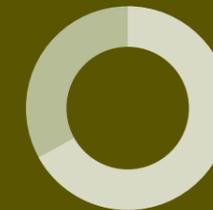
**0.9%**  
SEXUAL

**74.6%**  
EXPERIENCED MORE THAN  
ONE TYPE OF ABUSE



The most common age  
group for victims was

**80-84**  
YEARS (20.8%)



**29.3%**  
of victims had  
impaired capacity

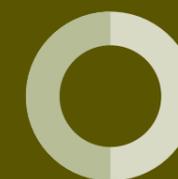
**67.2%**  
of victims  
were female

**61.4%**  
of victims were  
living with  
perpetrators



The most common age  
group of perpetrators was

**50-54**  
YEARS (13.7%)



**50%**  
of perpetrators were female

**35.7%** of perpetrators were sons

**34.4%** of perpetrators were daughters

**13.3%** of perpetrators were spouses  
or partners



## Insights

- The proportion of victims who experienced homelessness as a consequence of elder abuse increased by 23.7 per cent between 2023–24 and 2024–25. Fear of experiencing homelessness was also reported as a barrier to change for victims in a greater proportion of cases in 2024–25. Notably, the proportion of victims either experiencing homelessness or who were fearful of experiencing homelessness as a consequence of the abuse was higher among victims who owned a home. Further research could seek to explore why homelessness, and a risk of homelessness, may be higher for victims who own a home.
- Further research into facilitators and inhibitors of help-seeking would likely be beneficial. The most frequently recorded call prompt was that the caller found out about the EAPU. In addition, many people do not contact the Helpline until they reach breaking point. Gaining knowledge about facilitators and inhibitors of help-seeking would provide insight that could be used to shape awareness-raising efforts that are focused on prevention and early intervention.
- Further research into the neglect of older people is warranted. The proportion of cases in which neglect is reported has increased over the past 7 years (17.6% in 2018–19, 26.4% in 2024–25). The National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study (Qu et al., 2021) also identified that neglect had the second-highest prevalence in reported cases of abuse. Despite this, there has been little research into neglect occurring outside Australian residential aged care facilities. Further research would help to better understand this phenomenon and guide prevention and intervention efforts.



SECTION 1.

# Total Call Data

This section describes notifications, what prompted the call, and referrals made.

## Notifications

The Helpline received a total of 4,828 calls in the 2024–25 financial year. The total calls were 8.3 per cent ( $n = 370$ ) higher than the total recorded in 2023–24. The calls comprised 2,794 abuse notifications and 2,034 enquiry calls. An increase of 4.5 per cent ( $n = 120$ ) in the number of abuse notifications was recorded (Figure 1).

There were 2,624 cases of abuse in close or intimate relationships and 634 cases of abuse in consumer and social relationships (Figure 2). The number of cases is higher than the number of calls as more than one abuse relationship may be identified within a single call.

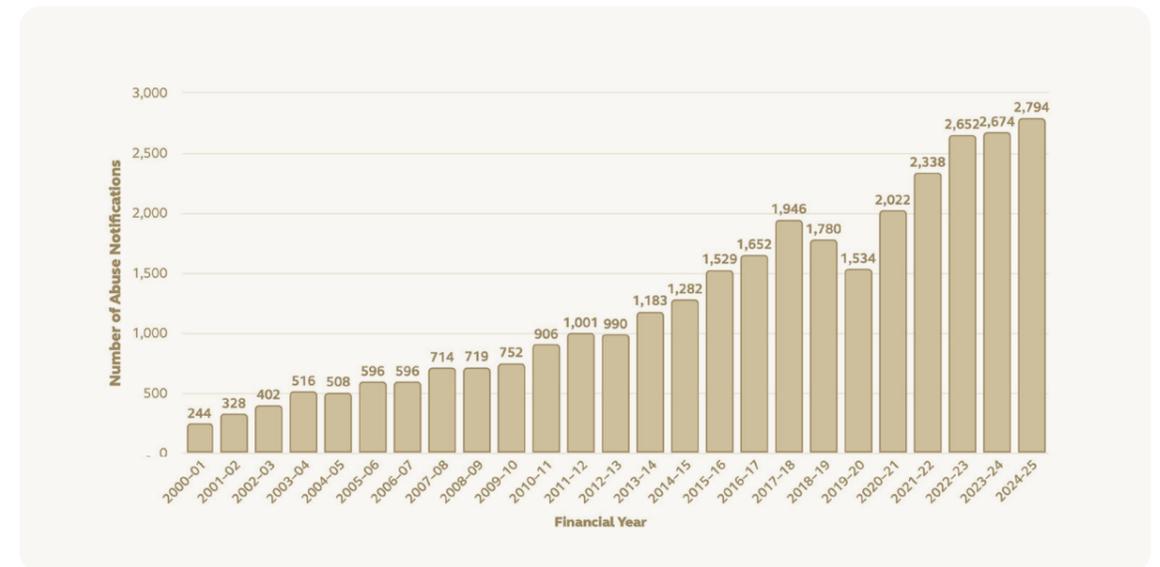


Figure 1. Total abuse notifications by financial year.

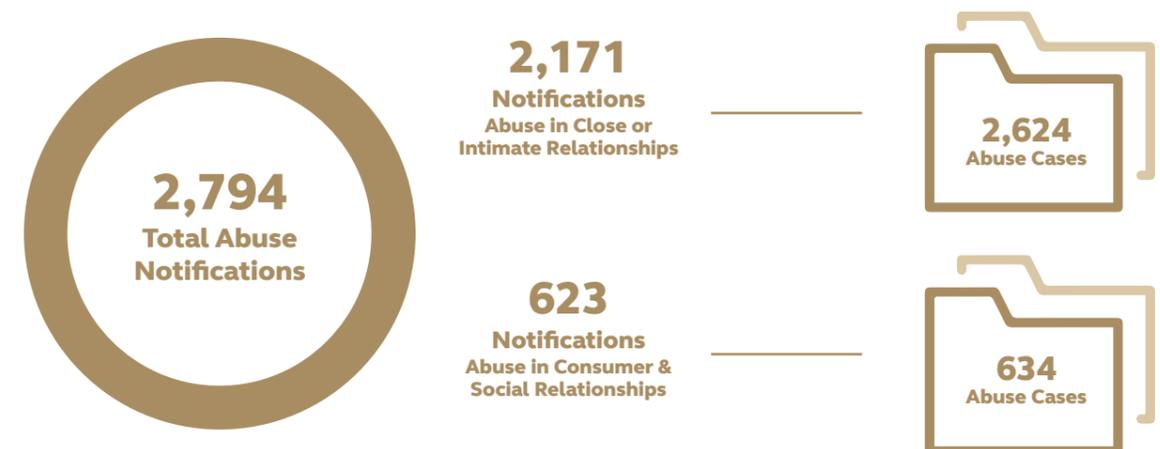


Figure 2. Notifications received in the 2024–25 financial year.

## What Prompted the Call?

The PEARL database allows users to record what prompted the caller to phone the EAPU.<sup>1</sup> This information was recorded for about half of the calls ( $n = 2,782$ , 57.6%).

The most frequently recorded call prompt was that the caller found out about the EAPU (Figure 3).

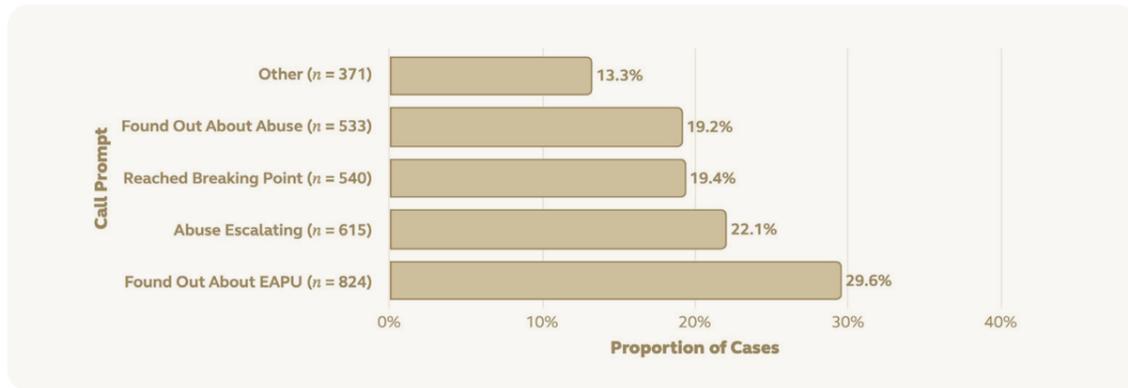


Figure 3. What prompted callers to contact EAPU ( $n = 2,782$ ).

