

**TURN UP THE
VOLUME!**

2024 Australian Elder Abuse Conference

22–24 July 2024

Adelaide Convention Centre

Australian Elder Abuse Conference

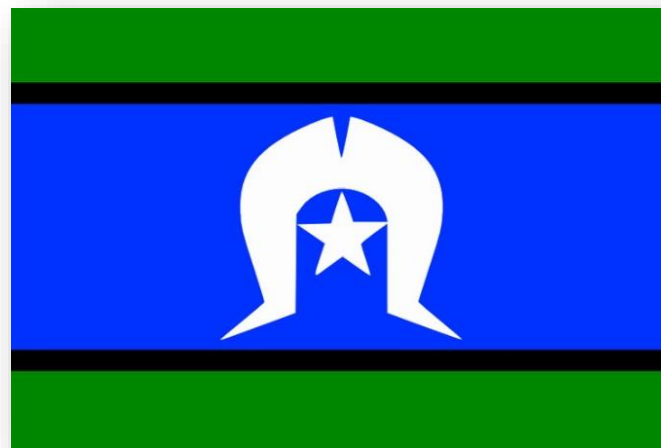
Preventing the abuse and neglect of older people and people living with disability through education and early intervention with family and friend carers

Melissa Docker, Manager Policy & Development, Carers NSW

EAAA
Elder Abuse Action Australia

aras
Aged Rights
Advocacy Service

Acknowledgement of Country



I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this Land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people here today.

About Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the peak non-government organisation for carers in New South Wales (NSW). Our goals are to:

- Be a leading carer organisation in which carers have confidence
- Actively promote carer recognition and support
- Actively support carers to navigate a changing service landscape that will be characterised by ongoing policy reform
- Promote connected community experiences and opportunities for carers that are inclusive of diverse carer groups
- Lead and advocate for carer-specific and carer-inclusive policy making, research and service delivery
- Continue to be a quality-driven, responsive and carer-focused organisation.

About carers

Who are carers?

- Provide care and support to a family member or friend living with:
 - disability,
 - mental illness,
 - drug and/or alcohol dependency,
 - chronic or terminal illness, or
 - who is ageing or frail
- This does not include paid care workers and formal volunteers
- There are approximately 3 million carers in Australia (ABS 2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers)
- Of the 1.7 million people who are ageing who received assistance with everyday activities, 71.6% received informal support.



Background

Background

- Carers play a number of roles in relation to abuse and neglect:
 - Reporter
 - Victim
 - Perpetrator
- Carers are the subjects of allegation in many reports to the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC)
- There is a complex relationship between the ADC and carers
 - Ensure carers are adequately supported
 - Hold to account those who abuse/neglect/exploit
- Important to tailor actions and messaging about carers in the context of this work

Literature review

Literature review (UNSW Sydney)

Factors associated with abuse, neglect, and exploitation by carers:

- Demographics
- Willingness / motivations to provide care
- Personality factors
- Carer burden
- Physical / mental health
- Social factors

Lack of evidence regarding interventions, suggested approaches:

- Education
- Family mediation
- Helplines
- Preventative measures to reduce risk factors
- Programs to improve detection of abuse
- Rehabilitation programs for perpetrators
- Legislation and policy reform

Analysis of NSW ADC data

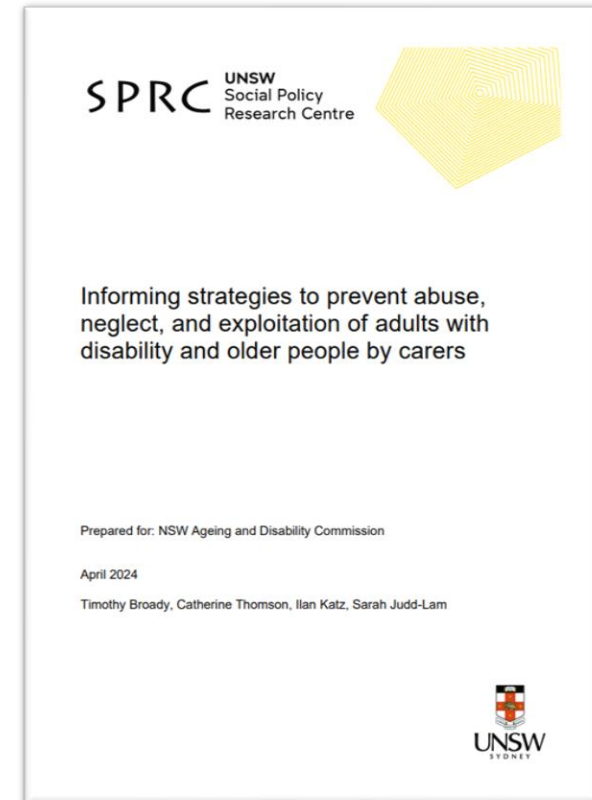
Analysis of NSW ADC data (UNSW Sydney)

