# **Ageing and Disability Commission data**

# **1 January 2020 – 31 December 2022**

## **Number of calls, enquiries and reports**

### **1.1 Number of calls to the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline**

Between January 2020 and December 2022, the Helpline received 38,216 calls. The number of calls to the Helpline has increased each year, including a **5.4% increase in 2021** and an **8% increase in 2022**. Over the three years, the Helpline received a **13.8% increase** in calls.

**Figure 1: Number of calls received by the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline, by calendar year, Jan 2020 – Dec 2022**

### **1.2 Number of reports and enquiries**

Between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022, the ADC received **15,008 matters**, comprising:

* **10,963 reports** under section 13 of the *Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019*
* **4,045 enquiries** – involving 2,024 general enquiries, and 2,021 abuse-related enquiries.

The number of **matters increased by 24.9%** between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022. The main increase was in the number of reports, including a 29.8% increase in 2021 and a 7.8% increase in 2022. Overall, **reports increased by 40%** between 2020 and 2022.

**Figure 2: All matters received by the ADC, by calendar year, Jan 2020 – Dec 2022**

# **Person status and demographics**

## **2.1 Person status**

Of the 10,963 reports received by the ADC in 2020 – 2022:

* **8,462 reports (77.2%) involved older people**[[1]](#footnote-1), including 2,752 reports relating to older people with disability
* **2,501 reports (22.8%) involved adults with disability**[[2]](#footnote-2) who were not older people.

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of reports involving adults with disability (who are not older people), increasing from 22.5% in 2020 and 2021, to 23.4% in 2022.

**Figure 3: All reports received by the ADC, by cohort, by calendar year, 2020-22**

## **2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background**

In 2.7% of reports to the ADC in 2020 – 2022, the adult with disability or older person was identified as Aboriginal.

**Table 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of person the subject of a report to the ADC, by person status, 2020-22**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Older people (n=8,462)** | **% of reports about older people** | **Adults with disability (n=2,501)** | **% of reports about adults with disability** | **All reports (n=10,963)** | **% of all reports** |
| Person identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 217 | 2.6 | 77 | 3.1 | 294 | 2.7 |

## **2.3 Culturally and linguistically diverse background**

In 6.9% of reports to the ADC in 2020 – 2022, the adult with disability or older person was identified as having a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

**Table 2: CALD status of person the subject of a report to the ADC, by person status, 2020-22**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Older people (n=8,462)** | **% of reports about older people** | **Adults with disability (n=2,501)** | **% of reports about adults with disability** | **All reports (n=10,963)** | **% of all reports** |
| Person identified as having a CALD background | 656 | 7.8 | 96 | 3.8 | 752 | 6.9 |

**Table 3: Primary language other than English spoken at home by people the subject of a report to the ADC, by person status, 2020-22**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Older people (n=8,462)** | | **Adults with disability (n=2,501)** | |
| Greek | 103 | Arabic | 27 |
| Italian | 83 | Vietnamese | 12 |
| Arabic | 50 | Greek | 7 |
| Spanish | 39 | Samoan | 6 |
| Croatian | 37 | Italian | 5 |
| Mandarin | 35 | Cantonese | 4 |
| Vietnamese | 30 | Turkish | 4 |
| Polish | 27 | Mandarin | 4 |
| Macedonian | 25 | Spanish | 3 |
| Serbian | 24 | Tagalog | 3 |

## **2.4 Gender**

Most (66.9%) of the older people in the 8,462 reports to the ADC in 2020 – 2022 were female.

Just over half (54.4%) of the adults with disability in the 2,501 reports to the ADC in the three-year period were female.

**Figure 4: Gender of adults with disability and older people the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020-22**

## **2.5 Age**

The largest proportion of the 8,462 reports about older people in 2020 - 2022 related to people aged 80-84 years (17.6%).

The largest proportion of the 2,501 reports about adults with disability related to people aged 18-24 years (18.3%), followed by people aged 60-64 years (12.2%).

**Figure 5: Age of older people the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020–22**

**Figure 6: Age of adults with disability the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020–22**

## **2.6 Location of person**

Of the 7,830 reports to the ADC in 2020 – 2022 in which the location of the person was known, regional NSW accounted for just over half of the reports (4,109; 52.5%). Hunter, Illawarra Shoalhaven, and Central Coast were the most common regional areas.