## Referrals

Callers were referred to other services in 64.6 per cent of cases ( $n = 3,120$ ). The most common referrals were to “Other Support Services” (Figure 4). Some examples of other support services include counselling, carer support, and interstate or international support services.

The findings differed slightly from 2023–24, with the proportion of callers referred to legal services increasing from 19.3 per cent to 21.6 per cent. Another notable difference from the 2023–24 findings was that the proportion of referrals for mediation increased from 3.5 per cent to 4.8 per cent.

Two-thirds of referrals to legal services in 2024–25 ( $n = 675$ , 64.8%) were to the Seniors Legal and Support Services (SLASS), which provides both legal and social-work support. Many victims of elder abuse are reluctant to initiate legal action against perpetrators, but some are more willing to engage when the legal and social-worker model employed by SLASS is described.

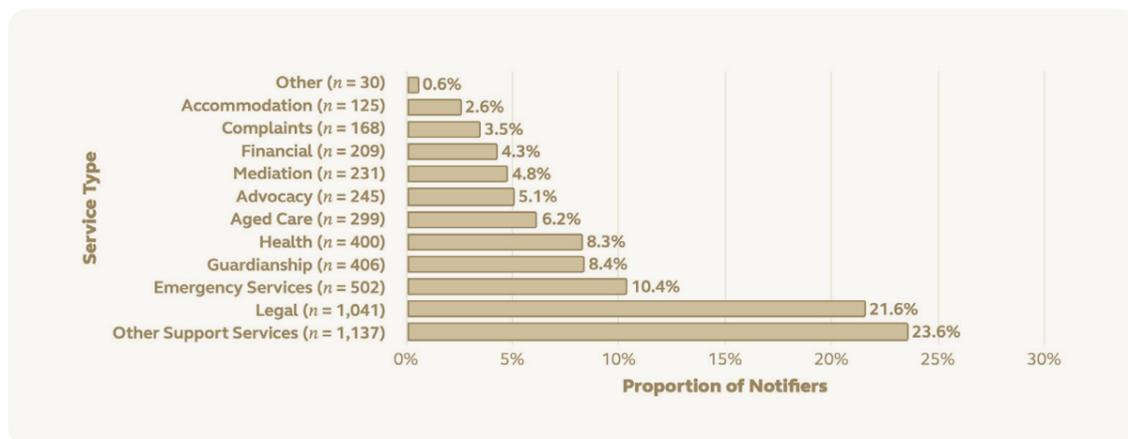


Figure 4. Types of services notifiers were referred to ( $n = 4,858$ ).



<sup>1</sup> Note. More than one option may be selected. For example, a victim may call because they believe the abuse is escalating and they have reached breaking point.

SECTION 2.

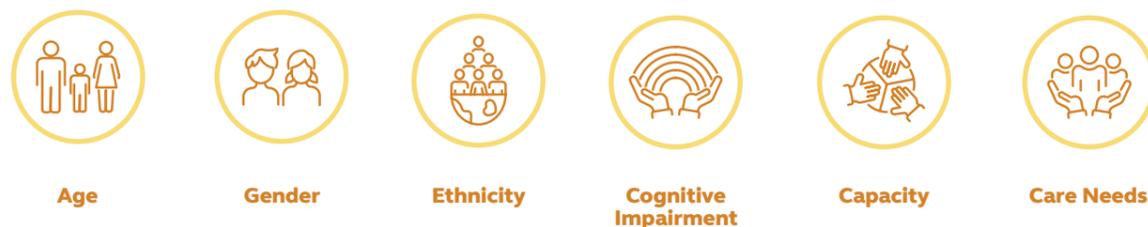
# Abuse in Close or Intimate Relationships

SECTION 2.1.

## Individual Factors for Victims

Individual factors or life circumstances may increase an older person's vulnerability and also influence their risk of experiencing abuse. Although these individual factors are not causal factors, they may be associated with an increased risk of experiencing victimisation. For example, victims of elder abuse are more often females; however, being female per se does not increase the risk. Rather, a complex combination of factors such as gender roles and women's longer lifespan may contribute to an increased risk of victimisation.

This section examines the role of the following individual factors:



### Age

Victim age group was recorded in 76.6 per cent ( $n = 2,009$ ) of cases but not for 23.4 per cent ( $n = 615$ ). Similar to 2023-24, the most common age group was 80-84 years ( $n = 418$ ). This group accounted for one-fifth of the total victims of known age (Figure 5).

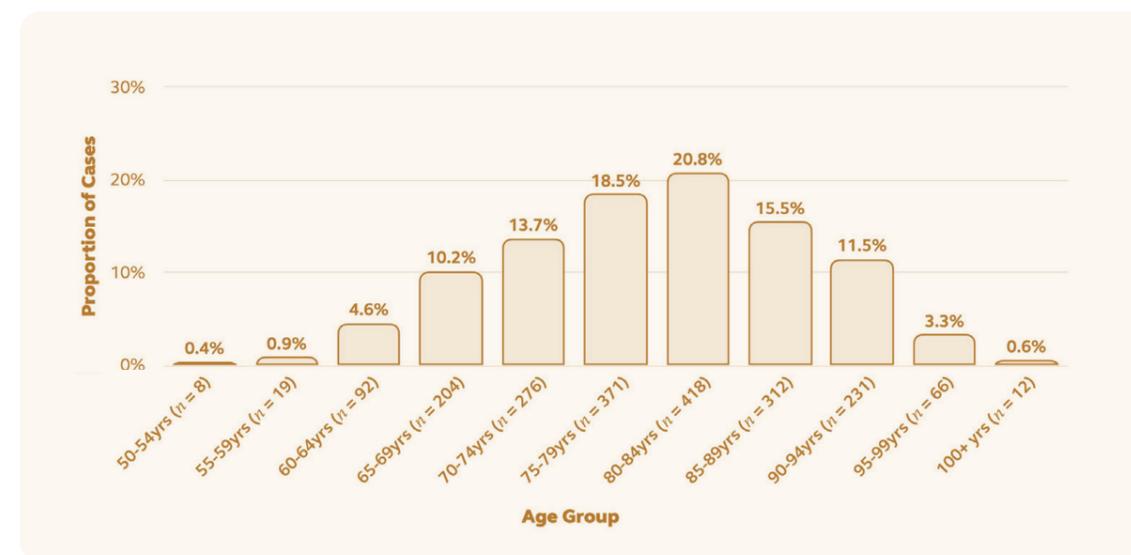
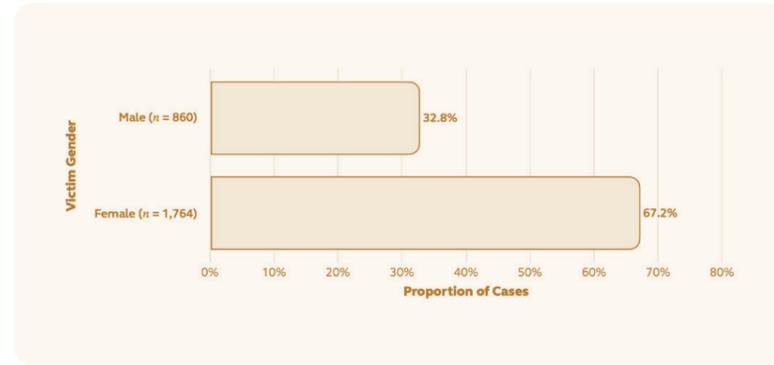


Figure 5. Age of victims ( $n = 2,009$ ).



## Gender

Similar to numbers in previous years, in 2023–24 there were more than twice as many female victims as male victims (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Gender of victims (n = 2,624).

## Ethnicity

Research suggests that race, ethnicity, and culture intersect with elder abuse in multiple and complex ways (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017; Horsford et al., 2011). In particular, vulnerabilities and stressors associated with being a member of a minority or a marginalised ethnic group may increase the risk of elder abuse.

### Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

In the 2024–25 reporting period, 76 victims (2.9%) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This number is slightly higher than the number that would be expected from population statistics (i.e. 2.4% of Queenslanders aged over 50 years identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

### Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

During the 2024–25 reporting period, 73 victims (2.8%) were recorded as having a CALD background, which is much lower than the number expected from population data (i.e. 13.9% of Queenslanders aged over 50 years have a CALD background) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

## Cognitive Impairment

Cognitive impairment of victims was recorded in 649 (24.7%) cases. Dementia was the most frequently reported form of cognitive impairment, affecting 350 (13.3%) victims.

