

A VOICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE



ANGLICARESA
Aged Care Services

*Partners
for Life.*

A VOICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Introduction

Advocacy is one of the pillars of AnglicareSA's mission and strategic objectives.

Our Mission: *AnglicareSA provides care and support with a voice for disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our communities.*

Strategic Objective: Justice For All:

We provide a voice and just outcomes for individuals, families and communities by:

- *Improving the lives of the disadvantaged and vulnerable;*
- *Improving community cohesion and inclusion; and*
- *Increasing investment in community engagement and advocacy.*

The Aged Care Services team at AnglicareSA has identified increasing demand for both individual and systems advocacy to support vulnerable older people. This is in part due to AnglicareSA's reputation for supporting vulnerable people who have nowhere else to turn. Their challenges include:

- Homelessness or risk of homelessness;
- Mental health issues;
- Drug and alcohol dependency;
- Financial stress; and
- Elder abuse.

This, coupled with the complexity of navigating the Aged Care System to enable them to access services, requires advocacy at both an individual and a systems level.

Individual and Systems Advocacy

The main purpose of this paper is to map out a proposed approach for addressing these issues through advocacy.

Individual Advocacy

For the purposes of this strategy Individualised Advocacy has been classified in two ways:

- Education, Information and Support; and
- Complex and Intensive.

Education, Information & Support

This type of advocacy generally supports older people through the provision of information about what supports are available if they are experiencing a need, general information on how to navigate the Aged Care System (including support with accessing services through My Aged Care) and education about other support services that are available.

This support can be delivered through:

- Education & Information Sessions;
- Customer Service Centre supports through a 1800 number;
- Electronic means including website and social media.

Actions

- Development of the Customer Service Centre to provide a focal point for Information and education;
- Revise marketing collateral to support simple education and information to older people from various backgrounds;
- Redesign the AnglicareSA website to deliver information simply and effectively.

Outcomes

- Older people are more informed about Aged Care and how to access Aged Care Services

Complex & Intensive

However when supporting people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged and are experiencing issues identified in the introduction of this strategy a more complex and intensive range of supports is required to assist in addressing and/or overcoming these obstacles to entry into main stream aged care services. This requires a combination of information and face to face interactions to access necessary supports including housing, Centrelink, financial counselling and in some extreme cases access to guardianship orders and interventions by police or authorities if abuse is identified.

Actions

- Resource this advocacy area with Aged Care Advocates who provide intensive but timely supports for the complex needs of older people who are disadvantaged and/or vulnerable;
- Develop a referral pathway to this service to ensure timely responses to needs;
- Develop an evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of this service to further support systemic advocacy.

Outcomes

- Older people who are disadvantaged and/or vulnerable are supported to live a full life and address the barriers to this that they may face.

Systems Advocacy

Systems advocacy seeks to influence and change a 'system' such as legislation, government policy and community attitudes. Through systems advocacy AnglicareSA aims to create change and a more informed understanding of the experiences and challenges of older people who are vulnerable and/or living with disadvantage.

AnglicareSA will seek to influence or secure positive long-term changes that remove barriers and address discriminatory practices to ensure the collective rights and interests of older people are upheld through:.

- Pursuing positive changes to legislation, policy and service practices in partnership with other like-minded organisations including Anglicare Australia, National Aged Care Alliance, Aged Rights and Advocacy Service and other relevant organisations;
- Seeking to address barriers and discriminatory practices to produce long-term positive changes.

As such there are three main areas of focus including:

- Recent Government Reform and long term government reform aligned to the Aged Care Roadmap;
- Elder Abuse; and
- Housing.

SYSTEMS ADVOCACY – GOVERNMENT REFORM

Aged Care is going through unprecedented changes and will be in a constant state of transition over the coming decade. At the same time, Australia's population is ageing, and both the proportion and number of people needing care are increasing. Planning for this growth is one of the main challenges of aged care policy and Government.

Over the last decade aged care has undergone a number of reviews starting with the introduction of "Living Longer Living Better (LLL) reforms".