Cases closed between July 2020 – June 2021 (n=3,504)

- Carers as Person Subject of Allegation [PSOA] (n=1,141; 32.6%)

Main variables:

- Person group (adult with disability / older person / older person with disability)
- Gender (Person + PSOA)
- PSOA relationship to Person
- Type of alleged abuse
- ADC primary action



Analysis of NSW ADC data

Analysis of NSW ADC data (UNSW)

Other considerations:

- Person risk factors
- Person outcomes
- ADC assistance provided
- Formal supports in place (for Person and PSOA)
- Informal supports in place (for Person and PSOA)
- Abuse of PSOA by Person / others
- Indication of carer stress
- Other contributing factors
 - Lack of knowledge of services, inability to obtain services, lack of care-related education, lack of awareness of abuse, previous experiences with services

Analysis of NSW ADC data

SPRC

UNSW
Social Policy
Research Centre


Carers **NSW**
Australia

Findings

Demographics - Person		%
Group	Adult with disability	25%
	Older person ⁻	40%
	Older person with disability	36%
Gender	Female	63%
	Male	37%
Language other than English		23%
Person lives with	PSOA	82%
	Children	5%
	Family/spouse	21%
	Others	3%
	Alone ⁻	9%
Accommodation	Community/social housing	11%
	Own home	81%
	Residential care	4%
	Retirement village	1%

Demographics – PSOA		%
Gender	Female	53%
	Male	47%
Language other than English		15%
Relationship	Spouse/partner	18%
	Relative	73%
	Friend	6%
	Community member	1%
	Other	1%
	Unknown	1%

