**ABUSE PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE -ESTABLISHMENT GUIDE**

Working together to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability.

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* 1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance in establishing abuse prevention collaboratives. These partnerships were initially established by the Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit, now the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC), and will continue to be referred to as ‘Collaboratives’.

Abuse Prevention Collaboratives harness the local knowledge and expertise of community services to increase referral and reporting pathways between organizations, build capacity of organizations to respond to and raise awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people or adults with disability.

While local protocols and guidelines will differ across each location, this document will help provide a framework that ensures links, opportunities, information exchanges, education and awareness raising activities are consistent and contribute towards a common goal of protecting older people and adults with disability from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their family, home and community.

* 1. Our shared role and the context of abuse

The overarching outcome for the ADC and Collaboratives is to support older people and adults with disability to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their family, home and community. The ADC will act as a central support to establish new Collaboratives and participate in existing Collaboratives within local government areas, districts or regions.

Collaborative groups will operate and respond to local circumstances and resources, and the ADC will seek to support these initiatives and not be prescriptive about how local Collaborative action should unfold.

### **The Ageing and Disability Commission**

The ADC is an independent agency of the NSW Government and promotes the rights of older people and adults with disability to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their family, home and community. The ADC has a range of functions, including:

* Raising awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability in their family, home and community.
* Responding to reports of alleged abuse, neglect and exploitation of an older person or adult with disability caused by someone such as a family member, partner or neighbour. Sometimes, this may involve an investigation.
* Providing support, advice and information to ensure an older person or adult with disability is protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
* Providing advice to the Government to improve systems and services that can protect and promote the rights of older people and adults with disability.
* Meeting other obligations as outlined in the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019.

The Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline receives enquiries and reports of abuse and neglect of older people and adults with disability. The ADC regularly reports on data received through reports to the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline which can be accessed on the ADC website [here](https://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/dashboard-datahttps:/www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/dashboard-data).

* + 1. Abuse of **older people**

Across Australia, the estimate for the prevalence of elder abuse among community dwelling people aged 65 and older in Australia is 14.8%[[1]](#footnote-1). The most common form of abuse is psychological abuse (11.7%). Neglect is the next most common abuse subtype at 2.9%. The abuse of older people can affect anyone, however particular groups may be at greater risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. These groups include older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older people living in regional and remote communities, LBGTQI+ and older people from First Nations communities.

Most of the reports received by the Ageing and Disability Commission relate to older people, mainly older women, with **psychological** abuse and **financial** abuse the most commonly reported abuse type[[2]](#footnote-2). The most common subject of allegations include the older person’s adult children.

* + 1. Abuse of **adults with disability**

Research indicates that adults with disability are more likely to experience violence than adults without disability, and it is estimated that 1 in 5 adults with disability have experienced abuse before the age of 18, with up to 32% of adults with disability experiencing high to very high psychological distress[[3]](#footnote-3).

In relation to reports of adults with disability, the Ageing and Disability Commission has identified that the most commonly reported types of alleged abuse of adults with disability are **psychological** abuse and **neglect**[[4]](#footnote-4). In addition, the most common subject of allegations include the adults’ parents.

* 1. How can a Collaborative improve your work?

Collaboratives provide a valuable way for agencies within a local government area to develop local or regional protocols and practice guidelines aimed at responding to and preventing abuse of older people and adults with disability in the community.

A collaborative approach to local practices can benefit older people and adults with disability by:

* Improving support opportunities for older people and adults with disability.
* Increasing awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation and encourage earlier reporting to relevant organisations.
* Strengthening strategies for early intervention.
* Improving referral pathways among local organisations.
* Sharing better practices and ways of working.

Local Collaboratives are effective in:

* Galvanising the knowledge, skills and resources of relevant local agencies within an LGA.
* Building local capacity in identifying, responding and preventing the abuse of older people and adults with disability.
* Bringing attention to early intervention strategies and local referral pathways.
* Increasing support for older people or adults with disability in the local area.
* Promoting best practice amongst all service providers.
* Identifying patterns, trends and relevant local data to strengthen plans and responses.
* Creating awareness of the abuse of older people and adults with disability in the local community, and increase reporting to local service providers and the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline.
  + 1. Types of Collaboratives

Depending on the population, needs and issues identified, a collaborative may be established to support **older people** and/or **adults with disability.**

The ADC promotes the rights of both these cohorts, and therefore recognizes and supports the need for Collaboratives to focus on the needs of these groups individually or together as appropriate to the local area.

