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Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Year
in Review
2012

UnitingCare Community

UnitingCare Community Values Compassion | Respect | Justice | Working Together | Leading through Learning

UnitingCare Community Services Lifeline | Child and Family Care | Counselling | Crisis Support | Disability Support | Social Inclusion

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Elder Abuse Helpline

In the 2011-2012 financial year the Elder Abuse Helpline recorded:

1001 elder abuse notifications

1061 abused

1084 alleged abusers

1137 abuse cases

1137 primary abuse types

UnitingCare Community, formerly Lifeline Community Care Queensland has operated the Elder Abuse Helpline (the Helpline) since November 1999 through the Queensland Government Department of Communities funded Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU). The Helpline offers support, information and referrals for anyone who experiences, witnesses or suspects abuse of an older person by someone they know and trust.

The Helpline is also a means of collecting non-identifiable data which EAPU reports on to provide a better understanding of the issues surrounding elder abuse. The following review provides a range of descriptive statistics and analysis of data collected using EAPU's Elderline database in 2011-12 financial year.

Elder abuse notification(s)

This refers to the count of notifications made to the EAPU regarding an elder abuse situation. Follow-up calls or several calls about the same issue, are included in the initial notification record. Similarly, if there were two victims involved and multiple abusers, this would also count as one notification of elder abuse. Previously these statistics were reported as Helpline call rates and although the majority of notifications are made via the Helpline, there is an increasing trend for digital notifications such as emails and electronic referrals from other agencies. 'Elder abuse notification(s)' is considered a broad term and can be compared with call rates from previous years as the same counting rules apply.

Abused/alleged victim

A notification may relate to more than one abused person. In situations where there are multiple abused persons it is usually both members of a spouse/partner relationship experiencing abuse, but it could also be co-habiting sisters or similar non-intimate relationships. Prior to the new Elderline database, situations involving multiple alleged victims were recorded in reference to a single primary abused, and minimal information was collected for secondary alleged victims. Statistics were derived from data relating to the primary abused only. However the primary abused is not necessarily more important or severely abused than secondary abused individuals as the terminology and data collection implied, and EAPU now records data for all alleged victims without priority. As a result the primary abused from previous years is considered a smaller sample of the same group we record for now. Numbers cannot be directly compared, but proportions can be.

Alleged abusers

The alleged abuser statistic suffered from the same limitations as the abused statistic in the old database and has been similarly adjusted in the new Elderline database. Multiple alleged abusers are often a spouse/ partner pair - one of whom is the alleged victims' child - but are also sibling teams, informal carer spouse/partners, and increasingly adult child and grand-child teams. Again, numbers cannot be directly compared, but proportions can.

Abuse cases

The abuse case statistic is a new statistic resulting from the changes to the recording of alleged victims and abusers. Each abuse relationship within an abuse notification is considered an abuse case, so one abuse notification may involve multiple abuse cases. For example, a notification involving a son and his wife abusing his elderly parents would be counted as four "abuse cases" one for each relationship between victim and abuser: mother and son, father and son, mother and daughter in law, father and daughter in law. What these changes to the database mean is that the number of abuse relationships are no longer equal to the number of abuse victims or abusers. Relationship type can only be compared with previous data as proportions.

Primary abuse types

Primary abuse type is an old EAPU term referring to the most urgent or dominant form of abuse as identified by the Helpline worker and considered the abuse type that led to the notification. Other types of abuse present in the case were listed as secondary abuse types. However, the distinction between primary and secondary abuse types is often imposed upon the data, and not meaningfully present in the abuse situation. Callers do not affix terminology to the situation and may report constant yelling and taking the older persons pension as equally disturbing to the alleged victim. Further, reliance on a primary abuse type masks the incidence of what may be less urgent forms of abuse, for example social abuse. Socially isolating an older person is not going to present as a primary abuse type when the older person is in physical danger from abuse, or when there is an immediate problem of their home being sold from under them. Where possible in this report, data from both primary and secondary abuse types are used.

As abuse type data is recorded against the relationship between alleged victim and abuser, the changes to the database mean that, like abuse cases, there are more primary abuse types than alleged abusers or alleged victims. Again, primary abuse type data can only be compared as a proportion with previous years' data.

12 Limitations of data

There are a number of limitations on the data collected by EAPU. In the first case the data is collected through the voluntary disclosure of the notifiers and vulnerable to the incompleteness, inaccuracy, and subjective assessment of the notifier. Some variables the notifier may simply not know, for example the income source of the alleged abuser. It is also probable that some notifiers will have incorrect information, such as a neighbour mistaking a victim's extended residence in a home as ownership when it may in fact be a rental arrangement. Notifier context will also impact on the data. For example, for what is considered lively debate by one person may be considered verbal abuse by another. These limitations are particularly an issue when examining data on the alleged abusers as the Helpline rarely has direct contact with them, and notifiers themselves may limit contact with alleged abusers, or be in conflict with them.

With regard to the representativeness of EAPU data, it must be kept in mind that abuse cases self-select themselves into our dataset, notifiers choose to call us, we do not individually seek them out. As a result, all statistics need to be viewed with the knowledge that the sample is likely to be significantly skewed. There are certain case types where EAPU is unlikely to receive a notification, for example where the victim is in a federally funded care facility, cases of physical or sexual abuse must be reported to the police. Even outside a facility, extreme cases of sexual abuse or overt physical abuse is likely to go straight to the police once discovered rather than EAPU, and many cases where the victim does not have capacity may go straight to the Office of the Adult Guardian.

Some of the statistics contained in the report need further cautions due to sample size, issues with operationalisation of variables, and data collection problems. Throughout the report any such caveats will be noted. The current database is being reviewed to ameliorate some of these issues while retaining comparability of data to previous years as much as possible. Finally, it should be noted here that EAPU does not have the resources to run analysis resulting in measures of statistical significance.

Despite these limitations, EAPU Helpline data collection remains the only known ongoing data collection in Queensland specifically around elder abuse. Further, comprehensive coverage of the range of abuse relationships and risk factors associated with elder abuse, and the state-wide scope of the service has drawn the attention of international researchers.

Elder abuse notifications

Notifications of elder abuse include calls to the Helpline, responding to messages left on the voicemail system, electronic enquiries such as Supportlink referrals, email and via the web-site contact form. Some face-to-face notifications were recorded after community education or training sessions where the EAPU worker provided information and referral options after the disclosure of a current elder abuse situation. In these instances, referring the person to the Helpline was seen as an inappropriate duplication of service and not in the best interests of the client. Note that all EAPU staff have a minimum qualification of Lifeline Telephone Counselling as well as a requirement for ongoing professional development in elder abuse areas.
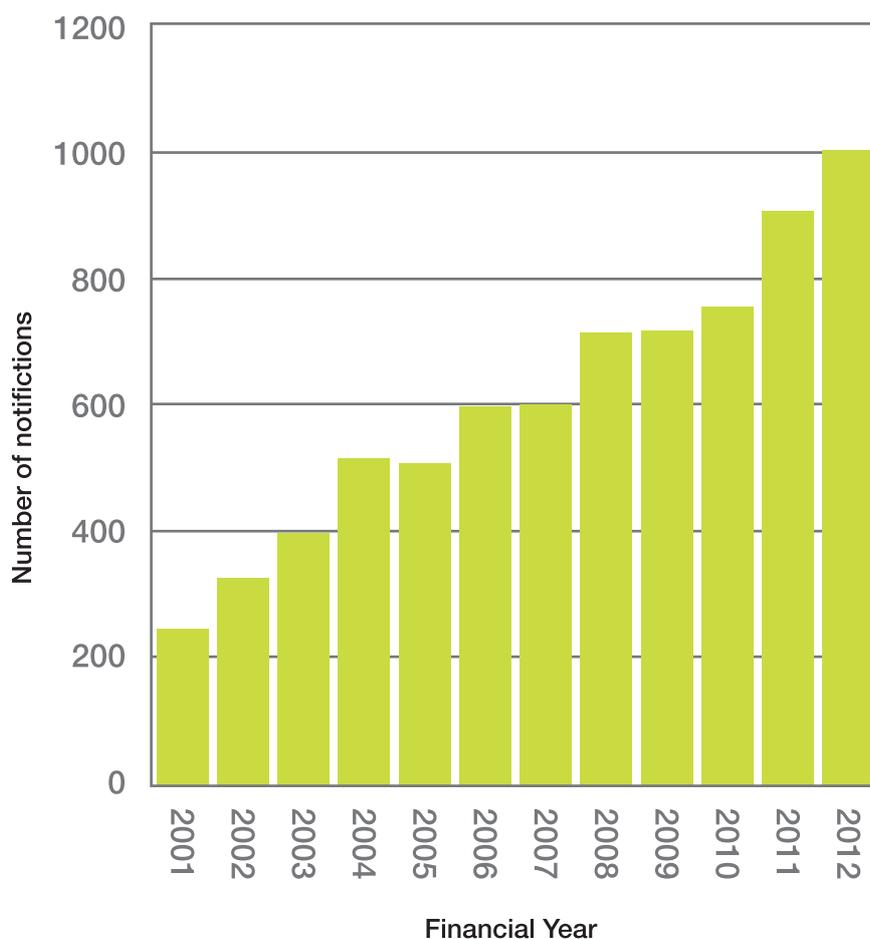
The 2011-2012 financial year saw an increase in notifications from previous years. This continues a general trend of increasing notifications since the service began (see Figure 1).

- There was a 10.49% increase in the number of notifications received by the EAPU helpline from the previous financial year.

- Average of 83 notifications per month received by the EAPU helpline for the 2011-12 financial year, which is an increase of approximately 8 notifications per month.

Figure 1. Total notifications received annually since 2001

Location

The following map shows the distribution by region of the number and proportion of the 1137 abuse cases recorded in 2012. Regions are the statistical divisions that were current at the initial database development. Due to changes to the Australian Bureau Statistics statistical division boundaries on 1 July 2011, this section of the database is under review. Brisbane and West Moreton divisions have been combined into one region which approximates the South East Region of Queensland.

Far North
46 cases
(4.05%)

Location unknown & interstate
128 reports (11.26%)

North West
8 cases (0.70%)

North
48 cases
(4.22%)

Mackay
17 cases (1.50%)

Central West
2 cases (0.18%)

Fitzroy
51 cases (4.49%)

Wide Bay Burnett
111 cases (9.76%)

Darling Downs
58 cases
(5.10%)

Brisbane & West Moreton
665 cases
(58.49%)

South West
3 cases (0.26%)
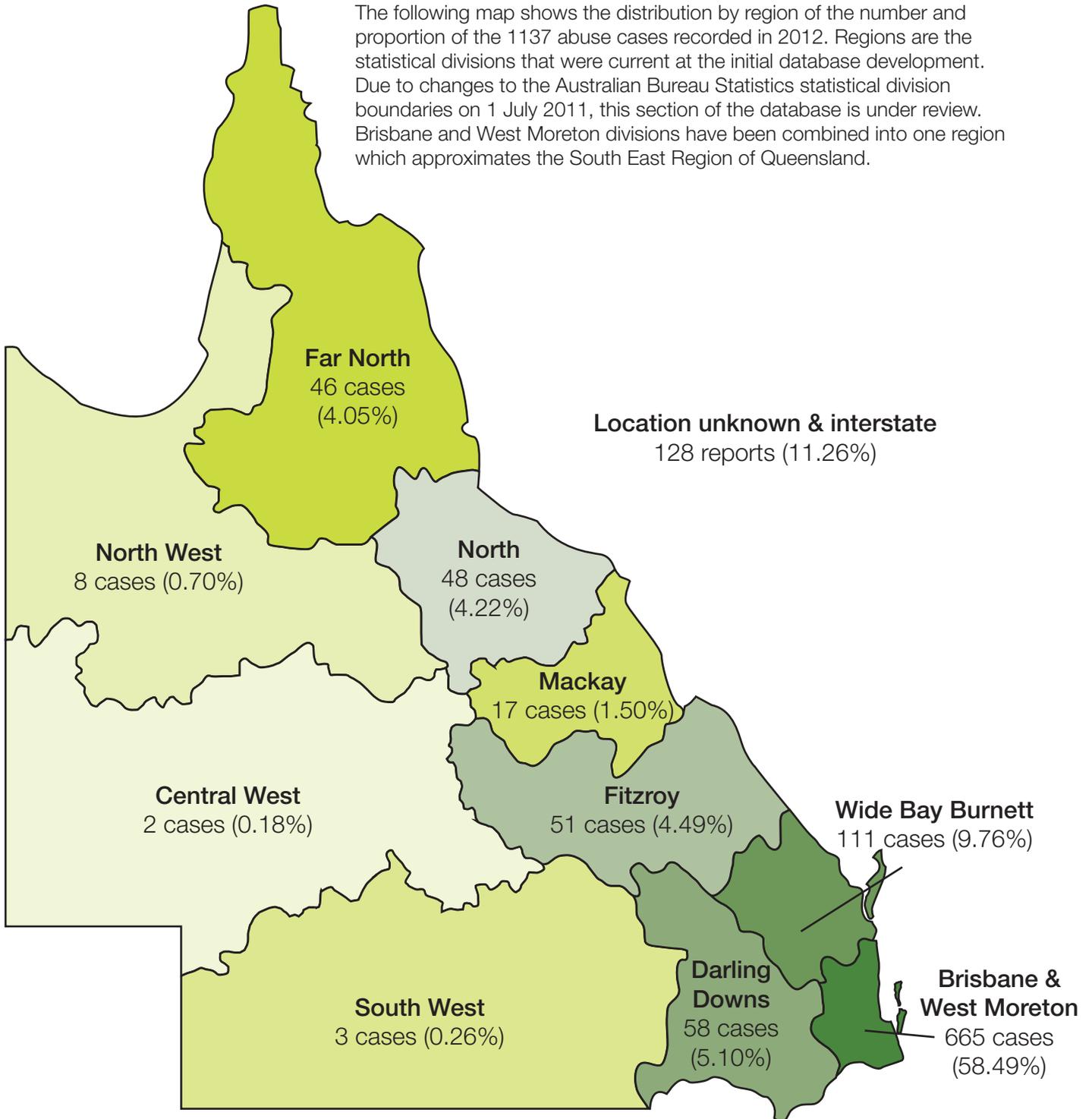
Figure 2. Regional breakdown of elder abuse cases for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012. Indicates number and proportion of cases from each region for 2012.

