



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Priority: **HIGH**

### **Social Development Ministry ‘kicks off’ Webinar on Elder Abuse**

*Port-of-Spain* --- Focused on the theme of “*Elder Abuse Detection & Prevention during the COVID19 Pandemic & Beyond*”, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services launched its Virtual Webinar Series today, July 15, 2021, on Elder Abuse, as part of its commemoration of World Elder Abuse Day, which was recognized on June 15. The four-part Webinar Series, which continues on July 22, 23 and 30, 2021 from 10: 00 am each day, is intended to foster greater awareness of the mistreatment and exploitation of older persons in the society.

In welcoming online participants to the Webinar, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry, Jacinta Bailey-Sobers noted that the deleterious effects of COVID-19, meant that now more than ever before, priority needs to be placed on encouraging further research, engaging stakeholders for policy development and highlighting support mechanisms in an effort to promote a safe living environment and better quality of life for older persons.

In her Keynote Address, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services expressed, “If ever there was need for a national conversation on this issue, the time is now. This pandemic has not only brought to the fore, but also exacerbated many challenges, which we knew existed before, one of which is the vulnerability of older populations to neglect, abandonment and abuse.” The Minister further cited data from the Division of Ageing’s records which revealed reports of **174** cases of different forms of elder abuse for the first five (5) months of this year. According to the Minister, “This figure has already surpassed the entire figure of 153 cases reported for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. This is indeed a matter of grave concern and the Ministry is resolute in its intent to bring awareness to, and aid in the prevention of elder abuse, in all its forms” She ended by encouraging participants to share and explore ways in which the phenomenon could be curbed in Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad born Independent Consultant, specialising in Independent living design and age-related healthcare innovation, Jackie Marshall-Cyrus, (now residing in the United Kingdom); presented on the topic, “Elder Abuse Prevention in Independent Living in Long Term Care Facilities: The Innovation Game”. She shared on the United Kingdom’s response to the mounting challenge of elder abuse, which has served as an international benchmark for managing the issue. Participants were encouraged to adopt social and technological methods of innovation to safeguard older adults.

The discourse ended around 11:55 am, as several questions were posed related to legislation and best practices to safeguard and protect older persons from abuse and neglect in Trinidad and Tobago and other jurisdictions. Persons interested in attending the next sessions can register via our website [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt) or view the proceedings from today via the Ministry’s Facebook page.

**-End-**

**For more information:**

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Senator the Honourable Donna Cox delivers the keynote address for the WEAAD Online Webinar





Permanent Secretary Jacinta Bailey Sobers delivers the welcome remarks for the WEAAD Online Webinar



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## DIVISION OF AGEING

Under the Auspices of Senator The Honourable Donna Cox

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD) ONLINE Webinar Series: 15, 22, 23 & 30 July 2021



@MSDFSTT  
[www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt)

The Director of Aging, Dr Hyacinth Blake leads the discussion on Elder Abuse





Sign Language interpreter during the WEAAD Online Webinar



Moderator addresses the questions sent from participants online