

**ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM**  
**FACT SHEET FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**What does the Abuse Prevention Program do?**

Advocare's Abuse Prevention Program (APP) supports older people who are being abused, or at risk of being abused, by someone with whom they are in a relationship of trust, such as family and friends. APP advocates work in consultation with the older person, either directly, or with their nominated representative.

The APP advocates for older people by:

- providing them with information about their rights
- assisting them to identify and clarify the issues related to abuse of their rights
- discussing information about options which they can implement to assert their rights
- identifying and discussing consequences of actions they may consider
- suggesting strategies which they can employ to stop abuse of their rights, and
- providing them with appropriate advocacy support that enables them to have their rights met.

Along with providing advocacy, the APP includes a significant focus on education related to the rights of older people and abuse prevention. In particular, APP education is directed toward individuals and groups of older people and those who may be in a position to represent them, such as aged care service providers. The APP also provides information about aged rights to other groups within the Perth community. The APP's education strategy is aimed at actively addressing the problem of elder abuse and positively influencing social attitudes about the rights of older people now and for the future.

**Abuse Prevention Program Statistics**

APP statistics from a similar agency reveal that advocacy provided has assisted older people with regard to various types of abuse including: financial, physical, psychological, sexual, social and neglect. The most common types of abuse identified by APP are psychological (41%) and financial (36%). Furthermore, it is common for these to occur simultaneously.

Statistics also indicate that dependency and vulnerability (44%) of older people are a common risk factor associated with elder abuse. To a lesser degree cognitive impairment (26%) and family conflict (20%) are also contributing factors. Risk factors associated with alleged perpetrators of abuse are most commonly family conflict (30%) and substance abuse (12%). It is interesting to note that in only five percent of APP cases caregiving stress was identified as a risk factor.

While around one quarter of APP clients contacted the APP directly (23%) the majority of referrals (36%) were made by a representative or carer; typically, a family member. An additional 20 percent of cases referred to the APP were from Home and Community Care staff (HACC). Actual provision of advocacy to APP clients was commonly provided either directly to the client (38%) or with the clients permission via their representative ((35%).  
(Source: *Aged Rights Advocacy Service, 2000.*)

## **Does the APP network with other agencies and Government bodies?**

The APP networks very closely with all relevant agencies and Government authorities, including the Office of the Public Advocate, the Guardianship Board and the Police. This approach is fundamental to providing APP clients with complete knowledge about their rights and options, and providing them with the most complete and effective advocacy support.

However, the APP also recognises the importance and value of natural advocacy and support that is commonly available within the informal networks of clients, for example, family and friends. Therefore, whilst remaining focused on the perspective and wishes of the client the maintenance and development of their informal networks is also explored with clients.

## **How can the APP help community aged care service providers?**

From time to time, aged care service providers who work within the community are likely to become aware of situations which they suspect may involve the abuse of an older person. As people who have had experience in this field it is reasonable to assume that their concerns are founded on that relevant experience and that those older people may be in need of assistance to address any abuse of their rights.

The APP networks very closely with community aged care service providers who suspect someone is being abused. This is facilitated by the service provider discussing their concerns about abuse with their client, and informing them about the APP, or, with their clients consent, representing them to the APP. In doing so, these community service providers and the APP work together with older people who have been abuse, or are at risk of abuse, to address the issue of elder abuse. The APP is always available for consultation with service providers who would like to discuss an issue.

## **How is Advocare's Abuse Prevention Program different from its other advocacy roles?**

The APP's target population differs from that of Advocare's other clients for whom advocacy relates to issues of residential care or other aged care service delivery within Western Australia..

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Funded by the Home & Community Care Program