Gender

Women were twice as likely to be abused than men, but there is only a small difference between males and females as abusers, for which we are unable to test for significance (see Tables 1 & 2). This is consistent with research literature findings that adult sons and daughters are equally the main perpetrators of elder abuse.

Alleged victim	2011/2012 Financial year		All data (01/11/99 to 30/06/12)	
	Records	Percent	Records	Percent
Female	754	71.07%	5375	71.30%
Male	305	28.75%	2118	28.09%
Unknown	2	0.19%	46	0.61%
Totals	1061	100.00%	7539	100.00%

Table 1. Gender of alleged victims for the periods 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012 and 1/11/1999 - 30/6/2012

Alleged abuser	2011/2012 Financial year		All data (01/11/99 to 30/06/12)	
	Records	Percent	Records	Percent
Female	460	42.44%	3188	42.14%
Male	567	52.31%	3780	49.96%
Unknown	57	5.26%	598	7.90%
Totals	1084	100.00%	7566	100.00%

Table 2. Gender of alleged ausers for the periods 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012 and 1/11/1999 - 30/6/2012
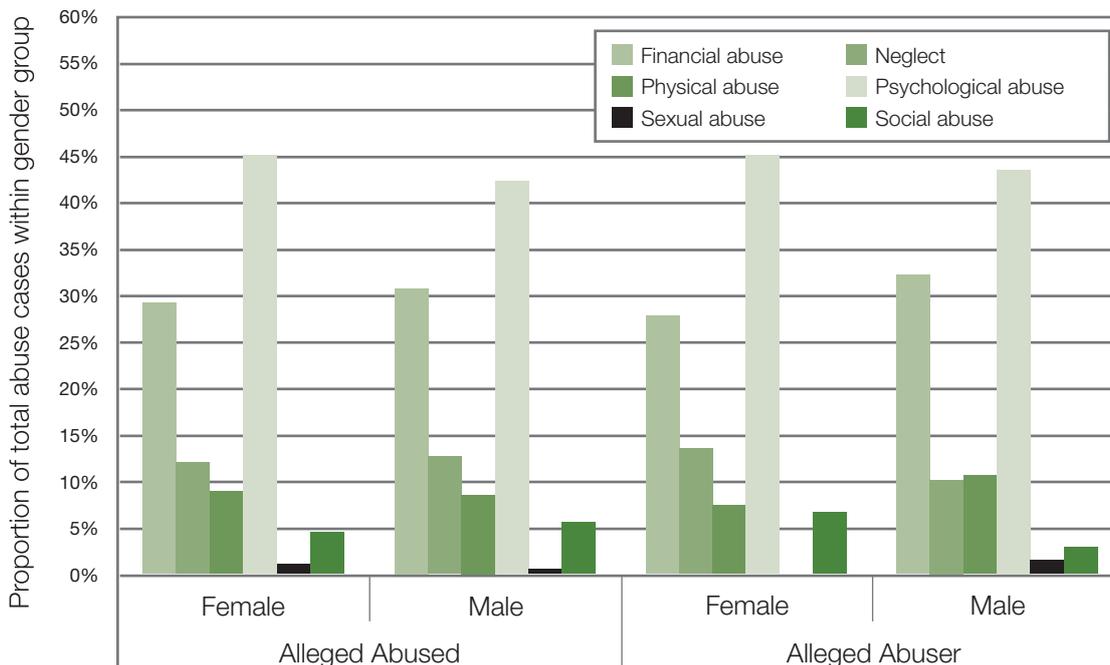
Figure 3. Proportion of abuse type as primary abuse type for each gender group.

12 Nationality

Low rates of disclosure by notifiers render nationality and country of origin data effectively useless. Conclusion could not be drawn from any findings and so were not examined beyond the task of demonstrating their limitations:

- 21.11% of alleged victims' country of origin was disclosed.

- Only 5.94% of alleged victims were disclosed as being from a country other than Australia.

- 10.70% of alleged abusers' country of origin was disclosed.

- Only 1.75% of alleged abusers were disclosed as being from a country other than Australia.

- 3.86% of alleged victims were disclosed as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

- 2.03% of alleged abusers were disclosed as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Age

During the 2011-2012 financial year there were 1062 abuse victims reported to the Helpline. Age was not disclosed in 15.74% of cases (n=167). Where age was disclosed:

- Most victims were of the 80-84 years age bracket (16.97%; n=180) for both genders.

- With the exception of the 45-49 year age bracket, females were reported more often than males as victims of abuse in all age groups.

During the 2011-2012 financial year there were 1084 alleged abusers reported to the Helpline. Age was not reported in 48.25% of cases (n=523). Where age was reported:

- Most alleged abusers were of the 50-54 years age bracket (19.79%; n=111). See Figure 4.

- There are substantially more male alleged abusers in the 50-54 years age bracket in comparison to both a) other age brackets, and b) female alleged abusers.

This pattern was found in previous years data as well.

The figure over-page shows the age and gender breakdown for the 2011-2012 financial year (Figure 5). The figure below shows the increase in the number of male alleged abusers in the 50-54 year age bracket for all data that was available to analyse; from 1 July 2005.
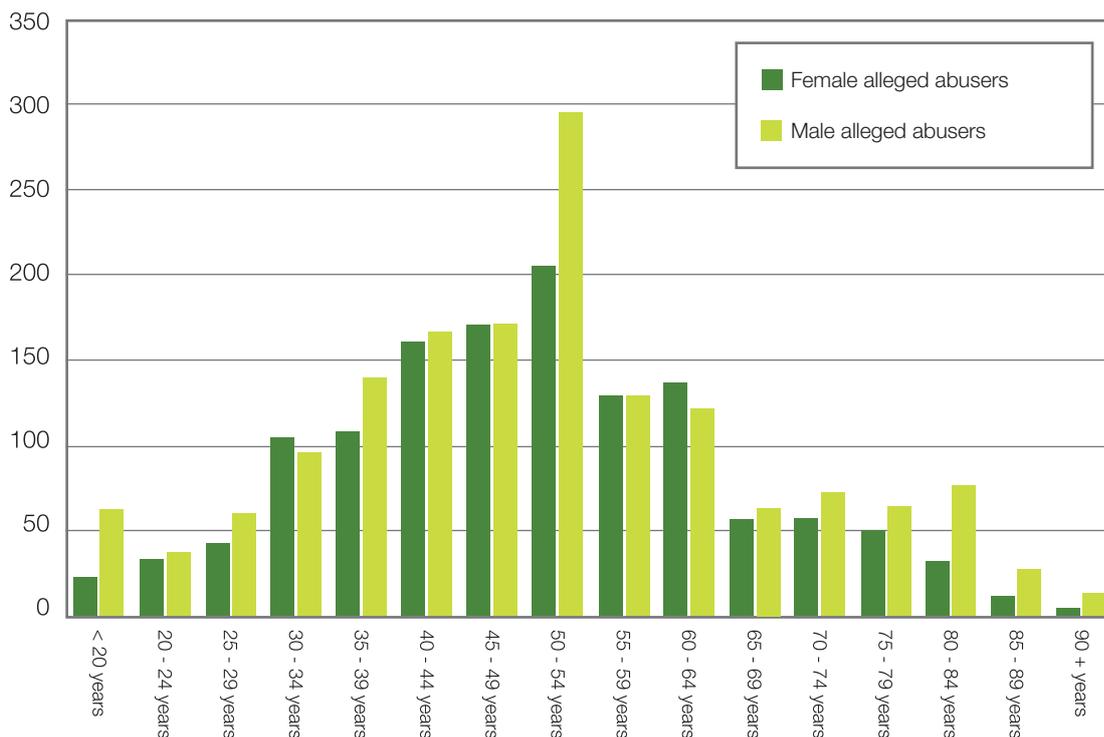

Figure 4.

Age and gender of alleged abusers for the period 1/7/2005 - 30/6/2012, unknown age removed.

Age and gender of alleged victims and alleged abusers

Age of alleged abusers by gender
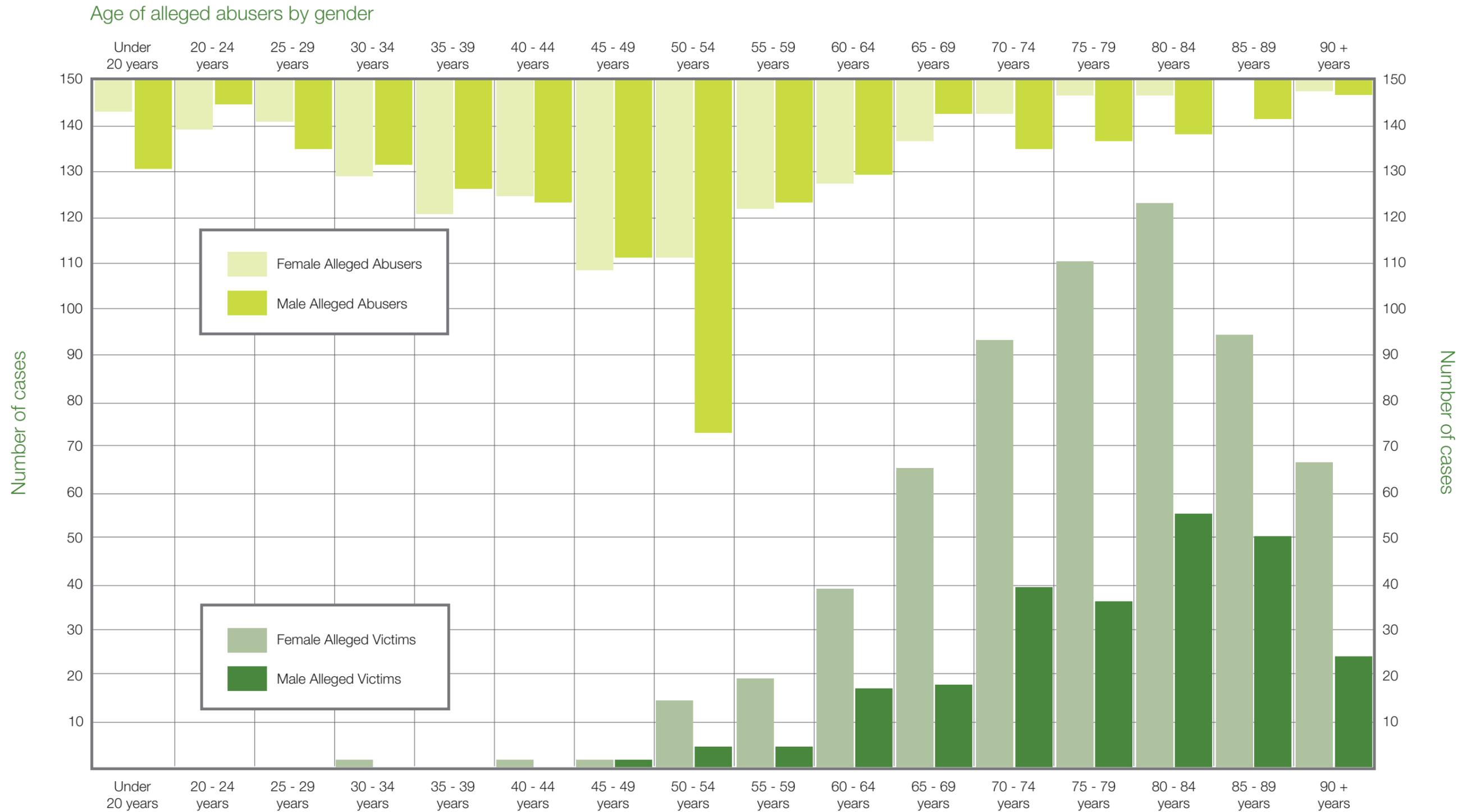
Figure 5. Age and gender of alleged victims and alleged abusers for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012, unknown age removed.