In 2018, it was estimated that 5.2 per cent of Australians aged 65 years and over had dementia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). In contrast, in the Helpline data, more than double this proportion had dementia (14.6%, n = 278 victims of similar age, where age was known).

## Capacity

Impaired capacity was recorded for 736 victims (29.3%, where known). A further 261 (10.4%) were suspected to have impairment.<sup>2</sup> Capacity status was unknown for 110 victims (4.2%).

## Care Needs

Victims were reported to require support in 1,496 cases (57%), with domestic, transport, and meal preparation needs the most frequently reported areas in which support was required.

<sup>2</sup> Note. There can be differences in assessment and interpretation of capacity due to different frameworks being used (e.g. medical versus legal). Data recorded in PEARL is largely self-reported, which likely influences what is recorded and thus findings should be interpreted with caution.

## SECTION 2.2.

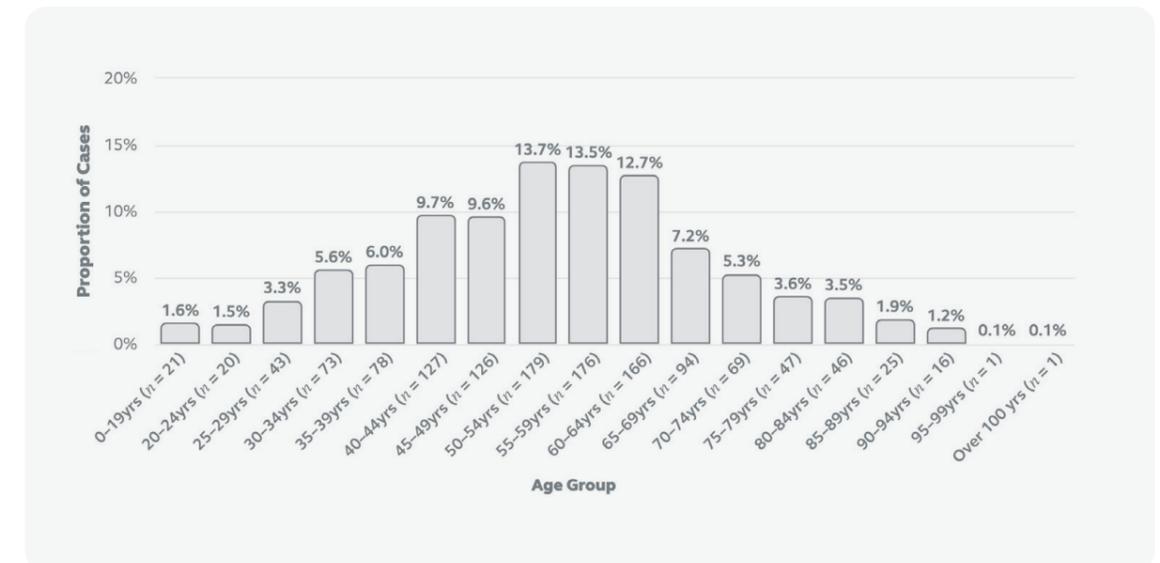
# Individual Factors for Alleged Perpetrators

This section covers key demographics of alleged perpetrators, as well as individual factors that are directly or indirectly associated with an increased risk of perpetrating elder abuse. Note these factors are not necessarily causal. Perpetrator age, gender, and psychological health are discussed.

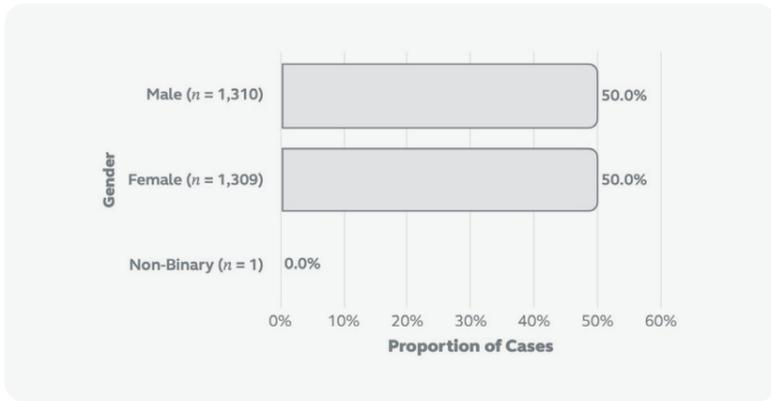
## Age

The age of perpetrators was unknown in 1,316 cases (50.2%). The most common age group recorded for perpetrators was 50–54 years, followed closely by 55–59 years (Figure 7).

The most common perpetrator age group reported in the data has consistently been the 50–54 years age group. However, it is likely that this will change over time because the average maternal age has increased and most perpetrators are the adult children of victims.



**Figure 7.** Age of perpetrators (where known) (n = 1,308).



## Gender

Males and females were equally represented as perpetrators (Figure 8). Perpetrator gender was not recorded for four cases.

**Figure 8.** Gender of perpetrators (where known) (n = 2,620).

## Psychological Health

### Mental Illness

In 485 cases (18.5%), perpetrators were reported to have, or were suspected by notifiers to have, some form of mental illness.

### Substance Misuse

Substance misuse by perpetrators was recorded in 375 (14.3%) cases.



SECTION 2.3.

# Relationships Between Alleged Perpetrators and Victims

This section of the report examines relationships between victims and perpetrators, as well as any shared history or current factors that may influence their interactions. The section covers relationships, living arrangements, and the caring role.

## Relationships

Family relationships accounted for 95.2 per cent ( $n = 2,497$ ) of cases of abuse in close or intimate relationships. Sons and daughters were reported as perpetrators in almost three-quarters of cases ( $n = 1,840, 70.1\%$ ).<sup>3</sup>

Sons were most frequently reported as perpetrators, followed by daughters (Figure 9). This finding differed from 2023–24, when daughters were reported as perpetrators slightly more frequently than sons. Further analysis revealed that 101 cases (3.8%) involved daughters-in-law and 62 cases (2.4%) involved sons-in-law.

Slightly more male victims ( $n = 176$ ) were reported to be experiencing abuse from spouses/partners than female victims ( $n = 173$ ).

Long-term conflict between victims and perpetrators was identified in 338 (12.9%) cases.

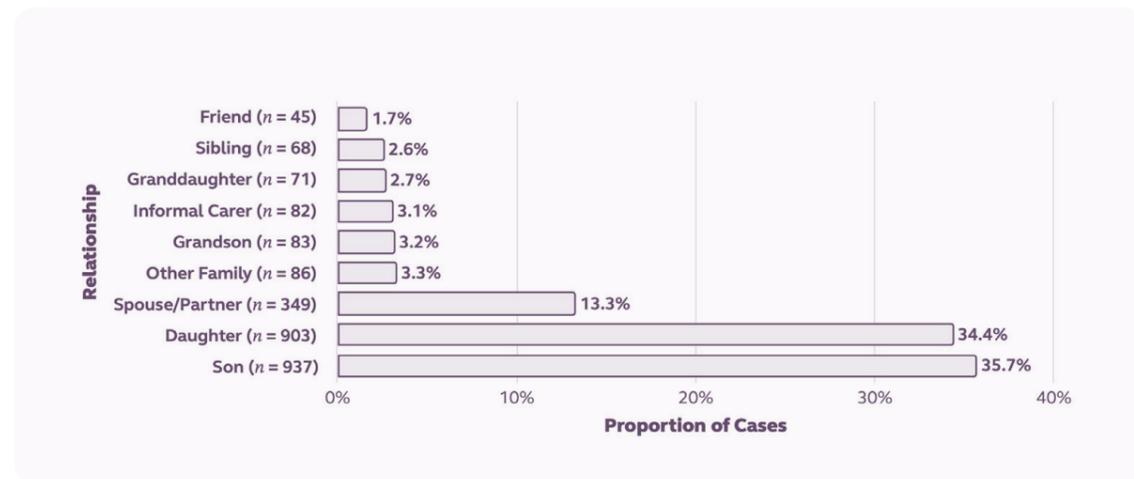


Figure 9. Relationship between perpetrator and victim ( $n = 2,624$ ).

<sup>3</sup> Note. This data includes non-biological relationships such as sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and stepchildren.

## Living Arrangements

Living with perpetrators is an established risk factor for elder abuse (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2017; Kaspiew et al., 2016). Overall, more than half of victims ( $n = 1,578, 61.4\%$ ) lived with perpetrators (where known) (Figure 10). In 326 of these cases, at least one non-perpetrator was also living with the victim.

In almost two-thirds of cases in which perpetrators lived with victims ( $n = 1,033, 65.5\%$ ), perpetrators were sons ( $n = 543, 34.4\%$ ) or daughters ( $n = 490, 31.1\%$ ).