For Collaboratives that have a focus on older people, alignment with [*NSW Interagency Policy on Identifying and Responding to the Abuse of Older People (2020)*](https://facs-web.squiz.cloud/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/591024/NSW-Interagency-Policy-Abuse-of-Older-People.pdf) must be considered.

3.2 Principles of Collaboratives

Participating agencies may commit to key principles that can guide interagency partnerships and strategies. ‘Principles to guide action’ outlined on page 9 of the [*NSW Interagency Policy on Identifying and Responding to the Abuse of Older People (2020)*](https://facs-web.squiz.cloud/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/591024/NSW-Interagency-Policy-Abuse-of-Older-People.pdf) can be applied to the work of Collaboratives who have a focus on older people and/or adults with disability in their local area. You may consider reviewing these principles when establishing your collaborative.

3.3 Who is part of your Collaborative?

The focus for Collaboratives for the prevention of abuse of older people and adults with disability is on raising awareness of the abuse of these two groups in local government areas, building the capacity of local service providers to identify and respond to abuse. Consider members from service providers and agencies across government and non-government sectors such as:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Elder Abuse Prevention Collaboratives** | **Disability Abuse Prevention Collaboratives** |
| NSW Police – Aged Crime Prevention Officers, Crime Prevention Officers or Domestic Violence Liaison Officers. | NSW Police – Aged Crime Prevention Officers, Crime Prevention Officers or Domestic Violence Liaison Officers. |
| Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care Package Providers. | NDIS partners in the community |
| Local Health District Coordinators | NDIS support coordinators |
| Medical personnel in private practice | NDIS service providers |
| Primary Health Networks | Local Health District Coordinators |
| Legal and justice services such as legal aid or community legal centres | Medical personnel in private practice |
| Community welfare, counselling and advocacy services | Primary Disability Health Networks |
| Seniors Rights Service | Legal and justice services such as legal aid or community legal centres |
| Multicultural services | Community welfare, counselling and advocacy services |
| Aboriginal services | Multicultural services |
| Domestic and family violence services | Aboriginal services |
| Social housing and public housing organisations | Domestic and family violence services |
| Carers NSW | Social housing and public housing organisations |
| Dementia specific services | Carers NSW |
| Mental Health – Specialist Mental Health Services of Older People | Mental Health services |
|  | Advocacy groups representing people with cognitive and intellectual disability |

3.4 How to name your Collaborative

It is recommended that Collaboratives begin by identifying the local government, followed by the primary cohort the collaborative. The ADC acknowledges the varied interpretations of the term elder abuse across NSW communities, and suggests the following naming convention:

**<LGA name> Elder Abuse Prevention Collaborative**

**<LGA name> Disability Abuse Prevention**

3.5 Where to start?

The following provides an outline of your first meeting. Please refer to reference one, which outlines the phases of establishment and the partnership with the ADC.

1. **Seek expressions of interest.**

Send out an expression of interest (EOI) to potential members inviting them to become involved in the Collaborative. In this EOI, outline the purpose of the Collaborative, key cohorts and region in which the Collaborative will operate in.

1. **Schedule a kick off meeting.**

Arrange a meeting date and invite interested members along to an establishment meeting.

1. **Have a clear plan for discussion at your first meeting.**

At the establishment meeting, consider a clear agenda that will ensure potential members can:

* + establish a Collaborative name and any branding or logo requirements
  + appoint the Collaborative chair/co-chair/convener
  + agree on a common agenda and shared vision
  + discuss and identify a common understanding of the problem within the local area
  + determine boundaries about the scope of the group and any focus areas interested in
  + agree on the development of a Strategic Action Plan
  + develop Terms of Reference/membership and meeting schedule
  + discuss feedback and evaluation mechanisms
  + Understand the central support and resourcing from the ADC.

Please refer to reference **two** for an agenda template.