Age of alleged victims by gender

Psychological abuse and financial abuse were the most reported forms of both primary and secondary abuse to the Helpline. Just under half the elder abuse cases recorded listed a secondary abuse type (46.44%) and many cases reported multiple secondary abuse types (see Figures 6 and 7).

The distinction between primary and secondary abuse types is sometimes arbitrary, generated by a data collection requirement to list at least one abuse type, but allow for multiple types. Though the pattern is generally the same, the combined data of primary and secondary abuse types may give a more accurate picture of the incidence of different abuse types among Helpline notifications (see Figure 7). Note that two thirds of abuse cases involved psychological abuse, and almost half involved financial abuse.
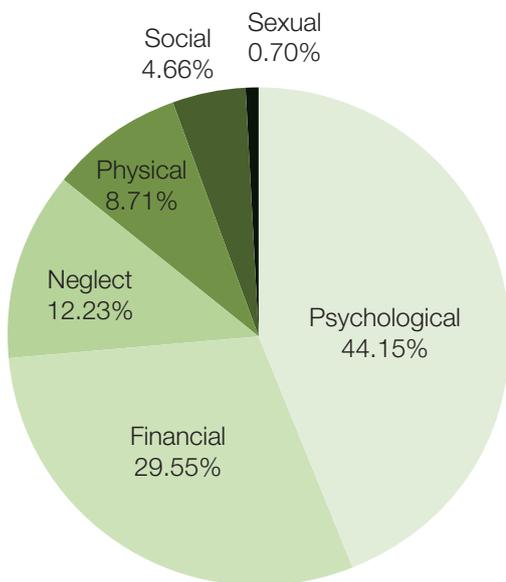
Figure 6. Proportion of primary abuse types for abuse cases reported to the Helpline in the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012
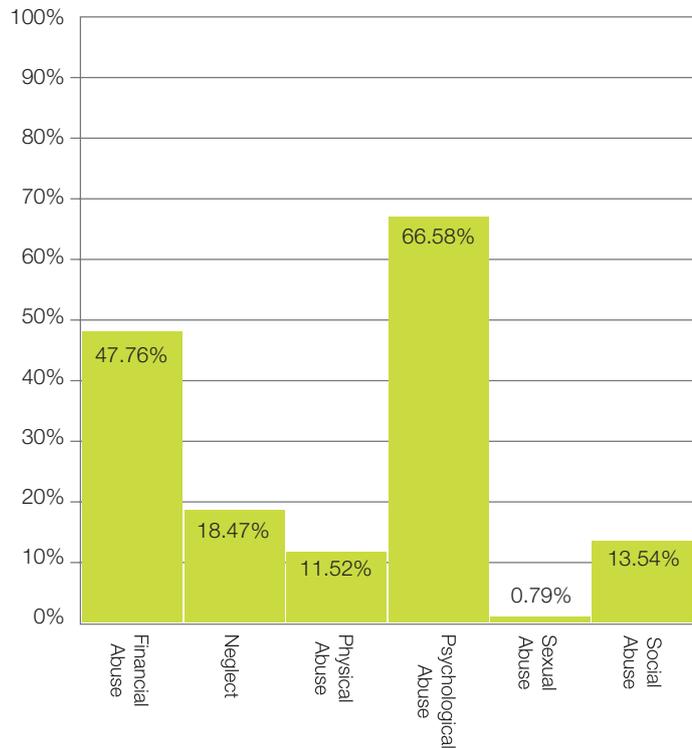
Figure 7. Primary and secondary abuse type records combined; proportion of cases where abuse type is present for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012

Financial abuse and abuse of Enduring Power of Attorney

Dollar figures associated with financial abuse should be interpreted with caution as in many cases notifiers do not know the extent of financial abuse, or the abuse involves the misappropriation of assets such as houses and cars without an easily identifiable value. The EAPU Helpline recorded that:

$3,864,122 was misappropriated by 31 alleged abusers during the 2011-2012 financial year.

Yet financial abuse was recorded in 66% (n= 543) of cases reported to the Helpline, leaving the contributions of over 500 instances of financial abuse missing from this statistic.

Abuse of the powers provided by an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) is one way to misappropriate funds and assets. Only around a quarter of the recorded funds were misappropriated by a holder of an EPA. It is important to note that EAPU's database does not record whether or not the EPA was used to misappropriate funds, only that the abuser held the EPA.

$974,800 of the missing funds recorded by EAPU were by misappropriated by 7 attorneys.

Furthermore, despite over 500 cases of financial abuse, only 11.26% (n = 128) of alleged abusers were holders of an EPA for the alleged victim. Figure 8 illustrates the limitations of EAPU data when describing financial and EPA abuse.

Financial abuse was recorded for 66% of cases reported to the Helpline.
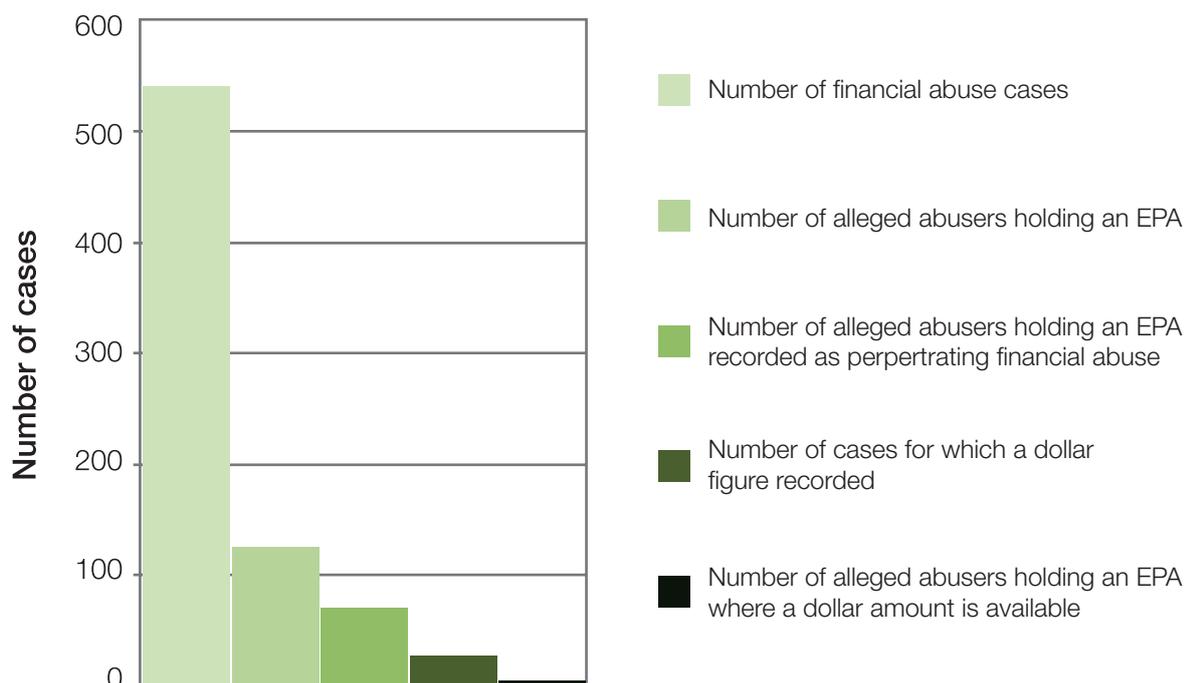
Figure 8. Limitations of EAPU financial abuse data

Legend:
- Number of financial abuse cases
- Number of alleged abusers holding an EPA
- Number of alleged abusers holding an EPA recorded as perpertrating financial abuse
- Number of cases for which a dollar figure recorded
- Number of alleged abusers holding an EPA where a dollar amount is available

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Relationship type

As in previous years, and consistent with research literature, the primary relationship between alleged victims and alleged abusers is that of parent and child (59% of relationships, see Figure 9).

Non-biological familial relationships (excluding spousal relationships) were recorded and accounted for 7.83% (n=89) of alleged abusers. For the most part this was made up of sons-in law or daughters-in-laws (2.99% and 2.37% of all alleged abusers respectively). These alleged abusers are included in the general analysis for sons and daughters.

Relationship type and abuse type

An examination of the proportion of different forms of abuse employed by different types of alleged abusers shows distinct trends. For example, friends who abuse are mainly financially exploiting the older person. This category includes individuals who appear to deliberately befriend an older person to gain access to their resources. The data also supports Helpline worker observations that elderly people experience bullying and intimidation (psychological abuse) by neighbours.
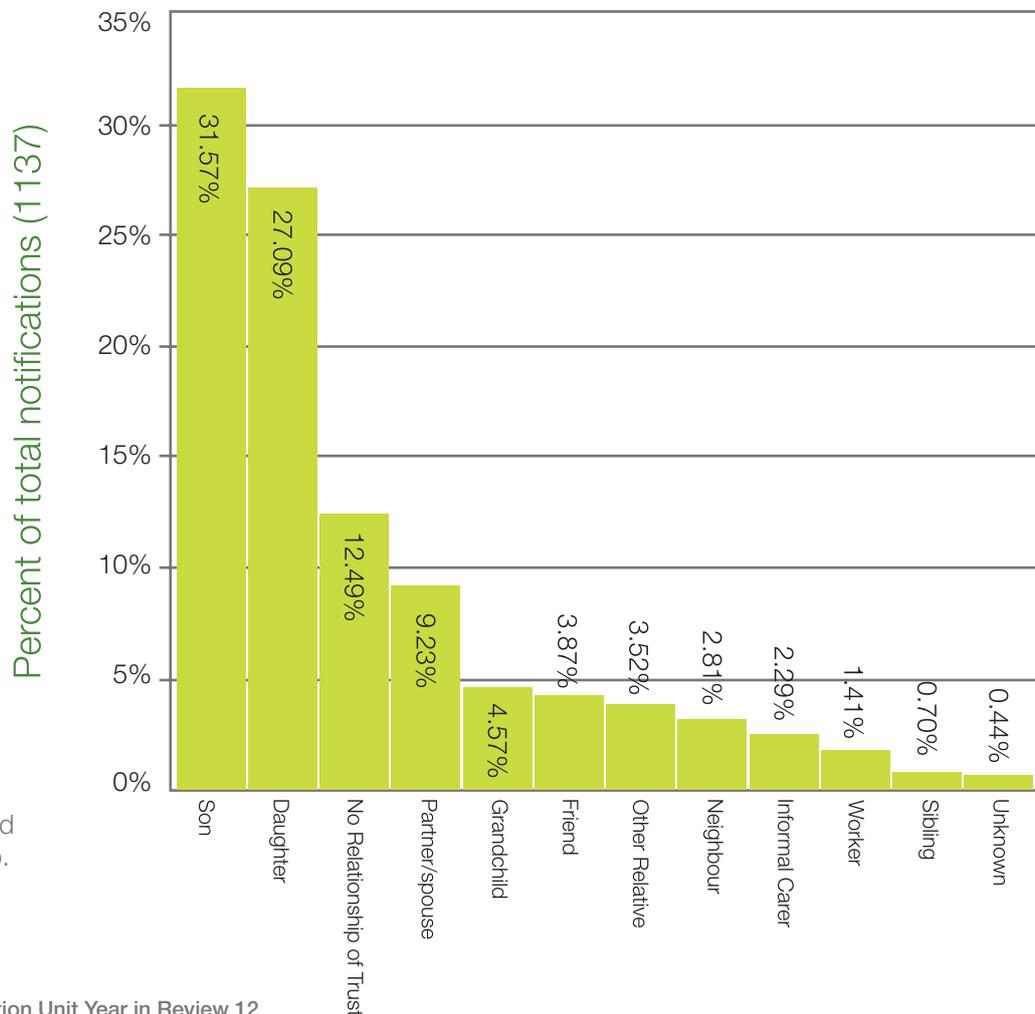
Figure 9. Proportion of notifications by the alleged victim-abuser relationship.