The proportion of cases in which victims and perpetrators lived together increased sharply in 2019–20 to 53.4% (Figure 10). In 2020–21 and 2021–22, the proportion continued to rise, followed by a small decrease in 2022–23 and then a more marked decrease in 2023–24. In 2024–25, the proportion rose again to 61.4 per cent (Figure 10).

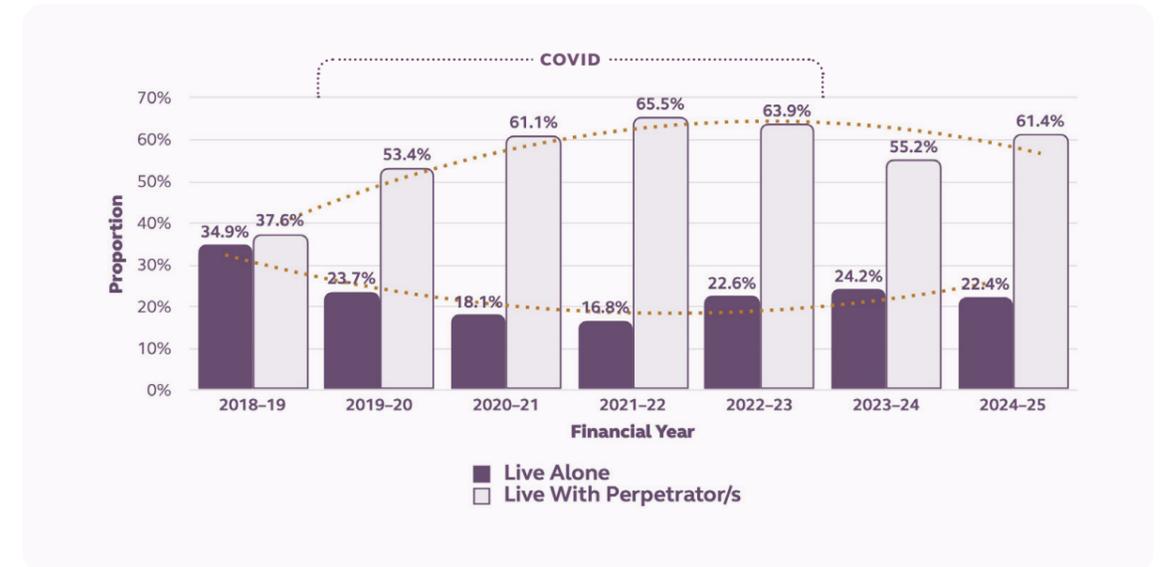


Figure 10. Comparison of victim and perpetrator cohabitation between 2018–19 and 2024–25.

## The Caring Role

In 2024–25, 22.8 per cent ( $n = 599$ ) of perpetrators were recorded as providing informal care to victims.

SECTION 2.4.

# Community Factors

Community factors relate to the intersection of victim and perpetrator relationships with other family, friends, community members, and potential support networks, or with features of the community such as geographical location. This section discusses factors related to family and community, and geography.

## Notifiers

In 2024–25, the largest group of notifiers were daughters, followed by victims themselves and workers (Figure 11). Health workers were the most common group of workers who contacted EAPU, representing 29.9 per cent of workers ( $n = 130$ ). Social workers ( $n = 51$ ) and nurses ( $n = 28$ ) were the most frequently identified occupations of the health workers. Notifiers' relationships to victims were unknown for 7 cases.

## Geography

Queensland has the second-largest land area of the Australian states and territories. Over half of the population lives outside the Greater Brisbane area, making Queensland mainland Australia's most decentralised state.

Geographical distance and population spread can create issues for service access in rural and remote areas.

### Victim Location

Victim location was known in 86.2 per cent of cases ( $n = 2,263$ ). Figure 12 displays the number of victims in each region.<sup>4</sup>

In four regions, the number of calls increased disproportionately compared with 2023–24 data: Toowoomba (by 47.1%), Central Queensland (34.1%), Darling Downs–Maranoa (30.9%), and Logan–Beaudesert (30.3%). Moreton Bay–South (–37.5%) and the Sunshine Coast (–26.2%) were the only regions to record substantial decreases in calls.

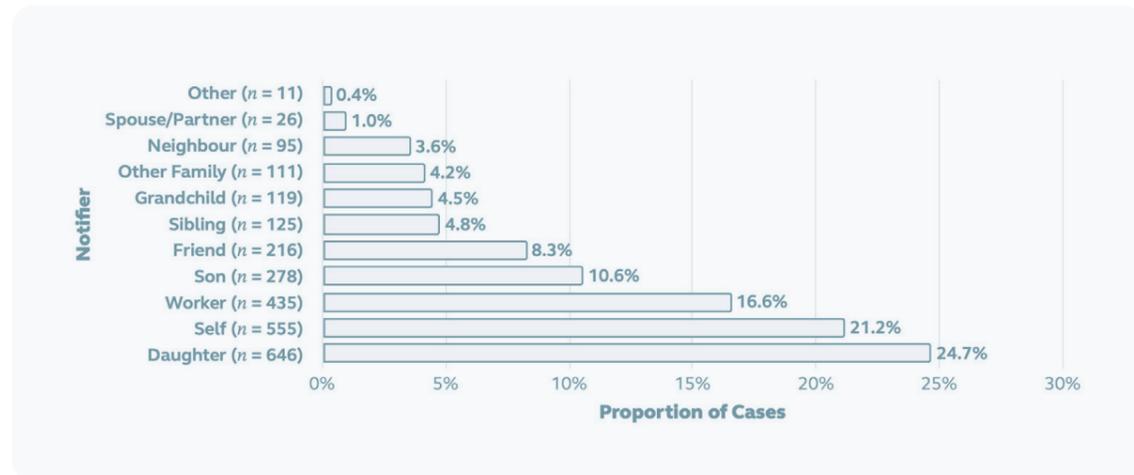
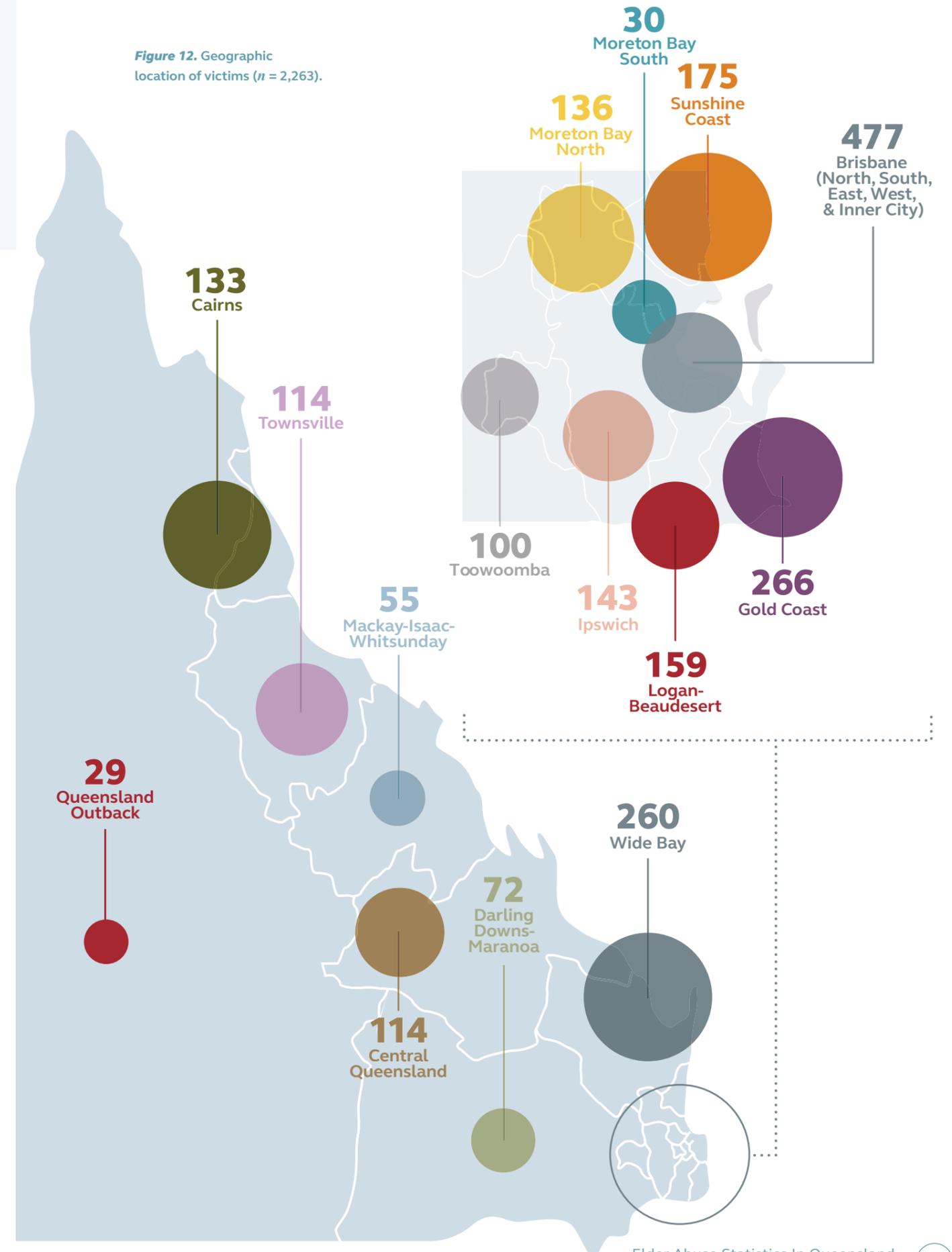


Figure 11. Notifier's relationship to victim ( $n = 2,617$ ).