Since then, the following reforms have taken place:

- The introduction of the Aged Care Roadmap – Aged Care Sector Committee released in April 2016 the Government's plan for Aged Care for the coming years;
- Increasing Choice in Home Care – Dept of Health – Feb 2017
- Alternative Aged Care Assessment and Funding Model – Feb 2017 – University of Wollongong;
- Review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument– Applied Aged Care Solutions – June 2017;
- A Technology Roadmap for the Australian Aged Care Sector - Aged Care Industry IT Council – June 2017;
- Future of Australia's Aged Care Sector Workforce – Senate Committee – June 2017;
- My Aged Care Evaluation – Stage 2 – HealthDirect – August 2017;
- Legislated Review of Aged Care – David Tune – Sept 2017;
- The Oakden Response Models of Care Project – SA Health – Oct 2017;
- Redesign of the NSAF – Dept of Health – Oct 2017;
- Redesigning of Dementia Supports – Dept of Health – Oct 2017;
- Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Process – Carnell – Oct 2017

As can be seen by the above the pace of reform and review of the Aged Care Sector has increased exponentially in the last twelve months signalling rapid change as the government lays the path for the future of Aged Care.

The government and the community as a whole need to engage in a more detailed conversation about how best to provide for the care needs of our ageing population.

The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of aged care reform is how it impacts on the most vulnerable. Reform will have failed if aged care is not responsive to diversity of need or accessible to the disadvantaged. Older Australians have diverse characteristics, with the majority experiencing one or more factors that may pose a barrier to accessing aged care services or impact on the outcomes achieved by services.

The aged care system must be responsive to the unique needs of older people, whether they be from special needs groups recognised in aged care legislation or experience other forms of disadvantage or diverse circumstances, with their needs considered holistically and not just through the lens of a particular characteristic. To achieve this, addressing systemic barriers impacting people with diverse circumstances and specific needs must be at the centre of aged care system design and reform and be seen as core business.

The following proposed approach is designed to influence the design, development, implementation and evaluation of aged care reform in order to ensure equity of access and outcome for all older Australians particularly those who are disadvantaged and/or vulnerable.

Home Care

Since the changes to the allocation of Home Care Package places in February 2017 it has become increasingly clear that current funding just isn't enough to meet demand, both now and into the future.

Government needs to consider reforms to tackle the increasing number of older Australians waiting to access appropriate home care. More must be done to cut the unacceptably long wait time so many older Australians are experiencing trying to access home care.

More than 100,000 older Australians are currently waiting to access the home care services they require this includes older people who have been allocated a lower level package (as no higher level packages are available) whilst they wait in the national queue for a higher level package that they have been assessed as needing by ACAT, and for those still waiting to receive a package. Some of these older people that AnglicareSA is aware of having been waiting more than two years for a package and that number is growing.

There are also increasing concerns that those who don't have the financial resources or support to stay safely in their homes will either miss out on care or be forced to enter residential care prematurely.

Government needs to consider urgent funding reforms to improve access and sustainability in the sector, including releasing more home care packages. This was identified in a number of key recommendations of the recent "Legislated Review of Aged Care 2017" by David Tune which identified the need to include funding additional level 3 and 4 packages as well as the introduction of a Level 5 package that would assist in bridging the gap between Home Care and residential services and support older people to remain in their own home for longer.

Actions

- Contribute to National Advocacy bodies including Aged Care Services (ACS) and Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA);
- Work with the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) to influence Government Reform;
- Work with Anglicare Australia to influence Government Reform;
- Provide detailed information to key politicians to ensure that wait lists and levels of funding for older people are addressed.

Outcomes

- Older People having access to the level of services they require, when they most need them;
- Adequate funding to support older people to remain in their own homes for as long as they need.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY – ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is gaining increased attention worldwide due to global population ageing. Population prevalence studies in the UK and Canada have found that approximately 5% of people aged over 65 experience one form of abuse in any one year, with the World Health Organisation estimating that 10% of older people globally are victims of abuse.