The chart shows Percent of total notifications (1137):
- Son: 31.57%
- Daughter: 27.09%
- No Relationship of Trust: 12.49%
- Partner/spouse: 9.23%
- Grandchild: 4.57%
- Friend: 3.87%
- Other Relative: 3.52%
- Neighbour: 2.81%
- Informal Carer: 2.29%
- Worker: 1.41%
- Sibling: 0.70%
- Unknown: 0.44%

Alleged abusers who are friends
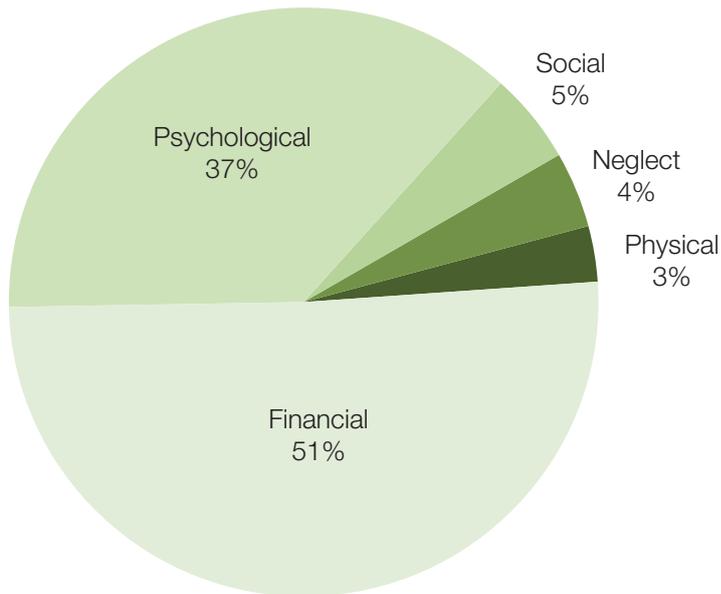
Figure 10. Friends as abusers, data is derived from primary and secondary abuse types. There were 44 friends who were alleged abusers, and they perpetrated 65 abuse types.

Alleged abusers who are neighbours
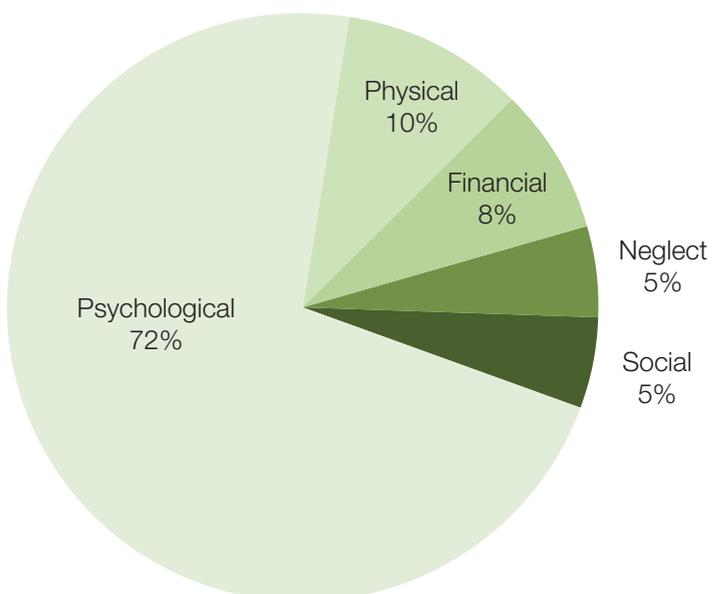
Figure 11. Neighbours as abusers, data is derived from primary and secondary abuse types. There were 32 neighbours who were alleged abusers, and they perpetrated 39 abuse types.

12 Relationship type

Another way of examining the data is to look at what type of alleged abusers perpetrate different kinds of abuse. This type of analysis must take into consideration relative number of different types of abusers. Even so, there are some interesting findings, namely that sons account for the most instances of financial abuse, and daughters for the most instances of neglect and social abuse.

Proportion of financial abuse accounted for by alleged abusers of different relationship types

Neighbour 0.55%
Worker 1.28%
Informal carer 2.57%
No relationship of trust 3.67%
Other relative 4.77%
Grandchild 5.50%
Friend 6.06%
Partner/spouse 6.24%
Son 40.73%
Daughter 28.62%
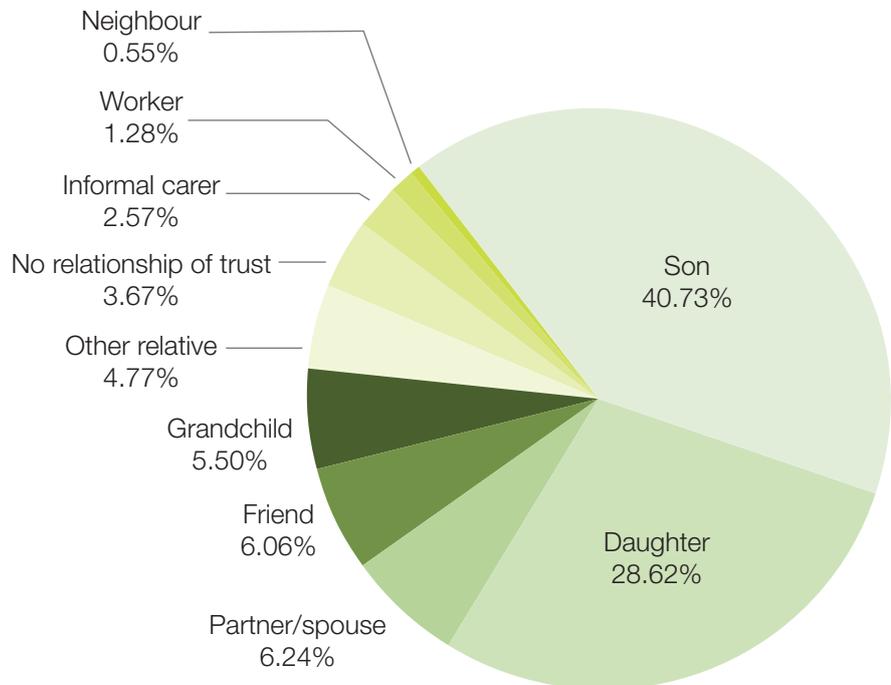
Figure 12. Proportion of financial abuse accounted for by relationship type for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012.

Financial abuse includes misappropriating funds or assets such as taking pension payments or having the house transferred into the abuser's name. Financial abuse also includes forcing or coercing the older person to support the abuser such as living rent free in the older person's home and having the older person cover household expenses. Data is derived from primary and secondary abuse types. There were 545 cases involving financial abuse, for 222 cases sons (359 son alleged abusers) were the alleged abuser, and in 156 it was a daughter (308 daughter alleged abusers).

Proportion of neglect accounted for by alleged abusers of different relationship types
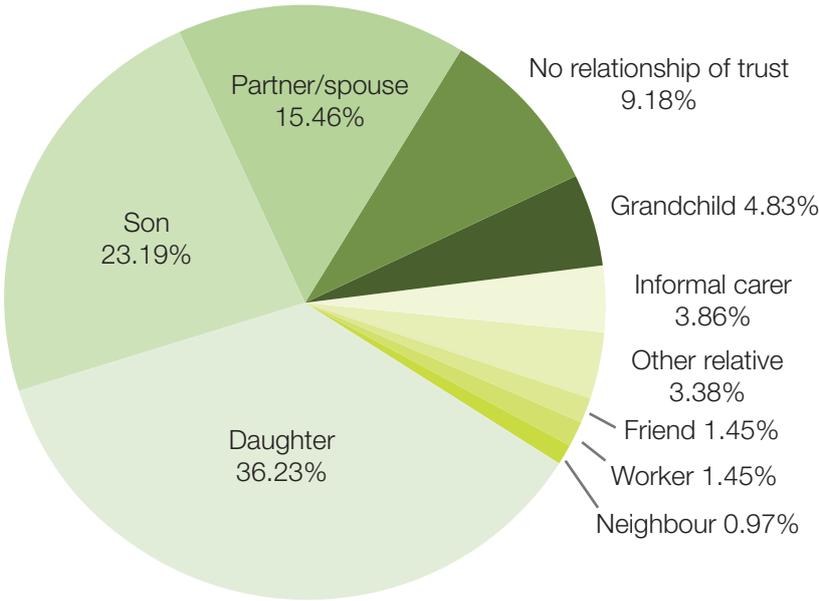
Neglect is recorded in cases where the older person is dependent on the abuser in some way for the necessities of life and the abuser fails to provide adequate care. Examples include failure to ensure proper nutrition, personal care, dispensing of medication, medical aids, or access to medical care. There were 207 cases involving neglect; in 75 the daughter was the alleged abuser (308 daughter alleged abusers), for 48 it was the son (359 son alleged abusers).

Figure 13. Proportion of neglect accounted for by relationship type for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012.

Proportion of social abuse accounted for by alleged abusers of different relationship types
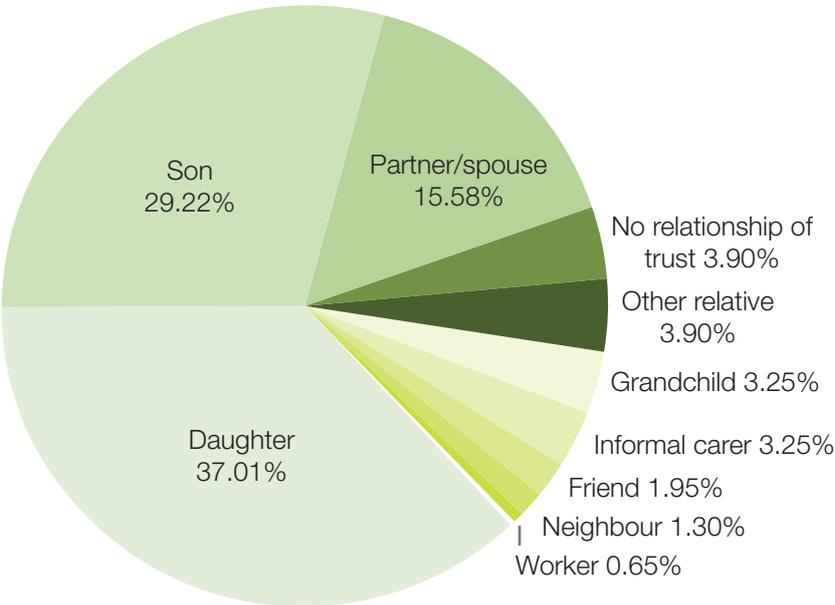
Social abuse is recorded in cases where the abuser socially isolates the victim. This includes refusing to allow the older person privacy and access to friends and family, sabotaging the older person's relationships, and stopping access to services that allow the older person to live independently. There were 154 cases of social abuse, in 57 the daughter was the alleged abuser (308 daughter alleged abusers), and for 45 it was a son (359 son alleged abusers).

Figure 14. Proportion of social abuse accounted for by relationship type for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012.

12 Relationship type

Taking the relative size of different alleged abuser groups into account, a trend emerges that may be linked to the ageing of domestic violence relationships. While spouse/partners are a small group of abusers in comparison to sons and daughters, they account for a similar amount of physical violence. Specifically, as a group partner/spouses account for 9.23% of the total number of alleged abusers but they account for 25.19% of all physical abuse instances. Larger groups such as sons who account for 31.57% of alleged abusers only explain 27.48% of physical abuse cases. As a ratio, close to 1 in 3 spouse partner abusers will abuse physically, while 1 in 10 sons and 1 in 14 daughters who abuse will do so physically.

Spouse/partner
105 alleged abusers

25.29%
n=33

Daughters
308 alleged abusers

Physical Abuse
n=131 (100%)

16.79%
n=22

27.48%
n=36

Sons
359 alleged abusers
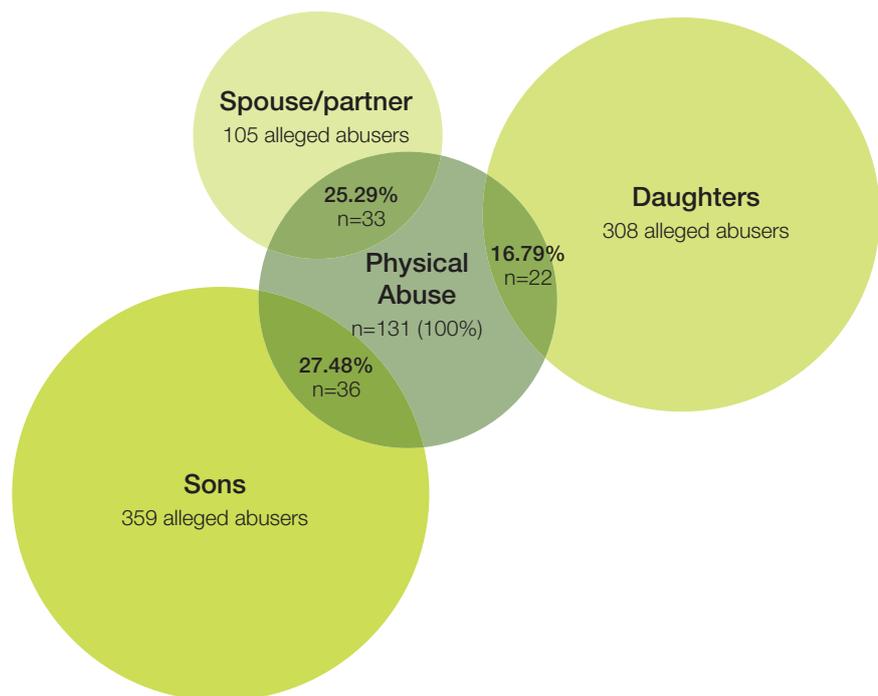
Figure 15. Population of total notifications involving physical abuse and the proportion of those accounted for by alleged abusers that are: sons, daughters or spouse/partners. Circle sizes are proportionate.