Figure 12. Geographic location of victims ( $n = 2,263$ ).



<sup>4</sup> Note. Data from Brisbane North, South, East, West, and Inner City were combined because Helpline workers sometimes record the suburb as Brisbane City if victims are reported to live in Brisbane without a specified suburb. This results in an over-representation of cases in the Brisbane Inner City region.

SECTION 2.5.

# Abuse Data

Consistent with findings from 2023–24, the most frequently reported types of abuse were psychological, financial, and social abuse (Figure 13).

Three-quarters of victims ( $n = 1,958$ , 74.6%) were reported to be experiencing more than one type of abuse.

The proportions of cases involving neglect, psychological abuse, and financial abuse are the highest ever recorded in the Helpline data (Figure 14). It is unclear why the proportions are higher than in previous years.

Neglect increased between 2023–24 (24.0%) and 2024–25 (26.4%). Rates of neglect have increased

since 2018–19, when neglect was recorded in only 17.4 per cent of cases. Psychological and financial abuse also increased between 2023–24 and 2024–25. Psychological abuse increased from 75.9 per cent in 2023–24 to 80.1 per cent in 2024–25, while financial abuse increased from 65.0 per cent in 2023–24 to 69.1 per cent in 2024–25.

The proportions of reported cases of physical, sexual, and social abuse in 2024–25 were reasonably consistent with those found in 2023–24.

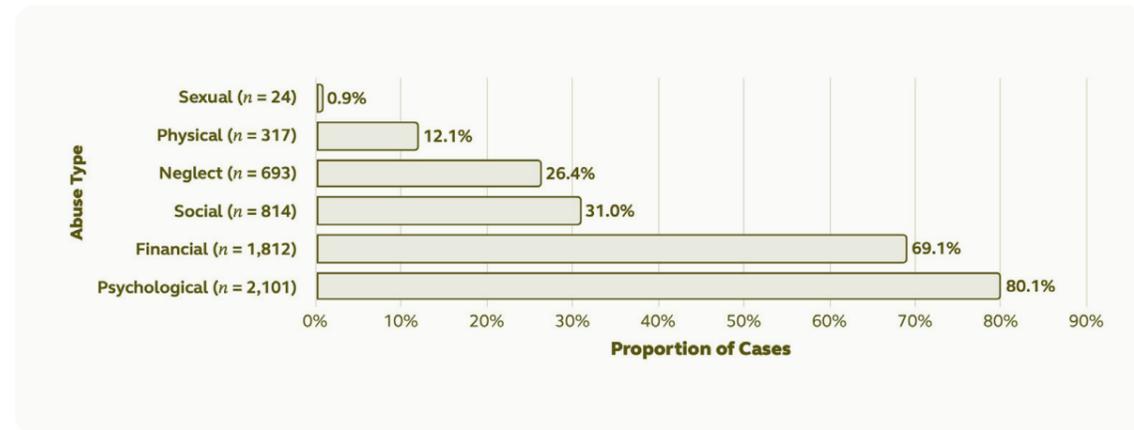


Figure 13. Proportion of victims by abuse type ( $n = 2,624$ ).

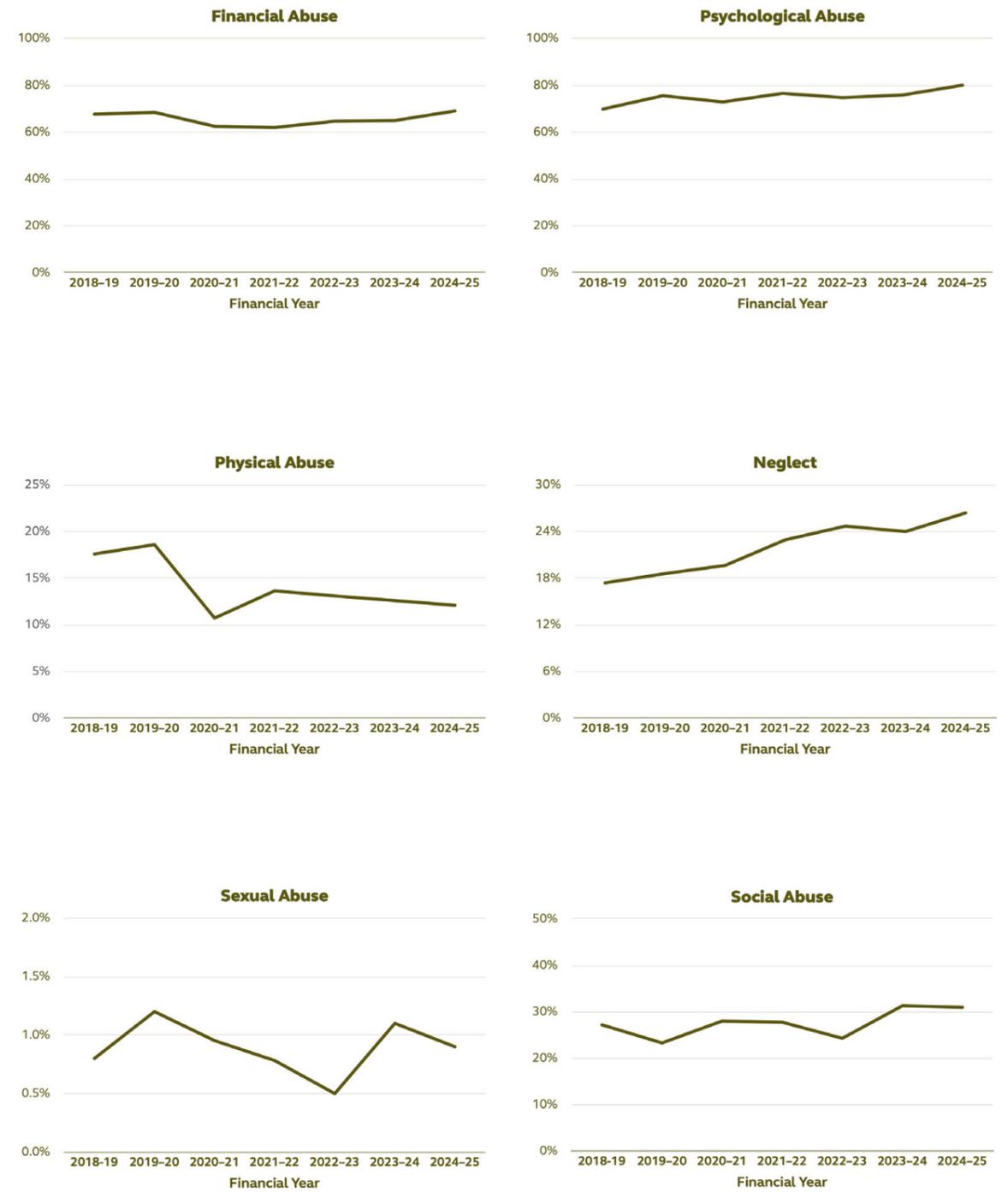


Figure 14. Proportion of victims by abuse type (2018–2025).

## Financial Abuse

In 2024–25, 1,812 cases of financial abuse were reported to the Helpline.

### Methods Used to Perpetrate Financial Abuse

The most common methods of perpetrating financial abuse were undue influence, misuse of debit and credit cards, and misuse of an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPoA) (Figure 15).