Elder abuse is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. It is usually classified according to the type of abuse, although different types of abuse often occur together. Elder abuse can be physical abuse (including threatening, punching, and shoving) or psychological (such as emotional blackmail and put downs). The most common type of abuse is financial abuse, including abuse of powers of attorney (PoAs), misuse of an older person's money, fraud, and appropriation of finances or assets. For this abuse to go undetected, perpetrators may also socially isolate the older person by restricting their access to family, friends, or medical practitioners (known as social abuse). Less common is sexual abuse, such as unwanted touching or being forced to watch pornography. The final form of abuse is neglect, where the older person is not provided with proper care and support.

As elder abuse is, by definition, perpetrated by a person of trust, it largely occurs within the family, and to a lesser extent within neighbourhoods and care environments. The prevalence of elder abuse in Australia is not known but international studies suggest that one in ten older people are abused in any one year.

Elder abuse has been the subject of increasing government and community attention in recent years, and there have been several recent state and federal government initiatives that have drawn attention to the issue including the most recent review conducted by the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption – the Hon Bruce Lander QC entitled “Oakden: A Shameful Chapter in South Australia’s History”.

Activity around this issue aims to develop an action plan with key priorities including:

- Raise awareness re the current inadequacies of the Aged Care System
- Raise community awareness of elder abuse and promote a positive image of older people
- Provide alternatives for older people to disclose elder abuse
- Develop a standardised tool for recognising abuse
- Ensure that all AnglicareSA staff receive training on identifying and responding to elder abuse
- Identify ways to support carers to reduce ‘carer stress’ as a risk factor for elder abuse
- Improve understanding and response to elder abuse in CALD and Aboriginal communities
- Improve housing options for victims of elder abuse

Raise community awareness of elder abuse and promote a positive image of older people

Issues

Some older people may not recognise when they are being abused, or be reluctant to address the problem. They may lack knowledge about the services available to them, both general aged care services that could serve a monitoring role for elder abuse risk, as well as specific services that can respond to elder abuse.

There is also a lack of understanding within the community generally about what elder abuse is; extreme cases of violence towards older people are recognised as abuse but some behaviour that infringe the rights of older people, such as arrangements exchanging assets for care are not always recognised as abusive.

One of the broader societal factors that contributes to elder abuse is ageism. This has been defined as “stereotyping and discriminating against individuals or groups on the basis of their age”.

Actions

- Develop and deliver a media and public education campaign in consultation with older people to increase awareness of ageism, elder abuse, and elder abuse as a form of family violence. The public awareness campaign would specifically target people who come into regular contact with older people, as identified by older people themselves. Older people would identify the messages that would resonate with them and those with whom they come into contact.
- Older people are to be represented in the campaign as empowered rather than victims. The public awareness campaign would also promote the rights of older people within the family.

Outcomes

- Older people and family members are able to recognise the signs of elder abuse and know where and how to access assistance.
- Strengthen awareness by older people themselves about their rights and legal options in situations of harm or abuse via information provision.
- Perpetrators are able to recognise behaviours as abusive, which may have a preventive effect.
- Negative stereotypes of older people are challenged.
- There is increased awareness of elder abuse by those who come into contact with older people.

Provide alternatives for older people to disclose elder abuse

Issues

Older people generally are reluctant to seek help when they are being abused. This is particularly true of 'officially' reporting the abuse to the police or another agency.

There are a range of reasons for this, including:

- Feeling a sense of responsibility – especially where an adult child is the perpetrator, the older person may feel responsible for their upbringing and adult behaviour.
- Lack of help for the perpetrator – the older person may feel that addressing the abuse may not solve the problem that they see as causing the abuse (e.g. the perpetrator's drug, gambling, or alcohol problem).
- fear of consequences – the older person may feel that reporting the abuse to the police or another agency may make things worse, either through repercussions from the perpetrator, loss of contact with grandchildren or other family members, or getting the perpetrator into trouble.
- Lack of options, including alternative housing for themselves or the perpetrator, mental health services and/or gambling support services.