A gender breakdown of spouse/partners who abuse physically finds almost two thirds of alleged abusers are male. In all cases the relationships were heterosexual. This figure is close to identical to the gender breakdown of spouse/partners who perpetrate without physical abuse, also all heterosexual. Domestic violence research usually indicates a much higher proportion of male abusers than shows in our data and one might have expected to see a high proportion of male abusers using physical abuse than for other forms of abuse. While ageing domestically violent relationships provide an explanation for the disproportionate amount of physical abuse accounted for by spouse/partner alleged abusers, the gender breakdown implies the need for a more complex explanation.

Gender of spouse/partner who physically abuse
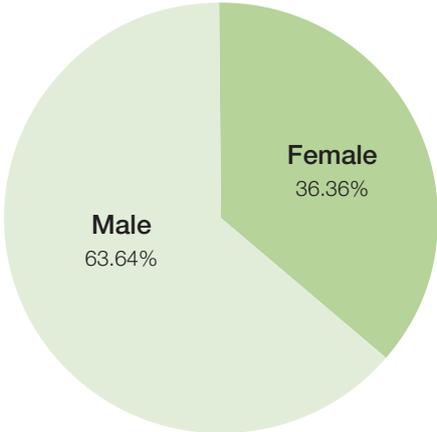
Gender of spouse/partner abusers excluding physical abusers
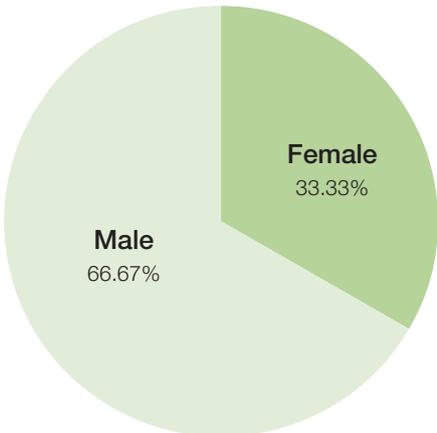
Figure 16 & 17. Gender analysis of primary abuse type for alleged victims and alleged abusers reported to the Helpline for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012.

12 Relationship type

Non-trust relationships

Strictly speaking, abuse of an older person where there is no relationship of trust, is not covered by the definition of elder abuse used by EAPU. However, these are still cases where an older person is experiencing abuse and EAPU does count them. No relationship of trust abuse cases are categorised under a number of common situations including: accommodation disputes, neighbourhood disputes, and financial disputes or scams. No relationship of trust is a recent inclusion in the database and covers notifiers such as shop keepers and hairdressers.

Of the 1137 abuse cases, 12.31% were perpetrated by individuals who are classed as not having a relationship of trust with the victim. Of these cases 77.86% (n= 140) provided details of the abuse situations allowing for the recording of a primary abuse type. Generally speaking, most non-trust abuse situations involved a primary abuse type of psychological abuse. In particular, psychological abuse constituted over 70% of primary abuse types for retirement village disputes, neighbourhood disputes, and where the abuser is unknown (stalker, gang members etc) (see Table 3). In a deviation from this trend, over 70% of abuse cases originating from nursing homes, disputes with the organisation generally or with individual workers, were cases of neglect (see Table 3). Two self-neglect cases were also recorded; situations where the older adult failed to provide for themselves sufficient care, despite being capable of doing so. Financial abuse, including scams, made up 7.86% of these non-trust cases. Two individuals disclosed the amount lost which totalled $28,000.

Primary abuse type

Abuse situation	Financial		Neglect		Physical		Psychological		Sexual		Social		Total (100%)
Accommodation dispute					(n=1)	9.09%	(n=8)	**72.73%**			(n=2)	18.18%	11
Agency dispute or complaint	(n=4)	15.38%	(n=6)	23.08%			(n=15)	**57.69%**					26
House-mate abuse	(n=1)	20.00%			(n=2)	**40.00%**	(n=1)	20.00%	(n=1)	20.00%			5
Neighbourhood disputes					(n=6)	17.14%	(n=30)	**85.71%**					35
Nursing home disputes			(n=5)	**71.43%**	(n=2)	28.57%			(n=1)	14.29%			7
Financial dispute or scam	(n=11)	100.00%											11
Self neglect			(n=2)	100.00%									2
Unknown abusers			(n=1)	25.00%			(n=3)	**75.00%**	(n=1)	25.00%			4
Individual workers			(n=3)	**75.00%**			(n=2)	50.00%					4
Unknown	(n=4)	12.12%	(n=3)	9.09%	(n=4)	12.12%	(n=18)	**54.55%**	(n=1)	3.03%	(n=3)	9.09%	33
Total	(n=20)	14.29%	(n=19)	13.57%	(n=15)	10.71%	(n=76)	54.29%	(n=4)	2.86%	(n=6)	4.29%	140

Table 3. Proportion of primary abuse types for each category of abuse situation.

Health and psychological risk factors

EAPU records health risk factors under three primary categories: substance abuse, psychological health, and physical health. These categories and subsequent options were included on the basis that they had been identified as risk factors in research literature. The factors are currently under review and may be refined in future. Specific risk factors currently recorded include mental illness, dementia, or suspected dementia (psychological); frailty, illness, or disability (physical); alcohol, prescription drugs, illicit drugs (substance abuse). The primary categories of risk factor are not mutually exclusive, and the database allows a free-text field to capture additional factors that may contribute to the case.

Alleged victim

Over half alleged victims were reported to have a psychological health risk factor, this was also the case for physical health risk factors. Substance misuse in the alleged victim was rarely reported (see Table 4).

Health risk factors	Number of victims	% of all victims
Substance abuse	6	0.57%
Psychological health	613	57.78%
Physical health	630	59.38%

Table 4. Number and proportion of total alleged victims where health risk factor is present.

Substance abuse

- Alcohol abuse was the only reported substance misuse in victims.

Psychological health

- Dementia was reported for 14.42% (n=153) of abused individuals, suspected dementia in 8.11% (n=86).
- Severe distress was recorded for 23.56% (n=250) of abused individuals.
- Depression for 5.09% (n=54) of abused individuals
- Mental illness for 2.36% (n=25) of abused individuals.
- Intellectual disability for 1.04% (n=11) of abused individuals.
- Other psychological factors for 3.20% (n=34) of abused individuals.
- Further category of risk factors enabled workers to identify:
  - Anxiety 3.77% (n=40)
  - Forgetfulness 0.47% (n=5)
  - Fear 0.47% (n=5)
  - Stress 0.47% (n=5)

12

Health and psychological risk factors

Physical health

- Frailty was the leading risk factor for physical health, reported in 28.56% (n=303) of cases.
- Illness was reported in 21.58% (n=229) of abused individuals.
- Disability in 9.24% (n=98) of abused individuals.
- The other category also captured additional health factors including:
    - Hearing impairment 0.19% (n=2)
    - Parkinson's disease 0.19% (n=2)
    - Stroke 0.19% (n=2).

Alleged abuser

The proportion of health risk factors was much lower for alleged abusers, but it should be noted that the Helpline rarely has contact with the alleged abusers themselves and detail is generally more sparse than for the alleged victim. The proportion of alleged abusers reported as having substance misuse issues was much higher that of alleged victims (see Table 5).

Health risk factors	Number of alleged abusers	% of all alleged abusers
Substance abuse	104	9.59%
Psychological health	131	12.07%
Physical health	43	3.96%

Table 5. Number and proportion of total alleged abusers where health risk factor is present.

Substance abuse

- Alcohol abuse (only) was reported for 5.35% (n=58) alleged abusers.
- Illicit drug reported for 2.95% (n=32) alleged abusers.
- Combination of alcohol and illicit drug use for 1.01% (n=11) alleged abusers.

Psychological health

- For psychological health risk factors mental illness was the most recorded with 8.49% (n=92) of alleged abusers reported as having suffering from a mental illness.
- Depression was reported for 1.38% (n=15) of alleged abusers.
- Intellectual disability in 0.83% (n=9) of alleged abusers.
- Further categories captured psychological factors including:
  - Aggressive 2.68% (n=29).
  - Anger 1.38% (n=15).
  - Stress 0.46% (n=5).
  - Anxiety disorders 0.37% (n=4).

Physical Health

Illness was reported in only 1.85% (n=20) of alleged abusers, and disability in 1.75% (n=19).

Care needs of the alleged abuser

The EAPU database also allows us to identify where alleged abusers require some level of care themselves. For the 2011-2012 year 2.21% (n=24) of alleged abusers were reported as needing either part- or full-time care. The EAPU database does not allow us to record who provides care to the alleged abuser, it could be a service such as Blue Care, a family member, or it could be that the alleged victim is the carer of the abuser.

12 Financial risk factors

Financial risk factors may be insufficient income; debt incurred by the victim or on behalf of family members such as signing as guarantor on loans; and financial dependencies, especially dependence of adult children on victims. The factors available in the database are mutually exclusive and under review. Some options are ill defined and appear to overlap, for example 'insufficient income' is likely to be an issue whenever 'unemployment' 'debt burden', or 'gambling' are involved.

Alleged victim

Of the total number of alleged victims, 32.80% (n=348) were reported to have one or more financial risk factors. Dependence by others such as family members, was the leading financial risk factor reported for alleged victims, followed by dependence on others.

- Dependence by others was recorded for 12.91% (n=137) of alleged victims.
- Dependence on others was recorded for 7.45 (n=79) of alleged victims.
- Insufficient income was recorded for 6.97% (n=74) of alleged victims.
- Both unemployment and gambling were recorded for less than 1% of alleged victims.
- Debt burden was recorded for 1.98% (n=21) of alleged victims.

An examination of co-occurrence of financial risk factors did not reveal any substantial pairings. See Appendix 2 for the resulting table.

Alleged abuser

Of the total number of alleged abusers, 18.73% (n=203) were reported to have one or more financial risk factors. Unsurprisingly the most common financial risk factor for alleged abusers is dependence on others, unlike alleged victims however, the reverse – dependence by others – was not second most common, but the least common risk factor. This appears to imply that financial dependence of alleged victims on alleged abusers is not a significant factor in elder abuse.

- Dependence on others was recorded for 6.73% (n=73) of alleged abusers.
- Unemployment was recorded for 4.26% (n=46) of alleged abusers.
- Insufficient Income was recorded for 4.24% (n=44) of alleged abusers.
- Debt burden was recorded for 3.04% (n=33) of alleged abusers.
- Gambling was recorded for 1.38% (n=15) of alleged abusers.
- Dependence by others was recorded for 1.85% (n=20) of alleged abusers.

An examination of co-occurrence of financial risk factors did not reveal any substantial pairings. See Appendix 2 for the resulting table.

Environmental/social risk factors

A number of factors external to the individual have been raised in research literature as increasing the risk an older person will experience abuse. Some social risks are relational such as a lack of a social support network and others are more concrete such as isolation due to remoteness or mobility issues, or a lack of support services available to the older person. In the Helpline database social risk factors are mutually exclusive. Other environmental factors include inadequate accommodation, dependence on others for day to day living and social engagement, and a history of family conflict. Social and environmental risk factors can be recorded for both alleged victim and alleged abuser. These risk factors are currently under review as items such as lack of support network is both an outcome and predisposing risk of elder abuse. Further, some items such as family conflict are inadequately defined and employed with a great deal of subjectivity by Helpline workers.

Alleged victim

Social risk factors were noted for 27.71% (n=294) abused individuals, lack of support network and isolation were the two leading risk factors (see Table 6).

Type of social risk factor	Alleged victims	% of all notifications
Isolation	118	11.12%
Lack of services	37	3.49%
Lack of support networks	124	11.69%
Unable to access services	15	1.41%
Total	**294**	**27.71%**

Table 6. Proportion of all alleged victims experiencing a social risk factor

- Dependency on the alleged abuser for day-to-day living was noted for 27% (n=288) of abused individuals.

- Family conflict was identified for 59% (n=626) of abused individuals and 64% (n=399) of these cases were ongoing conflicts.

- Inadequate accommodation was noted for 13% (n=139) of abused individuals.

12

Environmental/social risk factors

Alleged abuser

Environmental and social risk factors may also impact on the perpetrators of elder abuse. Only 6.64 % (n=70) of alleged abusers were recorded as having a social risk factor; but, similarly to alleged victims isolation (2.95% n=32) and lack of support networks (2.49%, n=27) were the most recorded (see Table 7).

Type of social risk factor	Alleged abusers	% of all alleged abusers
Isolation	32	2.95%
Lack of services	10	0.92%
Lack of support networks	27	2.49%
Unable to access services	1	0.09%
Total	70	6.46%

Table 7. Proportion of all alleged abusers experiencing a social risk factor.