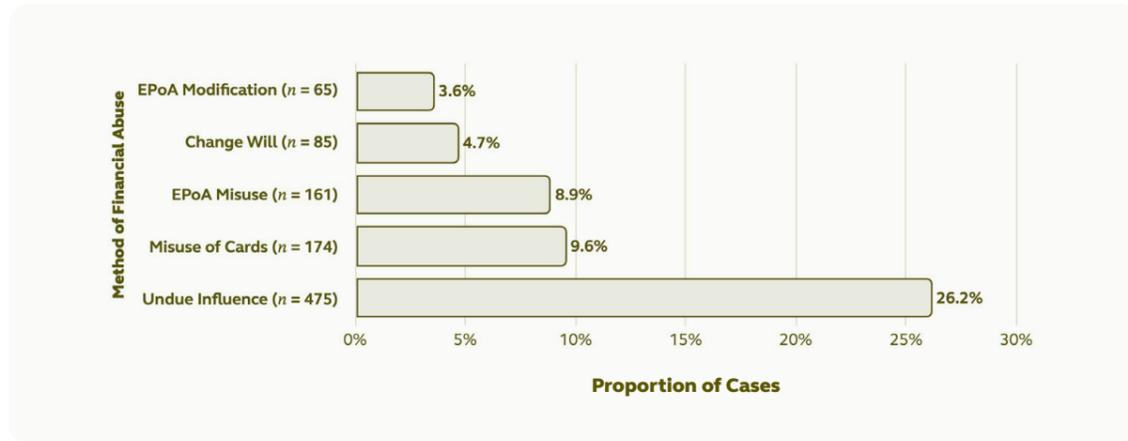


Figure 15. Methods of perpetrating financial abuse (n = 1,812).

### Forms of Financial Abuse

The most common forms of financial abuse involved non-contribution (for example, living with the victim and not contributing towards expenses such as electricity or groceries), coercing the victim into gifting, and paying perpetrator's bills (Figure 16).

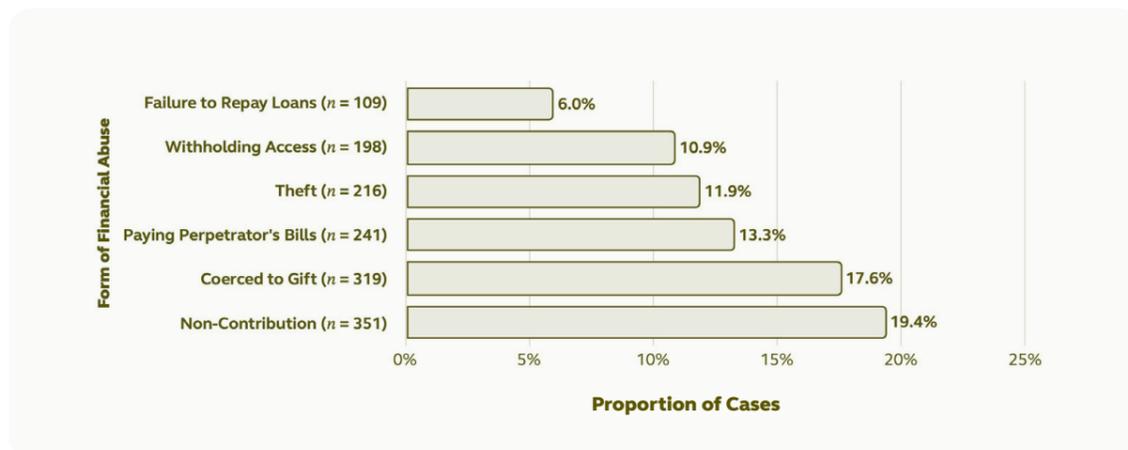


Figure 16. Forms of financial abuse (n = 1,812).

## Neglect

In 2024–25, 693 cases of neglect were reported to the Helpline.

Refusing to allow others to provide care, failing to ensure victim's needs for medical care were met, and failing to ensure victim safety were the most frequently reported forms of neglect in 2024–25 (Figure 17).

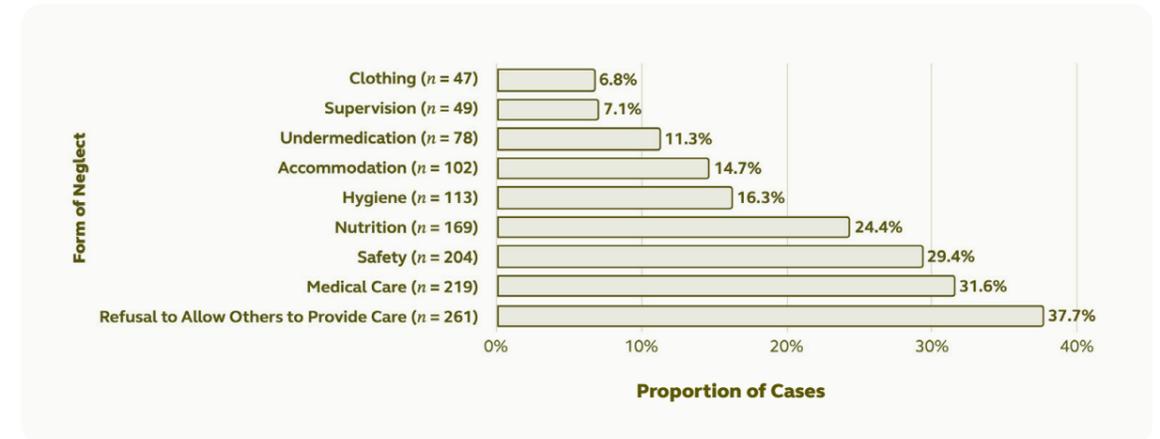


Figure 17. Forms of neglect (n = 693).

## Physical Abuse

In 2024–25, 317 cases of physical abuse were reported to the Helpline.

The most frequently reported forms of physical abuse were striking, pushing, and rough handling (Figure 18).

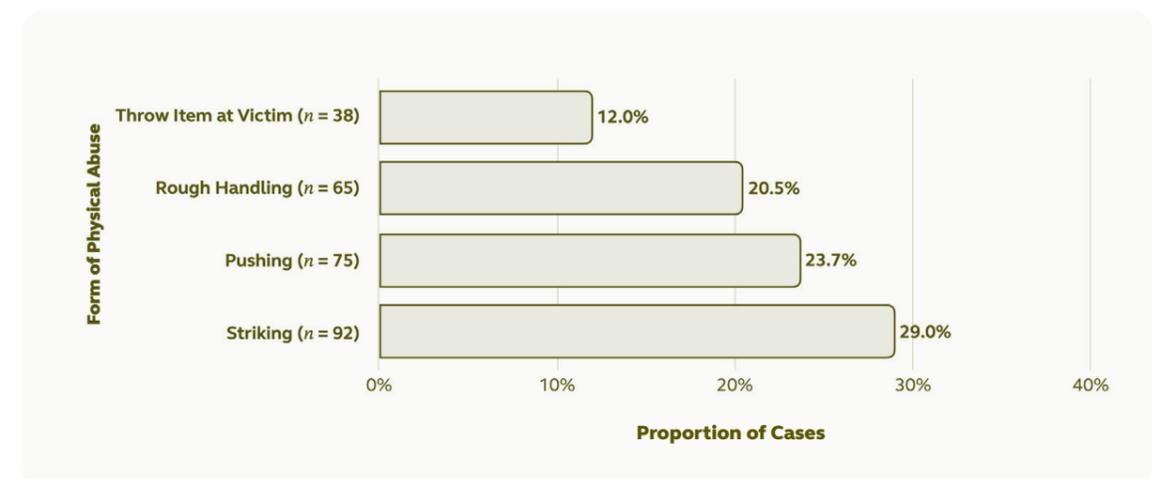


Figure 18. Forms of physical abuse (n = 317).

## Psychological Abuse

In 2024–25, 2,101 cases of psychological abuse were reported to the Helpline.

The most common forms of psychological abuse were pressuring, shouting, and making threats (Figure 19).

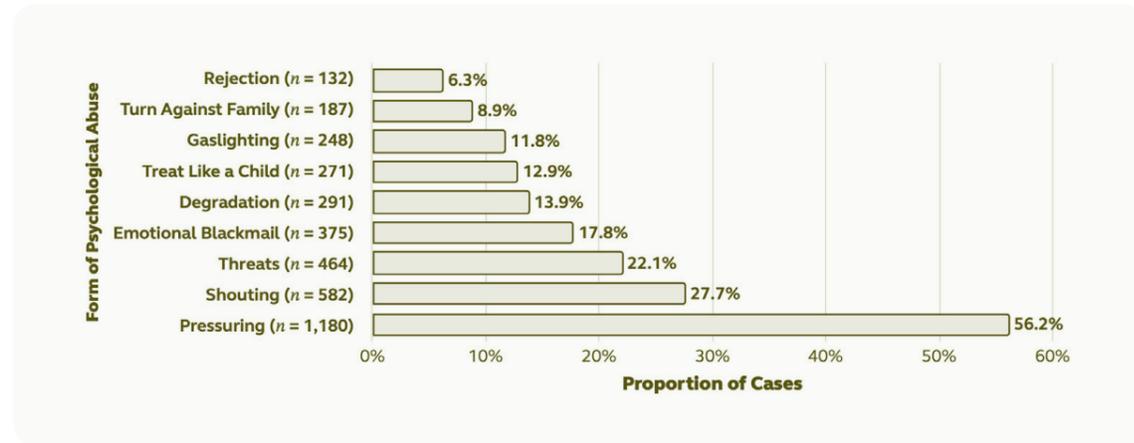


Figure 19. Forms of psychological abuse (n = 2,101).