**Figure 7: Location of person the subject of a report to the ADC by NSW region, 2020–22**

There are some slight differences in the main locations of older people in reports to the ADC in comparison to adults with disability. While the **Hunter** region has been the location of the highest number of reports about **older people** (11.2% of the 5,923 reports where the location of the person was known), **south-west Sydney** has been the main location in relation to **adults with disability** (13.5% of the 1,907 reports were the location of the person was known).

Regional areas outnumber metropolitan areas for both cohorts (52.5% for older people; 52.3% for adults with disability).

**Figure 8: Location of older people the subject of a report to the ADC by NSW region, 2020–22**

**Figure 9: Location of adults with disability the subject of a report to the ADC by NSW region, 2020–22**

At a Local Government Area (LGA) level, the adults who were the subjects of a report to the ADC in 2020 – 2022 most commonly lived in the Central Coast, Blacktown, and Canterbury-Bankstown LGAs.

**Table 4: Main LGAs of people who were the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020–22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Local Government Area** | **Number of cases (n=7,830)** |
| 1. | Central Coast | 424 |
| 2. | Blacktown | 387 |
| 3. | Canterbury-Bankstown | 340 |
| 4. | Lake Macquarie | 301 |
| 5. | Wollongong | 255 |
| 6. | Campbelltown | 231 |
| 7. | Cumberland | 218 |
| 8. | Newcastle | 215 |
| 9. | Fairfield | 175 |
| 10. | Tweed | 167 |

While many of the same LGAs feature in reports about older people and adults with disability, there are some differences.

Blacktown was the most common LGA of adults with disability, compared with the Central Coast for older people. Cumberland, Fairfield and Penrith LGAs were in the top 10 only for adults with disability; Tweed, Mid Coast and Bayside LGAs were in the top 10 only for older people.

**Table 5: Main LGAs of older people who were the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020–22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Local Government Area** | **Number of cases (n=5,923)** |
| 1. | Central Coast | 324 |
| 2. | Blacktown | 284 |
| 3. | Canterbury-Bankstown | 238 |
| 4. | Lake Macquarie | 218 |
| 5. | Wollongong | 187 |
| 6. | Newcastle | 154 |
| 7. | Tweed | 145 |
| 8. | Mid Coast | 136 |
| 8. | Bayside | 136 |
| 10. | Campbelltown | 130 |

**Table 6: Main LGAs of adults with disability people who were the subject of a report to the ADC, 2020–22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Local Government Area** | **Number of cases (n=1,907)** |
| 1. | Blacktown | 103 |
| 2. | Canterbury-Bankstown | 102 |
| 3. | Campbelltown | 101 |
| 4. | Central Coast | 100 |
| 5. | Lake Macquarie | 83 |
| 6. | Wollongong | 68 |
| 7. | Cumberland | 67 |
| 8. | Newcastle | 61 |
| 9. | Fairfield | 54 |
| 10. | Penrith | 50 |

# **Reporters**

## **3.1 Relationship of reporter to the adult**

### **Older people**

Adult children (28.6%) and paid workers (28.3%) were the main source of the 8,462 reports to the ADC about older people in 2020 – 2022.

Over the three-year period, there was an increase in reports by friends (from 5.8% to 6.1%) and a recent increase in reports by paid workers (from 26.3% to 30.2%). Overall, 15.6% of reports about older people in 2020 – 2022 were made by the adult themselves.

**Figure 10: Relationship of reporter to the older person in reports to the ADC, Oct-Dec 2022**

### **Adults with disability**

Paid workers have been the main source of reports to the ADC about adults with disability, accounting for 61.4% of the 2,501 reports in 2020 – 2022.

Over the three-year period, there has been an increase in reports by friends (from 2% to 2.8%). There has been an increase in reports by adults with disability (‘person experiencing abuse’), from 11.3% (2020) to 13.9% (2022). Overall, 12.5% of reports about adults with disability in 2020 – 2022 were made by the adult themselves.