Some older people may feel that disclosing abuse to police, an elder abuse service, or even a health professional may lead to unintended consequences, such as those outlined above, so alternative options are needed.

A non-intrusive monitoring role that could be carried out by trusted "Aged Care Advocates" would empower older people to discuss their experiences without feeling that they may have to take action against the perpetrator, and to get advice on options that are available to them.

Actions

- Further promote AnglicareSA's Aged Care Advocacy service internally and externally;
- Promote AnglicareSA's Aged Care Advocacy service as an impartial advocate to respond to existing customers feedback and complaints;
- Invest in AnglicareSA's Aged Care Advocacy service to enable it to meet the growing demand for this service
- Investigate the role of peer support groups as an avenue for older people to raise concerns about abusive behaviours.

Outcomes

- Older people are empowered to talk about abuse and be aware of where to seek help if and when ready.
- AnglicareSA staff better understand the signs and behaviours associated with elder abuse and the options available to older people.
- Increased confidence of existing customers to initiate conversations about elder abuse.
- Impartial feedback mechanism to deal with possible elder abuse within the business/service.

Develop a standardised tool for recognising abuse

Issues

Recognition of abuse requires understanding of the signs and behaviours, as well as the risk factors for abuse. The use of a screening tool is one strategy to assist in the detection and prevention of abuse. The basic premise for a screening tool is that they support staff and stakeholders (eg allied health professionals, GP's, pharmacists etc) recognise the signs, symptoms, behaviours, and attitudes of those who may be at risk of elder abuse.

Elder abuse cases may need to be assessed or monitored over a period of time, and a single act of screening may not pick up any indicators, which is why AnglicareSA staff and stakeholders play an important monitoring role.

Actions

- Develop and resource a central knowledge hub that includes information about current government policy, programs, services, research, and education relating to elder abuse;
- Involve elder abuse advocates (such as ARAS) in the development of this strategy and the standardised tool to ensure that it is sustainable and targeted.
- Conduct a follow-up study building on the outcomes of the trial of the screening tool including evaluating the effectiveness of the tool from the perspective of both staff and older people.

Outcomes

- Better knowledge of risk factors, signs, and behaviours of elder abuse amongst staff and stakeholders.
- Better knowledge of steps to take once elder abuse has been identified.

Ensure that all AnglicareSA staff receive training on identifying and responding to elder abuse

Issues

Clearly there is a need for all health and aged care professionals and AnglicareSA staff who come into contact with older people to be provided with education and training about elder abuse. It is not sufficient for detection and response to be the responsibility of external agencies like ARAS and the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

Gaps

There is a gap in AnglicareSA's current education and training programs. There is also a gap in knowledge about how to respond to each specific type of abuse, particularly education and service responses for neglect. Although current programs such as the Aged Care Channel provide training around elder abuse, a significant part of the organisation is not required to complete this training. As many other AnglicareSA staff and professionals come in contact with older people there is a lack of education about how to recognise and respond to elder abuse.

Actions

- In conjunction with AnglicareSA's Learning & Development team review the effectiveness of existing training programs, and identify the best approaches to education for people working with older people across a range of different services across AnglicareSA.
- Develop a strategy to encourage people to take up existing training programs, for example, building them into orientation programs, on line learning and policy and procedural guidelines.
- Ensure that there are effective training programs for different types of abuse across a range of settings.

Outcomes

- Staff who work with, or come into contact with older people have a better understanding of the risks, signs, and behaviours associated with elder abuse, and the options available to older people.
- Staff feel empowered to act in response to elder abuse in accordance with the older person's needs and wishes, and AnglicareSA's protocols.

Identify ways to support carers to reduce 'carer stress' as a risk factor for elder abuse

Issues

Research with informal carers of people with dementia has shown that there is a high prevalence of elder abuse amongst this group, particularly emotional/psychological abuse and the use of restraints. There has been very little evaluation of the effectiveness of carer interventions in reducing the risk or prevalence of abuse.