* 1. What do Collaboratives achieve?

Setting clear outcome areas for a Collaborative will inform the strategic action plan, and provide a working document for the group to track and review progress. Reference **three** is an example of a strategic action plan with four key outcome areas that may assist Collaboratives deliver against the purpose of promoting the rights of older people and adults with disability, and developing prevention pathways. These outcome areas are:

* Developing and communicating local protocols and service agreements for responding to abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability
* Raising awareness of the role of the ADC, and support available to anyone in the community.
* Improving capability of local staff to respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation through training and education, delivered by the ADC and/or other local providers.
* Development and sharing of resources and practices in responding to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability.
  + 1. Establish local referral and reporting pathways

Collaborative members work together to identify and formalize referral pathways between appropriate local services to seek advice or report matters of abuse, neglect or exploitation of an older person or adult with disability.

* + 1. Raise awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation

The ADC supports Collaboratives in their awareness raising events through the provision of media kits, flyers, communications tools as well as support and guidance as needed. Key communications and media strategies that Collaboratives may consider including in their actions plans are:

#### Media interviews via local media & community radio

* + Local media partnerships can be an effective way to broadcast key prevention and awareness messages related to abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability. Consider partnerships with community radio and local papers. The ADC can assist Collaboratives with media guidance as required.

#### Distribution of flyers, brochures and resources

* + Collaboratives can access all ADC communications resources for use at any relevant event. These events may include Senior’s week, White Ribbon Events, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, shopping centre stalls and local community events.
  + Collaboratives may also create their own brochures and flyers to distribute to local medical centres, pharmacies, libraries and other targeted audiences identified in their local action plans. These locally created resources can be made available to all Collaboratives to utilise if appropriate via the ADC Collaborative Hub.

#### Social media

* + Social media can be an effective tool to raise awareness and reach a broader audience. Collaboratives can share posts from the ADC’s Facebook and Twitter pages, and create their own social media content to share with their local communities
    1. Build capacity of services to respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation

Collaboratives provide opportunity to deliver training and education for frontline operators to improve their detection and response to abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability. Action plans can outline the approach to training, which could include seminars delivered by the ADC as well as sessions by members and associated organizations.

* + 1. Resources and information sharing practices

The network of Collaboratives across NSW provides a platform for shared learning, resources and experiences that can assist each collaborative in their different stages of establishment. Communication and support between Collaboratives is facilitated by the ADC in a number of ways, including:

* A buddy system that will pair new and established Collaboratives to gain insights into meeting structures, members and conversations.
* Regular Community of Practice opportunities for Collaboratives to share learning, experiences and achievements with Collaboratives from different regions.
* Sharing collateral from each collaborative via the Collaborative Hub, and access to the latest information and data from the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline.
  1. Evaluating effectiveness

Collaboratives are required to evaluate their activities to share their achievements and impact, and determine what work may need to be carried over in the following year. Evaluations are typically completed by an annual review process of the Collaborative annual action plan, activities and outputs. Reviews also provide the opportunity to review terms of reference and assess any necessary changes to the operations of the Collaborative and review membership and commitment of Collaborative members.

As part of the evaluation process, all Collaboratives provide a summary of their annual activity in a report shared with the ADC and other interested parties.

6 Support

The role of the ADC is to provide strategic advice on Collaborative activities and ensure the appropriate level of support and access to information is provided for Collaborative members to deliver on their projects and action plans. The ADC is able to offer the following mechanisms to every Collaborative:

* attendance at quarterly meetings (or as required) to input on progress, provide relevant updates or information that the Collaborative chair requires representation at events, talks and training seminars
* access to resources
* training.

In addition, the ADC will facilitate regular opportunities for Collaboratives to share learning and experiencing with other Collaborative partners throughout the year.

1. 2021 Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, The Australian Institute of Family Studies [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Ageing and Disability Commission Dashboard Data (1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020](https://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/dashboard-data)) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Australian Institute Health and Welfare, People with Disability Report September 2019](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dis/73-1/people-with-disability-in-australia/justice-and-safety/violence-against-people-with-disability) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Ageing and Disability Commission Dashboard Data (1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020](https://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources/dashboard-data)) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)