**Figure 11: Relationship of reporter to the adult with disability in reports to the ADC, 2020-22**

# **Subjects of allegation**

## **4.1 Relationship of the subject of allegation to the adult**

### **Older people**

Just over half (52.9%) of the 8,462 reports to the ADC about older people in 2020 – 2022 pertained to the person’s adult children. All up, relatives[[3]](#footnote-3) were the subjects of allegation in 62.1% of the reports about older people in the three-year period.

Allegations against a spouse or partner (or ex-spouse/ partner) featured in 12.9% of the reports about older people.

**Figure 12: Relationship of the subject of allegation to the older person in reports to the ADC, 2020-22**

### **Adults with disability**

In 29.3% of the 2,501 reports to the ADC about adults with disability in 2020 – 2022, the allegations pertained to the adult’s parent(s). All up, relatives[[4]](#footnote-4) were the subjects of allegation in half (50.1%) of the reports about adults with disability in the three-year period.

In 12.1% of matters, the adult’s spouse or partner (or ex-spouse/partner) was the subject of the allegations.

**Figure 13: Relationship of the subject of allegation to the adult with disability in reports to the ADC, 2020-22**

# **Type of alleged abuse**

Most reports to the ADC involve more than one type of abuse.

### **Older people**

The most commonly reported types of alleged abuse in relation to older people in 2020 – 2022 were psychological abuse and financial abuse.

**Figure 14: Number of allegations in reports to the ADC about older people, by abuse type, 2020-22**

**Table 9: Type of alleged abuse of the older person in reports to the ADC, 2020-22[[5]](#footnote-5)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of alleged abuse** | **Number of allegations** | **% of all allegations about older people** |
| **Psychological abuse**  (Mainly verbal abuse; and preventing or restricting access to family/others) | 5,132 | 40.2 |
| **Financial abuse**  (Mainly financial exploitation; misuse of Power of Attorney/ Enduring POA; and theft) | 3,561 | 27.9 |
| **Neglect**  (Mainly failure to meet the person’s support needs; and medical neglect) | 2,682 | 21 |
| **Physical abuse**  (Mainly hitting/kicking/punching; pushing/shoving/grabbing/ shaking; and threat of harm) | 1,049 | 8.2 |
| **Sexual abuse**  (Mainly sexual assault; and sexual touching) | 81 | 0.6 |
| **Other** | 265 | 2.1 |
| **Total allegations in reports about older people** | **12,770** | **100** |

The most common allegations reported in relation to older people related them being subject to verbal or other psychological abuse; not having their support needs met; being financially exploited; and being prevented or restricted from access to family and others.

**Table 10: Leading reported allegations in relation to older people, 2020-22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Reported allegation** | **Number of cases** |
| 1. | Psychological abuse – verbal abuse | 2,157 |
| 2. | Neglect – failure to meet the adult’s support needs | 1,343 |
| 3. | Financial exploitation | 1,249 |
| 4. | Psychological abuse – other psychological abuse | 1,008 |
| 5. | Psychological abuse – preventing or restricting access to family/others | 979 |
| 6. | Financial abuse – misuse of Power of Attorney/ Enduring Power of Attorney | 681 |
| 7. | Financial abuse – theft | 674 |
| 8. | Financial abuse – other financial abuse | 465 |
| 9. | Psychological abuse – preventing or restricting access to supports and services | 455 |
| 10. | Neglect – medical care | 434 |

## **Adults with disability**

The most commonly reported types of alleged abuse in relation to adults with disability in 2020 – 2022 were psychological abuse, followed by neglect.

**Figure 15: Number of allegations in reports to the ADC about adults with disability, by abuse type, 2020-22**

**Table 11: Type of alleged abuse of the adult with disability in reports to the ADC, 2020-22[[6]](#footnote-6)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of alleged abuse** | **Number of allegations** | **% of all allegations about adults with disability** |
| **Psychological abuse**  (Mainly verbal abuse; and preventing or restricting access to necessary supports) | 1,420 | 34.1 |
| **Neglect**  (Mainly failure to meet the person’s support needs; and medical neglect) | 1,082 | 25.9 |
| **Financial abuse**  (Mainly financial exploitation; theft; and preventing access to/withholding the adult’s money) | 736 | 17.6 |
| **Physical abuse**  (Mainly hitting/kicking/punching; threat of harm; and inappropriate restraint) | 631 | 15.1 |
| **Sexual abuse**  (Mainly sexual assault; and sexual touching) | 175 | 4.2 |
| **Other** | 126 | 3 |
| **Total allegations in reports about adults with disability** | **4,170** | **100** |

The most common allegations reported in relation to adults with disability related to them being subject to verbal and other psychological abuse; not having their support needs met; being prevented from accessing the supports they need; and being financially exploited.