The most common types of threats were threatening to physically harm victims, threatening to send victims to residential aged care facilities, and threatening perpetrator suicide (Figure 20).

In 2024–25, there was an increase in perpetrators making threats involving suicide (2023–24 n = 50, 12.6%; 2024–25 n = 81, 17.5%) and a reduction in threats to harm victims (2023–24 n = 182, 46.0%; 2024–25 n = 155, 33.4%).

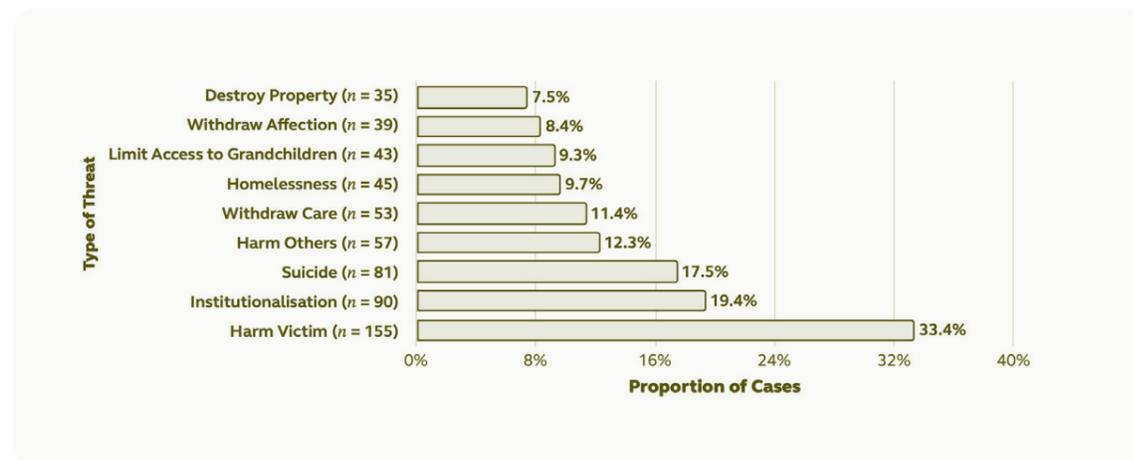


Figure 20. Types of threats experienced by victims (n = 464).

## Sexual Abuse

In 2024–25, 24 cases of sexual abuse were reported to the Helpline.

Coercing victims to perform sexual acts, inappropriate touch, and unwanted touch were equally represented as the most frequently reported forms of sexual abuse (Figure 21).

These results differed from those in 2023–24, when the most frequently reported forms were coercing victims to perform sexual acts, unwanted sexual comments, and rape.

The perpetrators in reported cases of sexual abuse were most frequently spouses/partners (n = 10, 41.7%), sons (n = 5, 20.8%), and sons-in-law (n = 3, 12.5%).

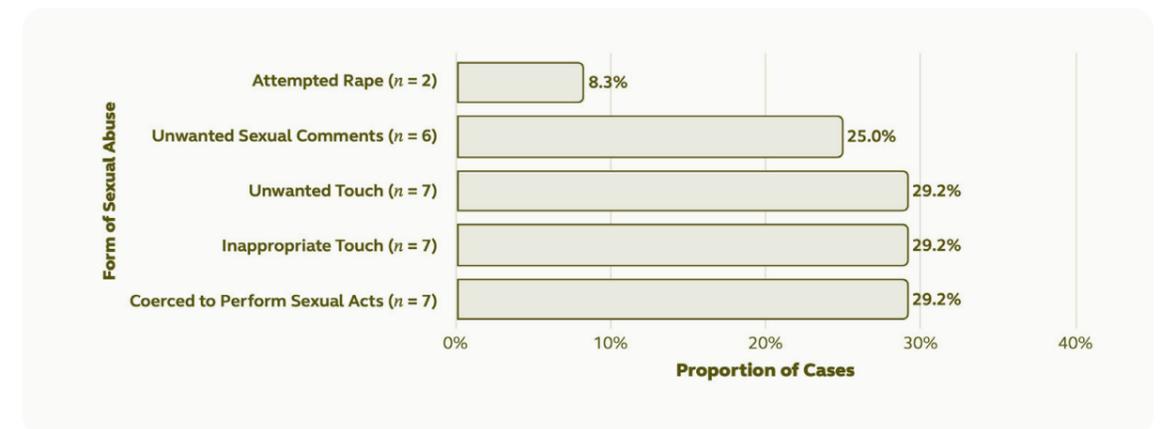


Figure 21. Forms of sexual abuse (n = 24).

## Social Abuse

In 2024–25, 814 cases of social abuse were reported to the Helpline. The PEARL database allows Helpline operators to collect data on the methods used to perpetrate social abuse, along with the forms of social abuse.

### Methods Used to Perpetrate Social Abuse

In 77 (9.5%) cases of social abuse, EPoA misuse was recorded as the method used to perpetrate the abuse.

### Forms of Social Abuse

Perpetrators behaving in ways that limited visitation by others, restricting visitation by others, and limiting a victim's ability to be alone with others were the most common forms of social abuse reported in 2024–25 (Figure 22).

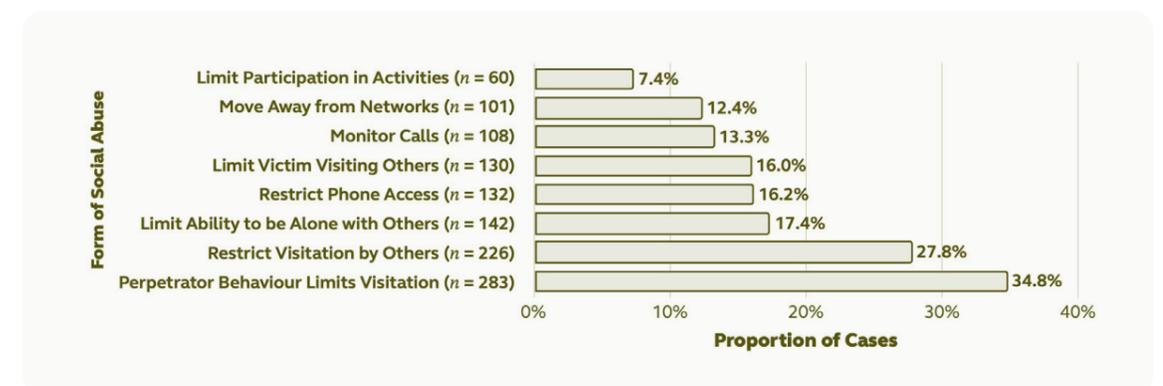


Figure 22. Forms of social abuse (n = 814).

SECTION 2.6.

## Impact of the Abuse on Victims

Information about how abuse had affected victims was recorded in 1,754 cases (66.8%). Psychological, health, and financial impacts were most frequently reported (Figure 23).

In 2024–25, 247 victims were reported to have experienced homelessness as a consequence of the abuse. The proportion of cases in which victim homelessness was identified increased by almost one-quarter (23.7%) between 2023–24 (11.4%) and 2024–25 (14.1%). Notably, the proportion of cases in which victims experienced homelessness was higher for victims who owned a home ( $n = 34$ , 17%) than for victims who did not own a home ( $n = 213$ , 13.7%).

Health impacts were also reported in a higher proportion of cases in 2024–25 (61.6%) than in 2023–24 (54.9%).