- Family conflict was identified in 46.31% (n=502) of perpetrator families and 64% (n=323) of these cases were ongoing conflicts.

Living arrangements

Living arrangements were disclosed for 49% (n=524) of abused individuals and a gender analysis of living arrangements reveals some trends reported below. (See Appendix 1 for full breakdown of living arrangements).

- Similar proportions of males and females live with family of some type, 72.6% and 69.2% disclosed living arrangements respectively, but:

- Men are more likely to be living with a spouse, 37.2% compared to 20.5%

- Women are more likely to be living with an adult child, 43.3% compared to 25.7%.

- Men are more likely to be living with non-family members than women, 13.5% compared to 4.3%.

Income and home ownership

Alleged victim

While close to a fifth of home ownership status and a third of primary income sources were not disclosed for alleged abusers, most alleged victims owned their own home and were in receipt of a Department of Human Services payment.

Primary income source of alleged victims

Not Disclosed
29%

Government
Payments
65%

Self-funded
retirement
5%

Paid work
1%
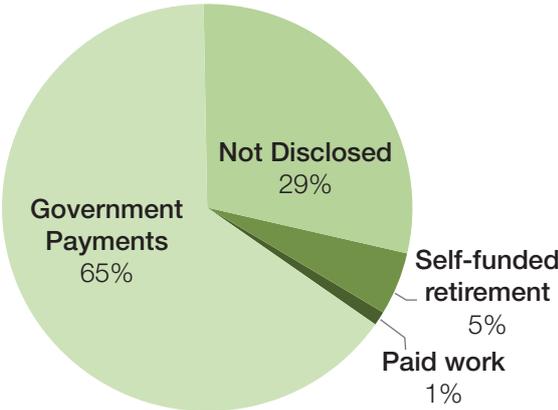
Figure 18

Home ownership status of alleged victims

Not Disclosed
19%

Owner*
57%

Renting
16%

Aged care facility
8%
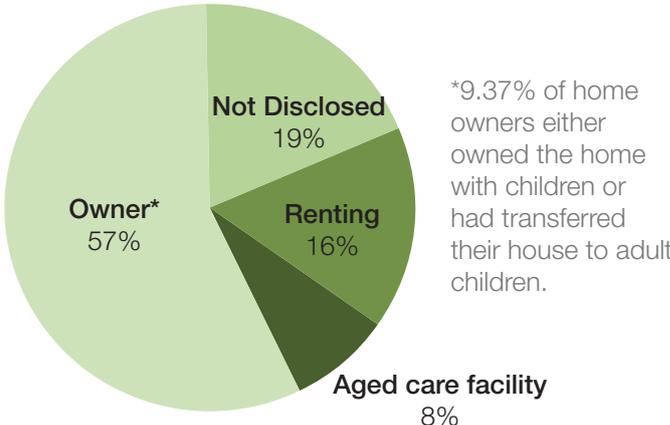
*9.37% of home owners either owned the home with children or had transferred their house to adult children.

Figure 19

Alleged abuser

Home ownership status was disclosed for alleged abusers for only 39.84% of abusers (n=428) and so results must be interpreted with caution. Of the alleged abusers for which home ownership status was available, 43.92% were renting in some form, 47.89% owned a home, and 8.18% lived rent free with their victims or their parents.

The primary income source for alleged abusers was disclosed for only 37.91% of alleged abusers. Of these 61.31% received government payments, 37.95% were in paid work, and 0.73% were self-funded retirees.

12 Carer status of abuser

Research literature has posed a carer burden model of abuse. This explanation holds that abuse is perpetrated by carers and this is a large part due to the stress involved in providing care for a dependent adult. EAPU data finds that carers constitute a sizable, yet minority of alleged abusers.

- Less than 20% of Helpline calls involve abuse by a carer.

- While females are more likely to be carers than males generally, in EAPU data equal numbers of males and females were recorded as abusers (see Table 8).

- Around 74% of carer abusers were recorded as having carer stress.

- Carer stress was recorded in equal proportions for male and female abusers.

Gender	Abuser is carer	Carer stress	% of carers with carers stress
Female	103	76	73.79%
Male	102	76	74.51%

Table 8. Gender breakdown of abusers who are carers, and carers experiencing carer stress.

- Overall, carer stress was only recorded as a factor for 14.02% of all abusers (see Figure 20.)

Carer status of alleged abusers and experience of carer stress
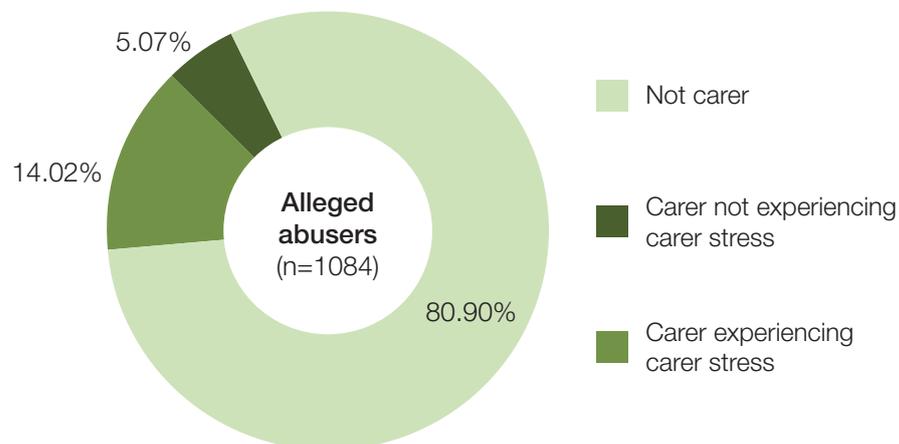
Figure 20. Proportion of alleged abusers who are not carers, carers, and carers experiencing carer stress.

Notifiers

A total of 1001 notifiers called regarding 1137 cases of abuse during the 2011-2012 financial year. Family members of various types account for the largest proportion of notifiers and it should be noted that well over half this group is made up of daughters; daughters make up 19.94% of all notifiers who contacted the helpline. Sons made up the next largest sub-group, accounting for 6.29% of all notifiers. The 2011-2012 financial year saw an increase to 30.41% in the proportion of self-notifiers, up from 25% in 2010-2011. No relationship of trust is a recent inclusion in the database and covers notifiers such as shop keepers and hairdressers.

Relationship to alleged victim/s for 1001 notifiers
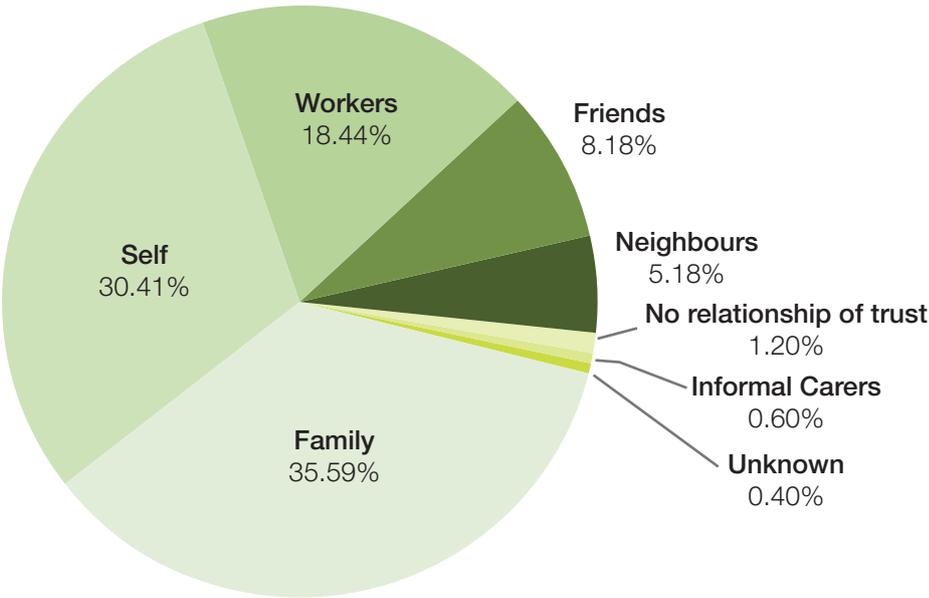
Figure 21. Proportions of notifier types contacting the Helpline during the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

12 Notifiers

Analysis of what type of primary abuse is reported by different notifier types shows a number of trends. Some groups appear to 'punch above their weight' in reporting certain primary abuse types. For example, despite only representing 18.29% of notifiers for all abuse cases, workers account for 37.41% of the cases where neglect is the primary type of abuse. Similarly, family members account for 34.56% of notifiers for all cases, but identify 62.26% of cases where social abuse is the primary type of abuse. The most common identified primary abuse type reported by self-notifiers is psychological abuse.

It is difficult to derive much from the data relating to sexual abuse as a result of the low number of cases. It should also be noted that the low numbers of spouse/partner as notifiers are a result of database limitations, not necessarily a lack of spousal concern. The Helpline database only records the relationship between the notifier and one victim. Where one part of an older couple is being abused, most often the other party (where the spouse/partner is not the alleged abuser) is being abused as well and as a result the notifier will be recorded as a self rather than spouse/partner.

Notifier type and proportionate group size		Financial (n=336)	Neglect (n=139)	Physical (n=99)	Psychological (n=502)	Sexual (n=8)	Social (n=53)
Family	34.56%	**43.45%**	39.57%	22.22%	26.89%	25.00%	**62.26%**
Self	31.57%	25.60%	2.16%	31.31%	**46.22%**	25.00%	9.43%
Worker	18.29%	15.77%	**37.41%**	**28.28%**	13.94%	12.50%	7.55%
Informal carers and friends	8.44%	10.12%	8.63%	7.07%	6.37%	25.00%	**16.98%**
No relationship of trust*	6.07%	4.46%	**12.23%**	**9.09%**	4.98%	12.50%	3.77%
Spouse/partner	0.70%	0.30%	0.00%	1.01%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%
Unknown	0.35%	0.30%	0.00%	1.01%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 9. Proportion of primary abuse type reported by notifier type for the 1137 primary abuse types.

Referral source

Most calls to the Helpline came as a result of other agencies referring notifiers to the Helpline, or from the notifiers own professional knowledge of the service. Following this, notifiers found the service through brochures and posters, the telephone directory, or via the web-site. Supportlink, which is a service that allows the Queensland police and ambulance services to electronically refer individuals to additional supports, referred 51 (5.09%) notifiers to the Helpline (see Table 10).

Referral source	Proportion of notifications (n=1001)
Word of mouth - agency	32.67%
Professional knowledge	13.69%
EAPU brochure/poster	12.69%
Telephone directory	11.49%
Internet	10.99%
SupportLink referral	5.09%
Promotional material	3.90%
Word of mouth - friend/ acquaintance	3.80%
Other	1.90%
Newspaper article	1.00%
Media-electronic	1.00%
EAPU training/awareness session	0.70%
Media-print	0.50%
Unknown	0.30%

Table 10. Proportion of notifications on the Helpline enabled by referral type for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Referrals for notifiers

EAPU refers to a range of different services depending on the situation of individual victims and needs of individual notifiers. Of the 1537 referrals 9.13% were for Queensland guardianship agencies (excluding the Public Trustee); 15.23% were to health services, 24.56% were to legal services, the bulk of which were Seniors Legal and Support Services; and 5.93% of referrals were to financial bodies including the Public Trustee. Interstate referrals made up 1.12% of the referrals made by EAPU. For a full list of referrals, see Appendix 3.

12

Enquiry calls

The total number of calls to the Helpline during the 2011-2012 financial year was 1690. Approximately 34% of these calls were classed as an 'enquiry call'. These calls are where there is no specific elder abuse situation and covers requests for training, community education sessions, order elder abuse resources, or enquire about the EAPU generally. General elder abuse information was the most common reason for enquiry calls (see Table 11).

Call subject	Number of calls	Proportion of enquiry calls
General elder abuse information	204	35.29%
Non elder abuse situation	117	20.24%
EAPU service	92	15.92%
Brochure/resource request	81	14.01%
Training session	54	9.34%
Awareness session	30	5.19%
Total	**578**	**100.00%**

Table 11. Enquiries received by the Helpline for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012

Community education

Training sessions

Training sessions are education or professional development sessions for industry audiences such as service providers working with older people or tertiary students who will be entering the field. These sessions are structured for workers, or future workers, who have an explicit duty of care to their clients. Sessions include an overview of elder abuse, types and signs of elder abuse, what to do when abusive situations present, including who to and how to report, as well as cross cultural issues and the rights and responsibilities of workers. EAPU delivered 114 sessions across Queensland, reaching 2333 participants in the 2011-2012 financial year (see Table 12).