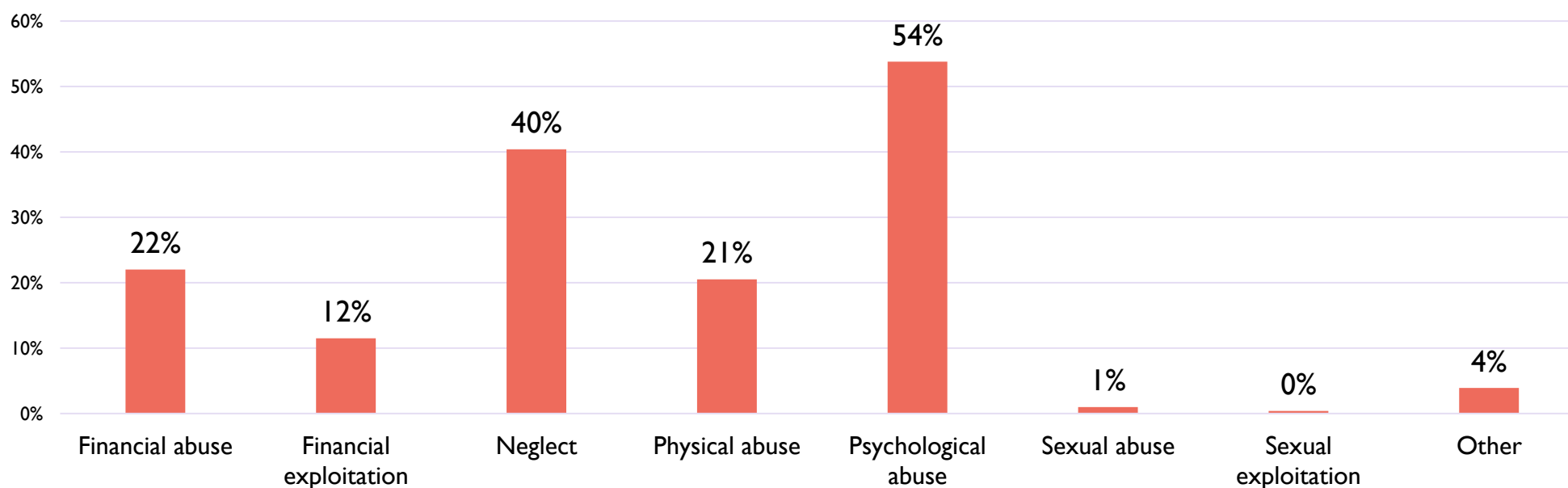
Analysis of NSW ADC data

SPRC

UNSW
Social Policy
Research Centre


Carers **NSW**
Australia

Types of abuse



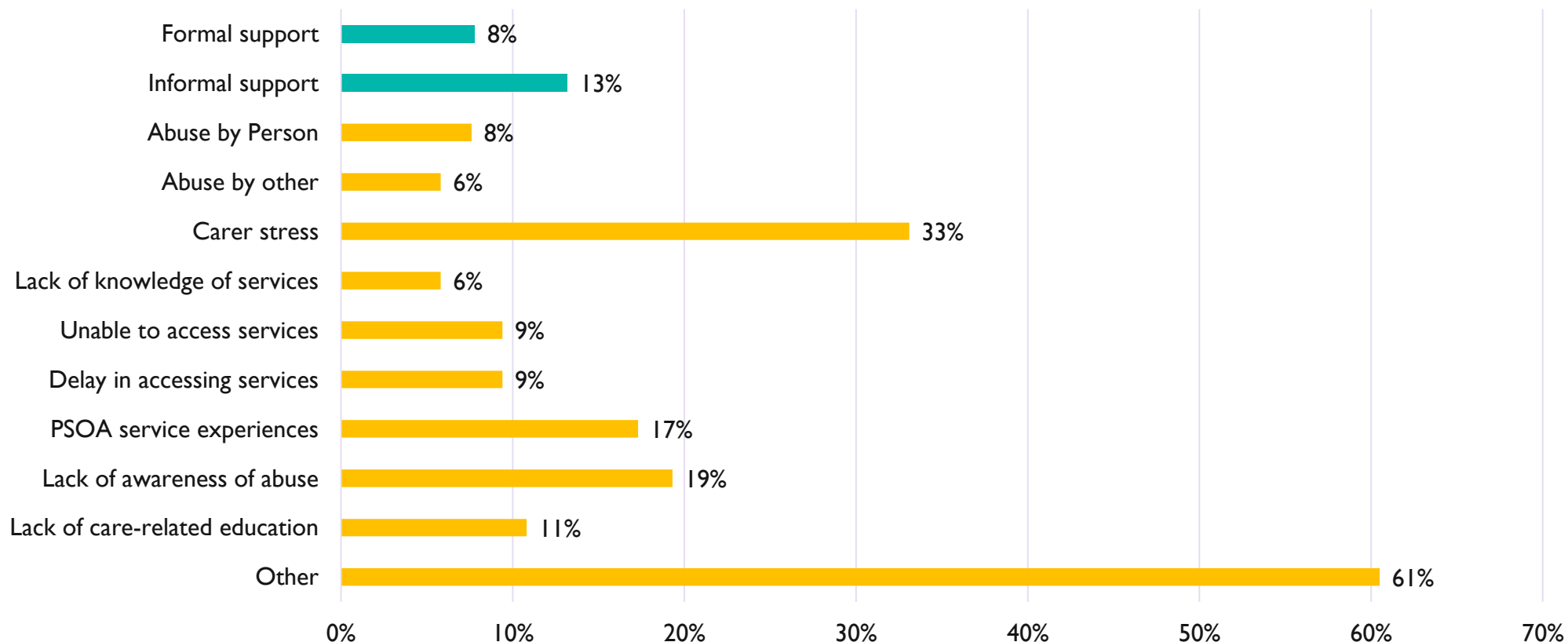
Analysis of NSW ADC data

SPRC

UNSW
Social Policy
Research Centre

CarersNSW
Australia

PSOA risk/protective factors



Analysis of NSW ADC data

SPRC

UNSW
Social Policy
Research Centre


Carers **NSW**
Australia

Factors associated with abuse types

Financial abuse	Neglect	Physical abuse	Psychological abuse
↓ carer stress	↓ Person unknown formal supports ↑ lack of awareness of services ↑ PSOA's experience with services ↑ other factors	↑ lack of awareness of services ↑ abuse of PSOA by Person	↑ PSOA's experience with services ↑ abuse of PSOA by others ↑ other factors

Analysis of NSW ADC data

Key findings

- NSW ADC report data highlighted the complexity in caring relationships, allegations of abuse, identification of carers in case reports.
- Many issues lead to situations of abuse/neglect, caring demands further complicate these
- Cultural/language factors may contribute to risk factors
 - E.g., unwilling to accept formal supports, lack of awareness of abusive practices
- Service access and previous experiences highlighted as significant issues
- “Other” factors identified in 61% of cases

Analysis of NSW ADC data

Key findings

- Approximately 1 in 5 PSOA unaware of actions that constitute abuse:
- Need for information and education
- Case notes highlight that abuse/neglect often unintentional
- ADC primary actions in response to reports is typically supportive (e.g. education, emotional support)
- Important for developing effective working relationships with carers and improving referrals

Advice on improving communication

Advice on improving communications and resources (Carers NSW)

- Carers NSW facilitated consultation with carers and stakeholders to reflect on findings and provide advice on improving communication with carers to prevent the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older people in NSW
- Consultation draft:
 - Informed by literature review, research report
 - Circulated to a small group of stakeholders and carers with experience and interest in this area
 - Summary of key themes and proposed resources for development
 - Proposed framing / messaging
 - Proposed priority cohorts