**Table 12: Leading reported allegations in relation to adults with disability, 2020-22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Reported allegation** | **Number of cases** |
| 1. | Psychological abuse – verbal abuse | 490 |
| 2. | Neglect – failure to meet the adult’s support needs | 487 |
| 3. | Psychological abuse – other psychological abuse | 306 |
| 4. | Psychological abuse – preventing or restricting access to supports and services | 290 |
| 5. | Financial exploitation | 252 |
| 6. | Physical abuse – hitting/kicking/punching | 240 |
| 7. | Neglect – medical care | 200 |
| 8. | Financial abuse – theft | 140 |
| 9. | Financial abuse – preventing access to or withholding the adult’s money | 128 |
| 10. | Other | 126 |

# **Outcomes**

**6.1 Person outcomes**

The ADC closed 10,908 reports in 2020 – 2022. Key outcomes for the older people and adults with disability included that their views and wishes were ascertained and respected; police/justice actions were taken; they were assisted to access necessary and increased supports; and they moved to alternative accommodation.

**Table 13: Leading outcomes for the person the subject of a report to the ADC, reports closed 2020-22**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Person outcomes** | **Number of cases[[7]](#footnote-7)** |
| Will and preference of Person ascertained | 1735 |
| Will and preference of Person respected/upheld | 1561 |
| Other police/justice action | 302 |
| Referral or help to access aged care supports | 289 |
| Change in accommodation | 250 |
| Review or assessment of aged care supports | 242 |
| Aged care support provided/increased | 237 |
| Referral or help to access legal support | 203 |
| Review or assessment of disability supports | 203 |
| Referral or help to access other supports | 197 |
| Disability support provided/increased | 188 |
| Referral or help to access advocacy support | 160 |
| Referral or help to access disability supports | 136 |
| Referral or help to access health services | 127 |
| Review or assessment of health/medical needs | 123 |
| Other supports or services provided/increased | 111 |
| Guardianship application | 109 |
| Health/medical support provided/increased | 106 |

## **6.3 Subject of allegation outcomes**

For the 10,908 reports closed in 2020 – 2022, key outcomes in relation to the subject of allegation included that actions were taken to reduce or manage their contact with and access to the adult with disability/ older person (including through an ADVO). In appropriate cases, subjects of allegation were also provided with education or advice, and linked to additional supports.

**Table 14: Leading outcomes in relation to the subject of allegation in a report to the ADC, reports closed 2020-22**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subject of allegation outcomes** | **Number of cases[[8]](#footnote-8)** |
| Education or advice provided | 969 |
| Linked to/received more support | 273 |
| ADVO put in place | 93 |
| Reduced/supervised access to Person | 73 |
| Prevented from access to Person | 72 |
| Removed from premises | 52 |
| Criminal charges | 45 |
| Removal as POA or EPOA | 41 |
| Removal as NDIS nominee | 19 |
| Benefit removed | 18 |
| Removal of other authority | 18 |
| Criminal conviction | 17 |
| Removal as enduring guardian | 16 |
| Removal as guardian | 13 |
| APVO put in place | 10 |

1. Adults aged 65 years and older, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander adults aged 50 years and older. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Adults aged 18 years and older with a disability as defined in the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the purposes of our analysis, ‘relatives’ does not include the adult’s spouse/partner or ex-spouse/partner. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For the purposes of our analysis, ‘relatives’ does not include the adult’s spouse/partner or ex-spouse/partner. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The data captures all matters in which that type of abuse has been reported; in the majority of matters, more than one type of abuse is reported. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The data captures all matters in which that type of abuse has been reported; in the majority of matters, more than one type of abuse is reported. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. There can be multiple outcomes for an individual. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. There can be multiple outcomes in relation to an individual. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)