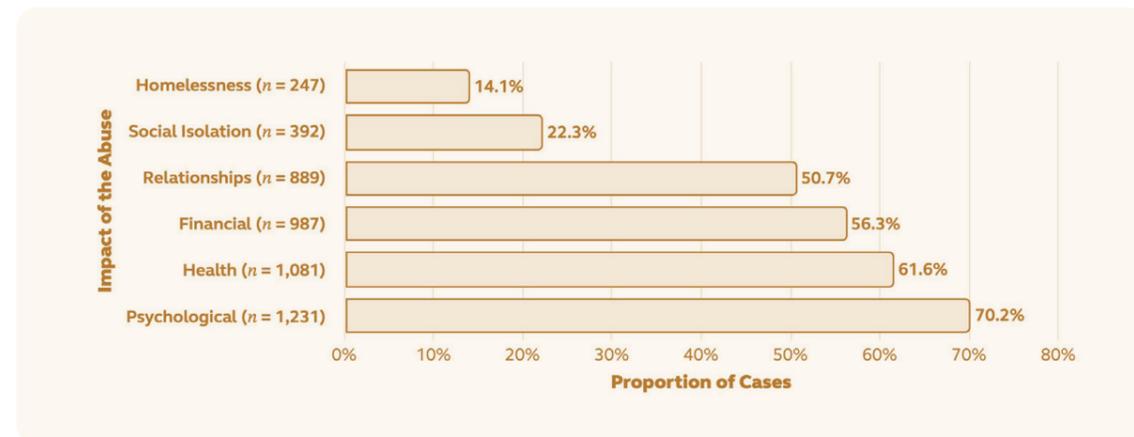


Figure 23. Impact of elder abuse on victims ( $n = 1,754$ ).



SECTION 2.7.

# Barriers to Change for Victims

Helpline operators can record data about barriers to a victim’s ability or willingness to enact change regarding the abuse they are experiencing. Barriers to change were identified in almost two-thirds of cases ( $n = 1,736, 66.2\%$ ).

For simplicity and clarity of reporting, the 25 barriers to change (Table 1) have been grouped into six categories (factors) (Gillbard & Leggatt-Cook, 2022).<sup>5</sup>

1. Protecting the Perpetrator and Relationship
2. Fear of Further Harm
3. Impact on Relationships with Others
4. Available Resources
5. Shame or Stigma
6. Individual Vulnerabilities

Fear of experiencing homelessness was also reported as a barrier to change for victims in a greater proportion of cases in 2024–25 (7%) than in 2023–24 (2.7%). This represents an increase of 159.3 per cent. Notably, the proportion of victims who were fearful of experiencing homelessness as a consequence of the abuse was much higher for victims who owned a home (10.7%) than for victims who did not own a home (6.6%).

See Table 1 for a full breakdown of factors and frequencies for the 25 data points.

The most common barriers to change for victims were protecting the perpetrator and their relationship with them, fear of further harm, and individual vulnerabilities (Figure 24).

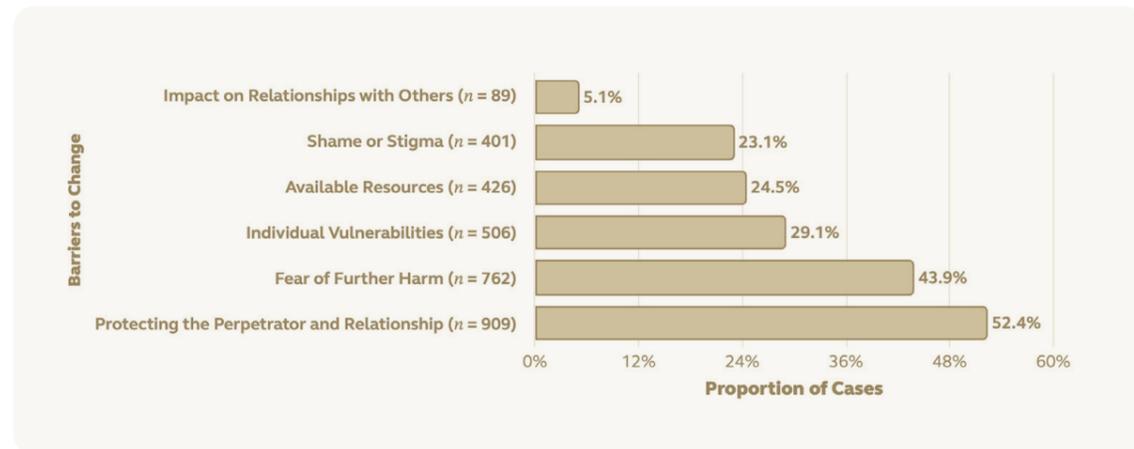


Figure 24. Barriers to change for victims ( $n = 1,736$ ).

<sup>5</sup> Note. The factors were identified using a principal factor analysis with oblique (oblimin) rotation for the 2021–22 report.

Table 1. Barriers to Change Factors and Frequencies ( $n = 1,736$ )

Factor 1 – Protecting the Perpetrator and Relationship	
Impact on perpetrator – police involvement	358
Impact on perpetrator – lose relationships with others	348
Impact on perpetrator – financial	345
Impact on perpetrator – homelessness	293
Impact on perpetrator – health/mental health	221
Fear – lose relationship with perpetrator	215
Fear – safety of perpetrator	110
Fear – forced intervention	103
Factor 2 – Fear of Further Harm	
Fear – further abuse	615
Fear – safety of self	221
Fear – safety of others	55
Fear – not be believed	46
Factor 3 – Impact on Relationships with Others	
Fear – lose relationship with grandchildren	54
Fear – lose other relationships	26
Fear – lose relationship with other children	10
Factor 4 – Available Resources	
Lack of knowledge	265
Fear – homelessness (self)	122
Financial situation	80
Factor 5 – Shame or Stigma	
Denial	251
Guilt/self-blame	171
Shame or stigma	97
Cultural factors	19
Factor 6 – Individual Vulnerabilities	
Support needs	282
Lack of capacity	260
Fear – moved into aged care	58

SECTION 3.

# Abuse in Consumer and Social Relationships

Although the Helpline focuses primarily on abuse in close and intimate relationships, it also receives calls about abuse in consumer and social relationships.

In 2024–25, 623 calls about abuse in consumer and social relationships were recorded. This represented an increase of 19.1 per cent on the 523 calls that were recorded in 2023–24. Some victims were experiencing abuse in both consumer and social relationships, and thus one call may have generated two cases (one consumer abuse case and one social abuse case). Consequently, cases of abuse in consumer relationships numbered 360 and cases of abuse in social relationships numbered 274.

The most common abuse types recorded for cases involving consumer and social relationships were psychological and financial abuse (Figure 25).

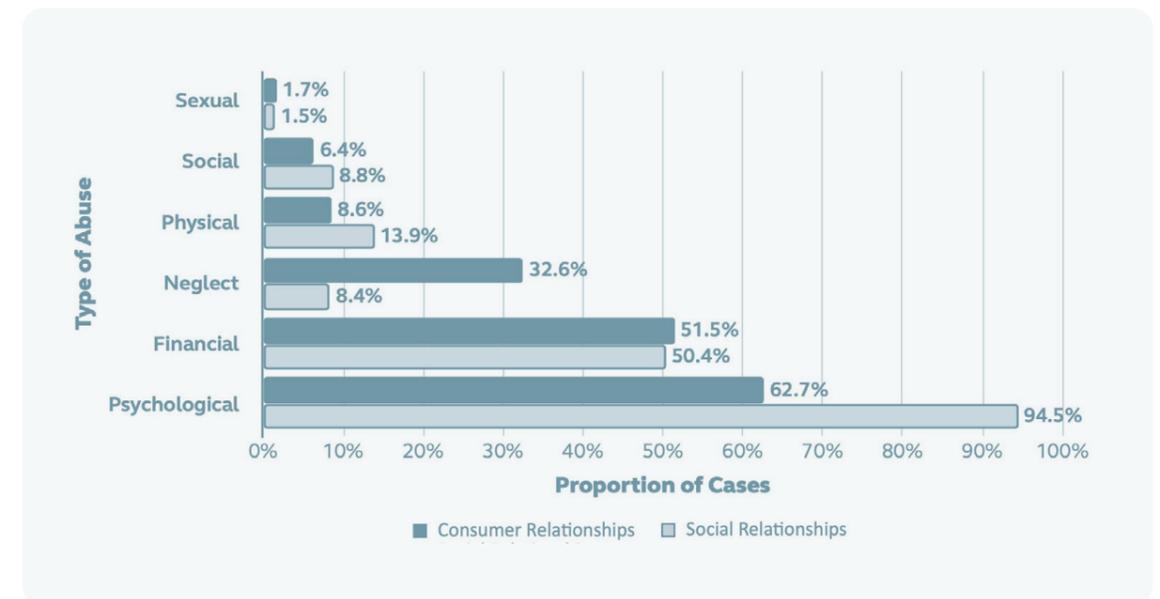


Figure 25. Abuse types reported for abuse involving consumer (n = 359) and social (n = 274) relationships.



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