Advice on improving communication

Key findings

- Limited awareness about what constitutes abuse and neglect
- Carer stress is a significant risk factor that could be better addressed with messaging and resources
- Reluctance to access formal services is a significant risk factor that could be better addressed with messaging and resources
- Relational tension and conflict may contribute and is not overtly addressed much via carer support and information
- The kinds of support provided through the ADC could be more explicitly shared with potential reporters, victims and subjects of allegation

Co-development of resources

Co-development of resources

Carers NSW is currently in the process of co-designing information and capacity-building resources aimed at both carers and service providers with a focus on the following topics:

- 1. What abuse, neglect and exploitation are – and what quality care looks like
- 2. How and why to access help from formal services
- 3. Where to turn when you are experiencing – or witnessing – carer stress
- 4. How to manage tension and conflict within family and partner relationships
- 5. What to expect from the ADC as a reporter, or when you have been reported

Carers NSW is also working with the ADC to develop training for ADC staff responding to and investigating reports made to the ADC to improve carer awareness and understanding and to promote supportive approaches.

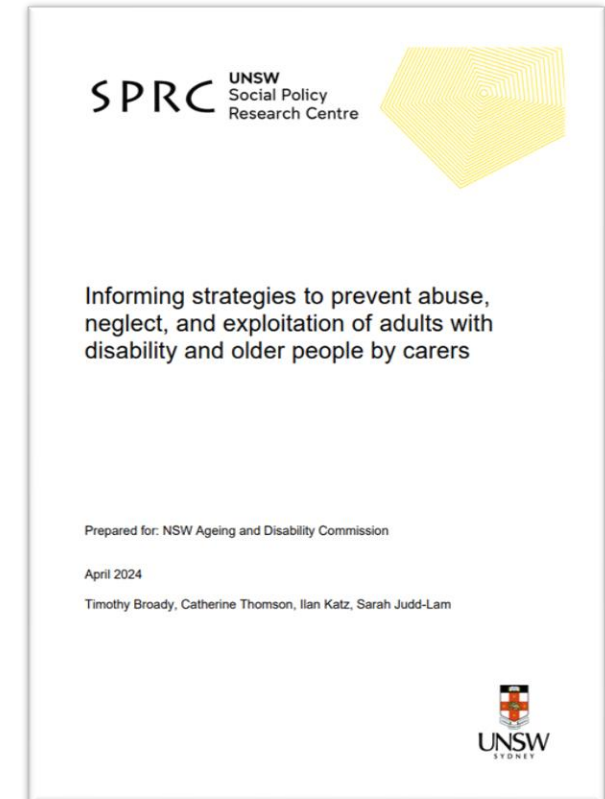
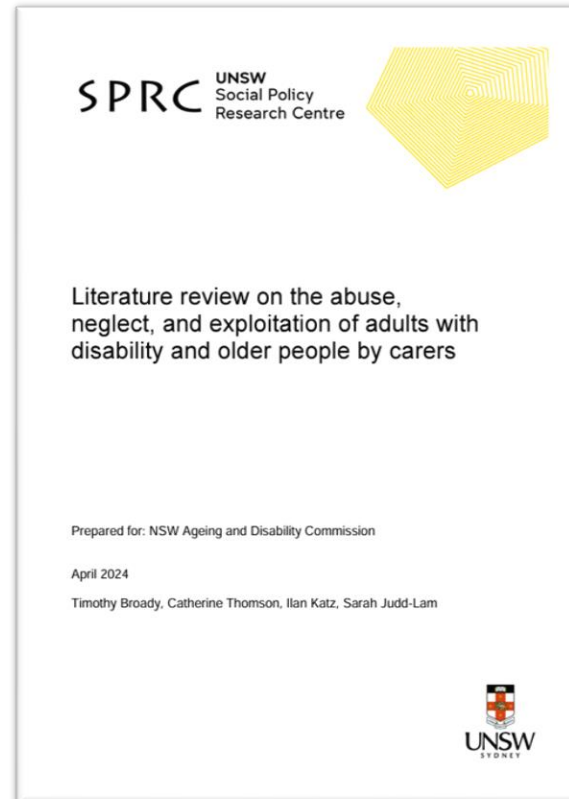
Summary

Resources

You can access the Literature
Review and Report at:

[https://ageingdisabilitycommission
.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-
submissions.html](https://ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-submissions.html)

SPRC **UNSW**
Social Policy
Research Centre





SPRC
UNSW
Social Policy
Research Centre

Melissa Docker | Manager Policy and Development

policy@carersnsw.org.au

PH: (02) 9280 4744