Region	Training sessions provided
Brisbane and West Moreton	63
Central West Qld	6
Darling Downs	1
Far North Qld	14
Fitzroy	8
Mackay	2
South West Qld	2
North Qld	10
North West Qld	0
Wide Bay Burnett	8
Total	**114**

Table 12. Number of training and awareness session provided for each region for the period for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Community education

Evaluations

EAPU requests feedback on all training sessions for both the content and the presentation. For the content, participants are asked to record on a scale of one to five their knowledge about elder abuse before and after the training sessions. The lowest possible score is one, meaning 'Not at all' though to five 'Yes' (2 = 'Not really', 3 = 'Partly', 4 = 'Mostly'). Table 13 lists the mean score for each question derived from the 1333 questionnaires returned. This represents a response rate of 67.7% for the 2011-2012 financial year.

Learnings in EAPU training sessions	Before	After	Increase
About elder abuse (types)	40	4.8	0.8
How to recognise (signs) of abuse	3.7	4.7	1.0
What to do in an abuse situation	3.5	4.7	1.2
Who to refer cases of abuse to	3.4	4.7	1.3
My rights and responsibilities	3.6	4.7	1.1
About cultural issues	3.3	4.5	1.2

Table 13. Mean pre and post training self-assessment scores for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Feedback on the presentation of the training is measured by three questions using the same scale as the content questions. The questions and mean score are listed in Table 14.

Trainer/session feedback	
Information was presented in a clear and understandable way	4.8
The session was well organised	4.7
The presenter encouraged participation	4.6

Table 14. Mean scores for feedback questions for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Awareness sessions

Awareness sessions, also known as community education sessions are offered to community groups or older persons groups with the aim of giving a general overview of elder abuse including support options and preventative strategies. The goal of offering awareness sessions is to increase community understanding of the issue, enabling a broader recognition of abuse situations as well as linking victims with support services. The EAPU provided 65 awareness sessions to 1401 people across Queensland during the 2011-2012 financial year (see Table 15).

Region	Awareness sessions provided
Brisbane and West Moreton	30
Central West Qld	5
Darling Downs	6
Far North Qld	1
Fitzroy	19
Mackay	
South West Qld	6
North Qld	2
North West Qld	
Wide Bay Burnett	3
Total	**65**

Table 15. Number of awareness sessions by region for the period 1/7/2011 - 30/6/2012.

Evaluations

Due to the nature of awareness raising sessions response rates of feedback questionnaires are much lower than training sessions. For the 2011-2012 financial year the response rate was 17.3% (n=243). Table 16 shows the percentage of respondents choosing Yes, No, or Unsure to the four questions asked on the feedback form.

Question	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response
My knowledge about elder abuse increased	83.95%	10.28%	4.52%	1.23%
The information was useful	96.30%	0.82%	0.82%	2.06%
I was satisfied with the presentation	95.88%	0.82%	0.82%	2.47%
I know who to contact for assistance	93.00%	1.65%	3.70%	1.65%

Special events

Special events include forums, network meetings and expos where EAPU holds a stall or is invited as a guest speaker. Media interactions such as recorded interviews and written articles are also included in this category. EAPU participated in 67 special events in the 2011-2012 financial year.

12 Rural and remote peer support network

The peer support network aims to link rural and remote workers with expertise, options and information to deal with encounters of elder abuse, through UnitingCare Community's EAPU networks and contacts. One of EAPU's roles is to be first port of call for service providers dealing with suspected elder abuse and we can assist with planning a course of action for workers with clients experiencing elder abuse. Members have access to websites, information, news of upcoming events and regular teleconferences with guest speakers. Current membership stands at 314 rural, regional and remote workers throughout the state and three teleconferences were held during the year.

Teleconference July 2011

A panel of staff from EAPU explored the difficulties of working with elder abuse and discussed their shared experiences regarding: struggles and frustrations; the inclination not to take action; sitting on the fence hoping the issue will resolve itself; waiting for a crisis; those gut feelings that don't go away; not wishing to get involved with 'family matters'; not wishing to breach confidentiality; stretching boundaries and forgetting self-care.

Groups dialled in from:

Ayr, Barcaldine, Burketown, Cairns, Gayndah, Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, Mackay, Miles, Mount Isa, Roma, Tara, Texas, Thursday Island, Townsville, and Wandoan.

Teleconference October 2011

Mark Phillips, Senior Investigations Officer from the Office of the Adult Guardian gave a presentation on *How does the Office of the Adult Guardian work?* Mark is the longest serving officer at the Office of the Adult Guardian and has conducted literally hundreds of investigations involving the use of enduring powers of attorney and allegations of abuse of adults with impaired capacity, including many complex and high profile matters.

Groups dialled in from:

Barcaldine, Cairns, Charleville, Dirranbandi, Goondiwindi, Killarney, Mackay, Mareeba, North Mackay, Ravenshoe, Richmond, Roma, Townsville, and Toowoomba.

Teleconference March 2012

Felicity Walker from the Aged Care Complaints Scheme gave a presentation on Reportable Assaults – Mandatory Reporting which covered the topics of *What is a reportable assault?*; *Timeframes for reporting*; and *Approved Provider responsibilities.* Felicity has worked in both the Aged Care Resolution Scheme and the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme since 2005 and in that time has worked as an assistant director leading both the intake and investigations teams. Felicity had recently taken a lead role in developing new guidelines for the reformed Aged Care Complaints Scheme.

Groups dialled in from:

Cairns, Charleville, Dalby, Kingaroy, Longreach, Mareeba, Mt Isa, Pialba, Roma, and Tambo.

Website

The EAPU website received 12 046 visits during the 2011-2012 financial year, averaging more than 1000 hits a month. There appears to be a substantial increase in visits from February 2012 onwards which may be attributable to the promotional activity and online registration for the Elder Abuse National Conference held on 7 June 2012.

Number of website visits
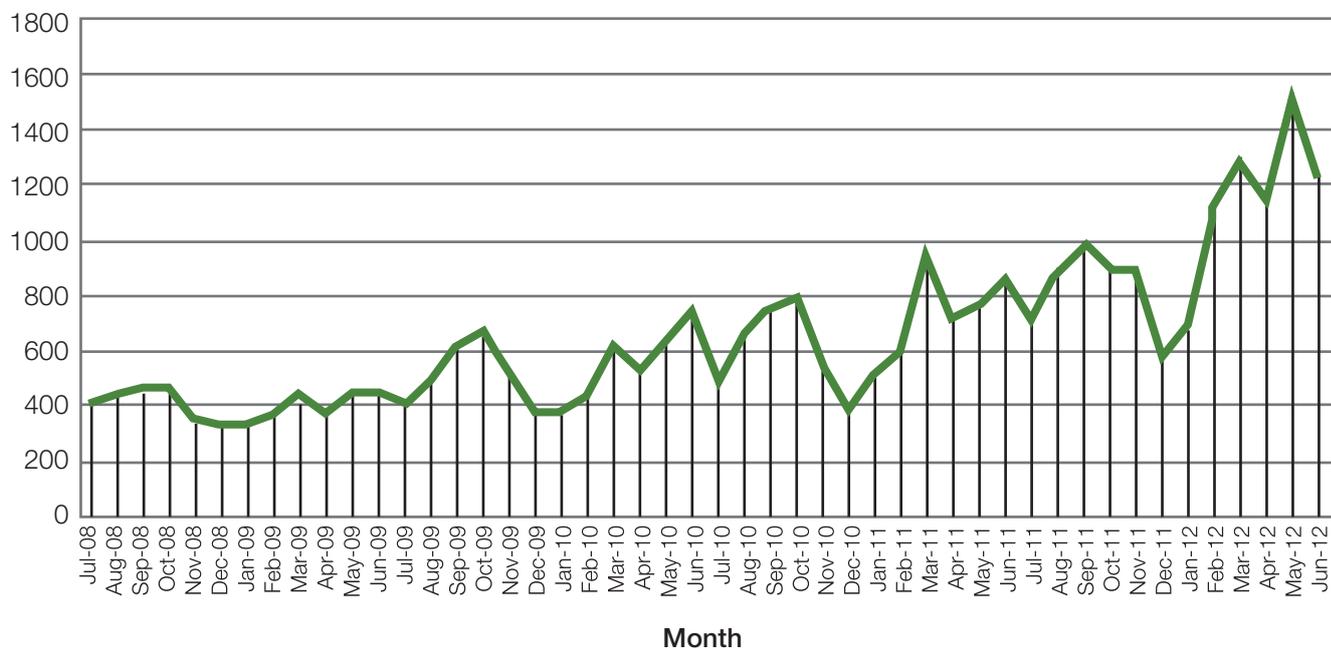
Figure 21. Number of web-site visits per month for the period 1/7/2008 – 30/7/2012.

Website

Traffic sources

Most of the visits to the website were from within Australia (86.55%; refer to Table 17). Most of the visits were Google searches with the remainder evenly split between referral and direct traffic (see Figure 22). However, 20.95% of visits were direct, achieved by typing the URL into a browser's address field.

Direct traffic
23.46%

Referral traffic
23.63%

Search traffic
52.91%
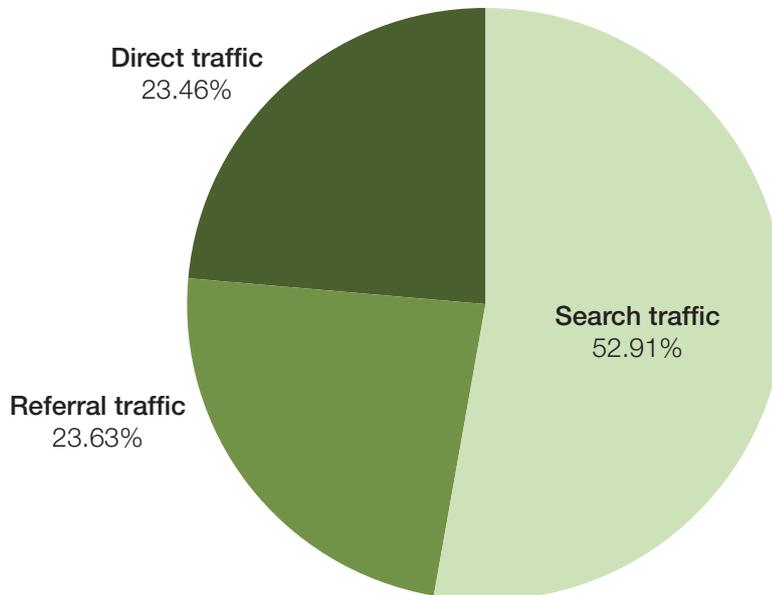
Figure 22. Proportion of traffic originating from sources for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Continent	Visits	% of total visits	Pages / visit	Average duration	% New visits	Bounce rate
Oceania	10, 490	87.08%	3.87	0:03:49	66.02%	48.76%
Australia	10, 426	86.55%	3.87	0:03:49	66.02%	48.72%
Americas	909	7.55%	1.65	0:00:48	87.02%	82.07%
Europe	342	2.84T	1.85	0:01:21	88.89%	75.44%
Asia	258	2.14%	2.47	0:02:46	80.23%	64.34%
Africa	28	0.23%	1.82	0:00:55	78.57%	85.71%
Unknown	19	0.16%	2.32	0:01:51	89.47%	63.16%

Table 17. Number and proportion of total visits from different regions for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012.

Direct traffic

There were 2826 (23.46%) visits where users accessed the site by typing the URL into a browser's address field.

Search traffic

Most visitors used a search engine to access the site. There were 6373 (53%) visits arriving from 1921 different search terms. The top 10 terms are listed in Table 18, consistent with last year's data, "elder abuse prevention unit" was the most common search term by a large margin.

	Search term	Visits	% of search visits
1	elder abuse prevention unit	893	14.01%
2	eapu	395	6.20%
3	elder abuse	320	5.02%
4	(not provided)	292	4.58%
5	elder abuse queensland	195	3.06%
6	elder abuse definition	151	2.37%
7	www.eapu.com.au	117	1.84%
8	elder abuse qld	108	1.69%
9	elder abuse hotline	86	1.35%
10	elder abuse conference brisbane	83	1.30%

Table 18. Top ten search teams resulting in visits to the EAPU website for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012

Referral traffic

There were 2826 (24%) visits via a referrer (another web-site linking to ours), the top 10 referrers are listed in Table 19.

	Referrer	Visits	% of referrer visits
1	helpguide.org	237	8.32%
2	communities.qld.gov.au	197	6.92%
3	seniors.gov.au	183	6.43%
4	uccommunity.org.au	156	5.48%
5	learn.unisa.edu.au	134	4.71%
6	eapuconference.gofundraise.com.au	123	4.32%
7	intranet	113	3.97%
8	police.qld.gov.au	104	3.65%
9	cshtafe.com	103	3.62%
10	justice.qld.gov.au	91	3.20%

Table 19. Top ten referring sites resulting in visits to the EAPU website for the period 1/7/2011 – 30/6/2012

Regional reports

South West, Central West and North West Queensland

by Rose Marwick, Project Officer, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

One of the hardest tasks for a small service like EAPU is to ensure that we spread ourselves evenly across Queensland so that we can deliver training, up to date resources and raise awareness of elder abuse. With only three of us covering such a huge state, our dream of visiting everywhere each year is impossible but we do our best and the trips we make are a highlight of working in the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit.