We don't know the extent of elder abuse that occurs in informal care settings or in community aged care settings and the legislation is less clear on reporting mechanisms in this area compared to more formal settings such as Residential Aged Care.

There is currently little data on the prevalence of abuse in either paid or family care relationships. The existing data on abuse within families does not differentiate between elder abuse arising in the context of family relationships and abuse where a person has care needs related to ageing.

Actions

- Conduct studies with carers and people with dementia to explore what they see as contributing to potential or actual elder abuse within care relationships and what would help to prevent it from occurring.
- Conduct a study of factors contributing to elder abuse in residential and community aged care in Australia, and whether the current system of audit reviews is adequate to monitor elder abuse risk.
- Work with AnglicareSA's other services (outside of Aged Care) to identify and deliver supports for carers to minimise the prevalence of elder abuse in the community.

Outcomes

- A greater understanding of factors within care relationships that contribute to elder abuse.
- Develop mechanisms and supports for carers to access other services to reduce the prevalence of elder abuse by carers.
- Review current legislative systems to determine whether they address elder abuse in the community and action accordingly.

Improve understanding and response to elder abuse in CALD and Aboriginal communities

Issues

CALD communities:

There is evidence that older people from CALD backgrounds are at increased risk of elder abuse. Culturally diverse populations have unique barriers and issues regarding elder abuse, including: poor English skills, social isolation, dependency on family members, stigma and shame, and cross-generational factors of care and support. There is a need to provide culturally appropriate elder abuse response services for CALD communities, to increase awareness and resources for CALD communities, and to train health and aged care workers to enable them to work alongside CALD communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

There is a need to reconsider the use of the term 'elder abuse' in Aboriginal communities, as the term 'elder' has significant meaning in Aboriginal cultures and the current definitions of elder abuse may not apply.

To our knowledge there are no appropriate services or referral pathways for Aboriginal communities. There is also a lack of awareness of elder abuse or advocacy for older people's rights for Aboriginals.

Actions

- Work with AnglicareSA's Aboriginal services to explore how elder abuse is conceived and described within these communities and determine culturally appropriate responses to elder abuse, including awareness-raising and training.
- Work with AnglicareSA's CALD services to explore how elder abuse is conceived and described within these communities and determine culturally appropriate responses to elder abuse, including awareness-raising and training.
- Develop a knowledge hub to ensure that current resources for people from CALD and Aboriginal backgrounds, as well as outcomes of any evaluations are widely accessible.

Outcomes

- The development of culturally appropriate resources to raise awareness in Aboriginal communities would help to facilitate the discussion of elder abuse in these populations and ultimately lead to appropriate identification and responses.
- Increased awareness and understanding of elder abuse in CALD communities, and avenues to provide support to elder abuse victims in CALD communities.

Improve housing options for victims of elder abuse

Issues

Housing is a key issue in elder abuse, as both a risk factor for abuse (co-habitation with the perpetrator increases risk of abuse in most cases) and a barrier to the resolution of abuse. One of the outcomes frequently associated with elder abuse is the need for relocation of either the older person or the perpetrator to stop the abuse continuing.

This area is often overlooked and is a significant unmet need for both victims of elder abuse. When an older person needs to leave a situation of abuse, they may face barriers to accessing emergency or long term accommodation, such as not being classified as “at risk”, or perceiving that the accommodation options are there for younger women and their children and not for them. They may also not be aware of the housing options available.

The Australian Government’s Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA) provides support, advocacy, assessment and referrals to accommodation services of which AnglicareSA is a provider.

There is a need for crisis and long-term housing for victims of elder abuse, in particular a need to establish and promote safe accommodation for older people who are victims of elder abuse.

Actions

- Work with AnglicareSA’s Housing services to explore options for victims of elder abuse both temporary and long term.
- Work with AnglicareSA’s Community services to explore options for victims of elder abuse both temporary and long term.
- Develop appropriate responses to elder abuse, including awareness-raising and training.
- Develop a knowledge hub to ensure that current resources for staff to refer victims of elder abuse are widely accessible.