I have been covering the South West down to the New South Wales border and as far out as Quilpie. Further West, Bedourie and Windorah have yet to be visited. I have also been covering Central and North West Queensland and Wide Bay. As trips can be quite expensive and we can't be away from the Helpline for too long, our visits tend to be planned down to the last detail and fleeting.

One of the disadvantages of making fleeting visits is that it is difficult to form long lasting working relationships with workers in regional Queensland, although we of course continue to make our presence felt through the quarterly newsletter and our teleconferences.

2010-2011 was my biggest year for travelling with trips to Central Queensland, Mount Isa and Cloncurry in conjunction with a worker from Diversicare in Townsville, Charleville, Augathella and Cunnamulla. I had the honour of travelling with Val French, a well known advocate for older people's issues, and Julie Argeros from Older Person's Programs at UnitingCare Community in July 2011. We did the circuit, calling in at Dalby, Chinchilla, Roma, St George and Goondiwindi where Val held seminars to learn about the issues concerning older people in Regional Queensland, in particular, transport and testing seniors for their driving licenses. I was able to deliver some training sessions as well, so it was a productive and enjoyable trip.

In August 2011, I travelled to Warwick, Inglewood, Goondiwindi and St George, and in November I went to Murgon and Kingaroy. August 2012 saw me spending a few days in the Wide Bay region and I visited Charleville, Cunnamulla, Roma, Injune and Mitchell. I always feel well received in the places I visit and there is a lot of interest in elder abuse. Sadly, everywhere I go I hear stories from or about people who have suffered, or are still suffering abuse from their families.

After five years with the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit I am hanging up my boots and moving Interstate with my husband. I have loved being part of such a vital service and I treasure many happy memories of my visits throughout Queensland. There are so many wonderful dedicated workers and it is a privilege to have touched base with them.

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Regional reports

North and Far North Queensland

by Maya Zetlin, Senior Project Officer, Education, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

One year seems to flow into another and it is only when I went through my work diary that I realised what a busy year it has been and how similar it was to other years but yet so unique.

Aiming to cover the South-East region and the North and Far North regions is a challenge combined with a juggling act. Besides the training and awareness raising sessions, I participated in relevant network meetings, occasionally travel interstate, develop resources, respond to Helpline calls etc.

The major part of this reporting period I have devoted to developing and compiling the Queensland Guide for Elder Abuse Protocols. Queensland now has its own protocols that are relevant to our State's laws, available services and appropriate pathways of referrals. However, as a significant number of callers to our Helpline are concerned about older people who live interstate, we also need to have up to date knowledge about services in other states so we can provide appropriate information and referrals.

More and more services and workers are aware of Elder Abuse and have encountered elder abuse situations, which required their intervention. Therefore my training presentations are very flexible, tailored to the participants and fluctuate from formal sessions with a Power Point presentation to sitting around the table, engaging in informal conversations and exploring challenging real cases.

Most of the training sessions I delivered were to providers of home and personal care to older people in the community. I regard these workers as being the key for identifying elder abuse because they are the eyes and ears of their services. Their timely, appropriate, sensitive approach and accurate reporting to their managers is paramount in identifying and responding to an abusive situation. These workers usually have close relationships with their clients and they could find it difficult to maintain the balance between personal relationships and professional boundaries. Therefore it is so important to provide them with training, information and ongoing support for balancing their rights and responsibilities.

Other sessions were provided to specialised and often experienced services including ACATs, Hospital Discharge Units, Transition Care Programs and Hospital Social Work Departments. Presentations that addressed compounding risk factors due to cultural diversity were delivered to services working with Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander communities and to multicultural services including the Serbian, Polish and Chinese communities.

I have continued my working relationships with some universities, including Griffiths' Nathan and Logan Campuses, TAFE courses and a Nursing Diploma course. Another ongoing working relationship I have is with RSL workers and volunteers in various locations. It is very rewarding to be invited to present again to the same service, usually yearly, as obviously they see the benefit of our training for their staff and clients.

I continued my collaboration with the Ipswich City Council's Safer Seniors Project, and gave informal awareness raising talks to respite clients, Legacy members, 60 and better groups, mother union group and some multicultural groups.

I was privileged to be invited to participate on a panel at The Aged Rights Service (TARS) Forum in Sydney. Many representatives from a variety of services attended, both on the panel and as the audience, demonstrated high level of skills and diversity. However, it was obvious to me that no one service could address and explore all the issues that a single elder abuse case may include e.g. medical, capacity, legal, accommodation, family relationships and cultural values, to mention just a few. The model of Elder Abuse Prevention Unit's program, including the Helpline and the training and awareness raising sessions, can be very beneficial for NSW in addressing elder abuse holistically by exploring the situation broadly, providing relevant information and making appropriate referrals with some phone advocacy.

Obviously, successful outcomes of our referrals depend firstly on whether the callers choose to utilise them and then largely on the availability and response of the services that we can refer to. We appreciate that all services operate within eligibility, funding, mandate, available staff and other guiding frameworks and restrictions. Therefore networking, collaborating and establishing good and respectful working relationships are paramount for all of us. Often the outcomes depend not on what we know but on who we know. Therefore I would like to end my report by thanking all the amazing, dedicated, selfless and simply wonderful people I have met along the way, who collectively contributed to the positive outcomes in addressing the rights of older people. I am looking forward to working with you again next year.

UnitingCare Community Elder Abuse National Conference 2012

New directions in elder abuse

Review by Les Jackson, Co-ordinator, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

The UnitingCare Community Elder Abuse National Conference 2012 was recognised by the Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse as its first national conference, which was a great honour for the EAPU, but a considerable responsibility as well. Although major support was provided by UnitingCare Community's support functions the bulk of the workload fell on the EAPU program staff and on Dom Sparkes in particular who project managed the conference on top of her normal duties. Held over the 7th and 8th of June 2012 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, the conference boasted arguably the world's two highest ranked international researchers on elder abuse; Dr Gloria Gutman (Canada) and Bridget Penhale (UK). Both are prolific researchers and both recipients of the International Rosalie Wolf Memorial Award which recognises dedication and commitment to elder abuse prevention and awareness raising through research, policy, practice, or education. Dr Gutman is also the current president of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).

The program featured a further ten presentations drawn from researchers and experts from across Australia and delegates were treated to a broad spectrum of elder abuse topics and new research; addressing financial abuse in an Aboriginal community, LGBTI initiatives, cultural aspects of abuse, human rights and new legislation were among some of the topics addressed although the growing issue of financial elder abuse emerged as a strong theme.

It was particularly satisfying to have a UnitingCare Community research project featuring at the conference with Dr Sharon Atkin, State Manager of UnitingCare Community research providing the preliminary results of an exploratory study on the prevalence of elder abuse. The project was driven by Dr Atkins team in partnership with BlueCare and Drummond Street Services, Victoria. This was quite an achievement by a unit that had not long been in existence and now provides UnitingCare Community with the ability to further support its programs through targeted research.

Another highlight was the panel debate exploring The Tipping Point where protection initiatives start to override a person's rights for self-determination. This was always going to be a very robust discussion with so many lawyers on the panel and it didn't disappoint. Our gratitude goes out to our local experts Dianne Pendergast, Sue Field, and Brian Herd who certainly knew their topic and were not shy about expressing their views, while the two international panel members brought their own world perspectives into the debate.

The conference by any measure was a success and enhanced the prestige of the organisation and the EAPU nationally and internationally.

Top: Guest speakers Dr Gloria Gutman (left) and Bridget Penhale (right).
Bottom: Morning tea at the conference.

Appendix 1.

Proportion of alleged victims in different living arrangements by total and gender.

Living Arrangements	Notifications	Male (n=148)	Female (n=376)	Percent of all victims				
Alone	114	18.2%	23.1%				**21.76%**	Alone
Son	96	12.2%	20.7%	18.32%	20.80%	All son	(14.2% Males)	37.60%
Son & son's family	13	2.0%	2.7%	2.48%			(23.4% Females)	All adult children
Daughter	64	7.4%	14.1%	12.21%	15.46%	All daughter	(9.5% Males)	(25.7% Males)
Daughter & daughter's family	17	2.0%	3.7%	3.24%			(17.8% Females)	(44.3% Females)
Adult Children	7	2.0%	1.1%	1.34%				
Grandchild	16	0.0%	4.3%	3.05%	3.44%	All grand-children	(0.7% Males)	
Grandchild & grandchild's family	2	0.7%	0.3%	0.38%			(4.5% Females)	
Parent	4	1.4%	0.5%	0.76%				
Sibling	5	1.4%	0.8%	0.95%				**71.37%**
Spouse	98	26.4%	15.7%	18.70%	25.19%	All spouse	(37.2% Males)	**All family**
Spouse & own family	34	10.8%	4.8%	6.49%			(20.5% Females)	(68.2% Males)
Other family	18	2.0%	4.0%	3.44%				(72.6% Females)
Friend	7	2.7%	0.8%	1.34%				**6.87%**
Carer/carers	9	4.1%	0.8%	1.72%				**All non-family**
Housemate/aquaintance	8	2.0%	1.3%	1.53%				(13.5% of Men)
Other	12	4.7%	1.3%	2.29%				(4.3% of Women)
Total	524	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%				

Appendix 2.

Co-occurrence of financial risk factors
1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012.

Co-occurrence of financial risk factors for alleged victims for the period 1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012

Primary financial risk factor	Secondary financial risk factors								
	Debt burden	Dependence **by** others	Dependence **on** others	Gambling	Insufficient income	Other	Un-employment	None reported	Totals
Debt burden		3			2			16	21
Dependence **by** others	1				8	2		**126**	137
Dependence **on** others					3			**76**	79
Gambling								1	1
Insufficient income	3	12	1					58	74
Other			1					32	33
Un-employment					2			1	3
Totals	4	15	2		15	2		310	348

Co-occurrence of financial risk factors for alleged abusers for the period 1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012

Primary financial risk factor	Secondary financial risk factors								
	Debt burden	Dependence **by** others	Dependence **on** others	Gambling	Insufficient income	Other	Un-employment	None reported	Totals
Debt burden			2	1	1			29	33
Dependence **by** others								**20**	20
Dependence **on** others				1	1	1	2	**68**	73
Gambling			2				1	12	15
Insufficient income	3		8				1	32	44
Other								34	46
Un-employment	1		5		6			8	8
Totals	4		17	2	8	1	4	203	239

Appendix 3.

Referrals given to notifiers for the period
1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012.

Accomodation	**2.95%**	**Interstate**	**1.12%**
Accommodation and Support Services	17	NSW - Guardianship	3
Department of Housing	44	NSW - TARS/Seniors Info Line	13
Other emergency accommodation	2	SA - Aged Rights Advocacy Service	1
Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)-QLD	8	VIC - Seniors Rights Victoria	7
Advocacy	**1.91%**	WA - Advocare	3
Other advocacy	4	**Legal**	**24.61%**
QADA	42	Community Legal Centre	41
Capacity	**10.87%**	Legal Aid QLD - Brisbane	9
Assessment of Capacity	26	QADA Legal Advocacy	16
Alzheimers/Dementia Info	16	Queensland Law Society / Private Solicitor	29
Office if the Adult Guardian	136	SLASS - Cairns	19
QCAT	84	SLASS - Ipswich	16
Public Trustee (see 'Financial')		SLASS - Brisbane	314
Complaints	**3.11%**	SLASS - Hervey Bay	74
Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme	23	SLASS - Townsville	29
Nursing Home	28	SLASS - Toowoomba	37
Office of Fair Trading - Brisbane	12	Women's Legal Service Inc - QLD	8
Other complaint agency	12	Indigenous Legal	1
Counselling	**6.80%**	**Other**	**5.64%**
Psychologist	37	Other	66
UnitingCare Community Face-to-face counselling	23	Multicultural	11
Lifeline (Crisis Line)	34	Personal Alarms	4
UnitingCare Community Financial Counselling	31	Veterans	13
General Counselling Service	37	TIS	6
Relationships Australia	2	Dispute Resolution Centre	36
Domestic Violence	**3.65%**	**Safety**	**7.10%**
DVLO	27	CPU	28
DV Connect Women	25	Home Assist Secure	5
DV Mensline	3	Volunteers in Policing	7
General DV Service	33	Queensland Police	131
Financial	**5.93%**	**Support**	**10.08%**
Bank	20	Elder Abuse Prevention Unit	174
Centrelink - Statewide	32	HACC	16
Public Trustee	91	Carers Queensland	20
Mental Health	**1.00%**	OPSO	4
ARAFMI QLD Inc - State Office	12	Seniors Enquiry Line	10
Mental Health Service	12	Social Support Group/OPAPs	19
Health 15.23%			
ACAT	38	Community Care Providers	35
Hospital	8	Community Health Centres	14
Hospital Social Worker	50	Community Health Worker	16
GP	182	CRCC	24
		Total referrals: 2410	

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