Outcomes

- Safe and appropriate accommodation for older people who are victims of elder abuse.
- Reduction of pressure on older parents to provide accommodation for potential perpetrators of abuse.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY – HOUSING

Issues

For many decades older Australians have generally had the protection of very high home ownership levels and a strong safety net of secure public housing for low-income non home owners. This has made it possible for older people, most of whom have relied on modest public pensions, to expect independent and secure (if economically humble) lives. That is no longer the case.

These are some of the alarming trends:

- More older people are renting in retirement
- Between 2011 and 2031 the number of Australians aged 65 years and over will increase from 2.4 to 5.8 million and represent 25% of the population.
- Between 2006-2011 people aged 55+ who own their home outright dropped from 63.8% to 60.5%.
- Between 1996 to 2007 public housing properties shrank by 32,000 while the population grew by 2.8 million people.
- In 2011, there were 173,000 Australians on public housing waiting lists.
- Between 2006-2011 the numbers of people aged 55+ living in private rental housing increased by 44% to total 334,000.
- The private rental market is insecure, expensive and poorly designed for ageing.

Work by the Benevolent Society NSW found the most important factor influencing older people's wellbeing was housing, yet housing affordability and suitability is becoming an increasing issue for older people in Australia.

Women are particularly vulnerable due to low paid and interrupted careers, lower rates of savings and superannuation. Most people affected have lived largely conventional lives but have, for a range of reasons, not aspired to or attained home ownership by the time they reach retirement. They need access to affordable housing to enable them to enjoy housing stability and affordability to ensure they can successfully age-in-place.

Whilst housing affordability and the vulnerability of low income households has been an issue in Australia for at least three decades the scale of the problem for the older population has come to the fore much more recently due to the trends outlined above.

Older people are at risk in the current housing market because of a number of factors. These factors include:

- the majority of the current older population being reliant on the pension as their main source of income with few other resources as a buffer against adverse situations;
- homeownership rates are declining and more people are carrying debt into their retirement years; and
- changes in government policy over the last two to three decades has seen declines in the provision of public housing.

These and other socio-demographic factors are forcing a small, but growing proportion of, older people into the private rental market, a market that has long been recognised as being unsuitable for low income older people potentially placing them at increased risk of homelessness.

The outlook for older people and their need to seek affordable housing within the private rental system is, according to Yates (2015), only going to intensify over the coming years:

Based on the assumption that the proportion of older people in the rental market remains the same over the next four decades, the number of older people in the rental market is expected to increase from 300,000 in 2014 to 600,000 in 2054.

If there is no increase in social housing stock for older people then seven out of every ten renters will need accommodation in the private rental market compared to less than two of every five now.

Increasing inequality: there has been a rise in wealth inequality over time, particularly in Australian cities (Sarkar et al. 2017) and this will impact increasingly on disadvantaged households who will be 'squeezed' out of the property market as investors continue to have a greater competitive edge.

In conclusion Yates (2015, p. 74) states, '...the number of older income- and asset- poor households is likely to grow rapidly over the next forty years and many of these are likely to be in the private rental market.' These are households that are particularly vulnerable to changes in the private rental market in terms of rent increases, lease expiry, suitability of dwellings and the availability of dwellings.

Actions

- Work carried out in conjunction with Anglicare Australia and the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) Position Paper into "A secure, affordable home for older Australians";
- Work carried out in conjunction with Housing for the Aged Action Group "Finding a Suitable Home for Older People at Risk of Homelessness in South Australia" A report on housing for older people at risk of homelessness in South Australia, improving their access to housing and the services that can help;
- Continue to work with peak bodies in raising awareness of the above mentioned issues;
- Continuing working with AnglicareSA's Housing portfolio to support older people living in AnglicareSA housing to maintain their accommodation through addressing other related service needs including the delivery of Education, information and Support and Complex and Intensive advocacy supports;
- Work with AnglicareSA's Community services to explore options for supporting older people living with housing stress.

Outcomes

- Safe and appropriate accommodation for older people