Good Practice Guidelines to Prevent Abuse of Older South Australians

5 steps to good organisational practices

Good Practice Guidelines have been developed by the Office for the Ageing, to enable services and organisations to support the rights of older South Australians and implement safeguards for elder abuse prevention.

The Guidelines provide a 5 step process designed to help organisations identify a range of activities which support the rights of older people:

1. Identify workplace champions

2. Complete an organisational self-assessment/audit and consider relevant actions

3. Develop an action plan using the recommended resources

4. Implement and communicate the plan

5. Evaluate the impact.

Organisations with a commitment to older people are encouraged to make use of these guidelines to support better practice in the recognition, response and prevention of elder abuse. Any policies, protocol or practices developed or amended as a result of these guidelines should complement existing policies and procedures.

These Guidelines include:

- Information which enables organisations to determine their role in elder abuse prevention, recognition, and response.

- Easy to follow steps for organisations to conduct a self-assessment and develop a tailored action plan.

- Good practice approaches which can be incorporated into policies, practices and protocol.

- Information which steps out activities, from raising awareness about what elder abuse is, its signs, risk factors, through to how to respond to concerns of elder abuse, including in complex or emergency situations.

- Links to useful resources which can be used to draft policies and protocol.

- Links to organisations which provide information and advice to further support staff and members of the community.

You can use this document to record activities, actions, progress and outcomes achieved. Simply save to your computer and begin typing in the blank boxes.

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Getting started – Working through the guidelines

To support the process, it is recommended that organisations follow these 5 steps:

1. Identify workplace champions
2. Complete an organisational self-assessment/audit and consider relevant actions
3. Develop an action plan using the recommended resources
4. Implement and communicate the plan
5. Evaluate the impact.

Working through these steps may help an organisation to clarify its role and commitment to good practice for elder abuse awareness, prevention and response.

It is up to each organisation to determine how the Guidelines are used, and to identify activities for implementation. Good practices may range from raising elder abuse awareness, recognising and escalating responses to concerns of elder abuse, through to practices which support organisations that self-identify as responders or lead organisations for elder abuse response.

Action plans can include activities for implementation over the shorter and longer term following the building of workforce awareness and capacity. To be effective, key person/s may be appointed or assigned to undertake this work, or to work collaboratively with partnering organisations.

It is recommended that an organisation work through all 5 steps over time, and identify key partner organisations to respond to areas that are beyond its ability or remit. To ensure continuity of progress developments, a scheduled review process should be included in monitoring of action plan. Below is a summary chart to help you track progress developments.

	In Progress	Reviewed	Completed – Date
Step 1 Identify workplace champions	☐	☐	☐ ____ /____ /_____
Step 2 Undertake an organisational assessment/audit	☐	☐	☐ ____ /____ /_____
Step 3 Develop an action plan	☐	☐	☐ ____ /____ /_____
Step 4 Implement/communicate changes	☐	☐	☐ ____ /____ /_____
Step 5 Evaluate the impact	☐	☐	☐ ____ /____ /_____

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Step 1

Identify workplace champions

Any changes in practice, policies or protocol are more successful if they have the support and approval from management/board/committee. An important part of getting started is raising awareness and securing committment of the right people across the organisation. The greater the change, the more people will need to be involved in undertaking or sharing responsibilities.

Action – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
☐ Familiarise yourself with elder abuse – know the difference between elder abuse awareness, recognition, response and prevention. Regularly update your knowledge. This is vital to understanding where your organisation is best placed to respond currently and where it can focus as part of a future action plan	
☐ Identify who to seek approval from	
☐ Identify where the support is strongest – success is more likely when commitment comes from Boards/Committees/Executive	
☐ Find out if other similar organisations have already committed to making the rights of older people a priority area. You may wish to partner with other organisations which have developed elder abuse policies and protocol	

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Action – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
☐ Seek external influence and support if necessary eg peak bodies, government agencies	
☐ Identify who is best placed in your organisation to initiate the changes and follow through with implementation	
☐ Develop a plan to raise awareness and target information effectively across the workplace. This could involve one or several members of staff or a working group who have been trained to educate staff	

Step 2

Undertake an organisational assessment/audit (suggested template)

The questions below are intended to help an organisation identify its role and responsibilities for supporting the rights of older people and elder abuse prevention good practices. Organisations are encouraged to undertake a stocktake of existing policies and procedures using these questions as a guide. The results of this assessment can then be used to identify elder abuse prevention activities/actions and opportunities for integration across the organisation.

Self Assessment – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
What is the role/purpose of your organisation ☐ General customer service ☐ Information ☐ Support e.g. social, transport ☐ Referrals ☐ Service provision e.g. home care, personal care ☐ Community and/or health service	
What is your organisation's duty of care or relationship with older people? eg provide direct care; customer service focus	
How do you ensure that older people feel valued and respected by your organisation? Is there an opportunity for older people to provide customer satisfaction feedback?	
Identify if the current awareness of elder abuse and safeguards for the rights of older people is : excellent, very good, average, needs improving, very limited, across: ☐ Staff ☐ Management ☐ Organisation	

Step 2

Undertake an organisational assessment/audit – continued

Self Assessment – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
Does your organisation have existing policies, practices or protocol relating to elder abuse? ☐ Awareness ☐ Prevention ☐ Response ☐ Clear roles and responsibilities ☐ Education/training ☐ Reporting	
Does your agency have reporting responsibilities? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure **If yes, are these:** ☐ Legislated ☐ Policy ☐ Customer service ☐ Other **Do they include provisions for elder abuse?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure	

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Step 2

Undertake an organisational assessment/audit – continued

Self Assessment – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
What are the priority areas for elder abuse prevention across the organisation? ☐ Awareness raising information ☐ Prevention activities ☐ Response training ☐ Information sharing ☐ Referral pathways ☐ Train the trainer ☐ Development of consumer/client resources	
Are there opportunities for integration into existing policies and procedures of elder abuse prevention? ☐ Staff induction and training ☐ Reporting (to supervisor) ☐ Notification (mandatory reporting) ☐ Provision of information ☐ Referrals (to response organisation) ☐ Agency sharing information (across partnering organisation) ☐ Documentation	

Step 3

Develop an action plan using recommended resources

An organisation and its workforce can respond to elder abuse by implementing a range of approaches, which can build capacity over a period of time. These include:

A. Awareness raising about elder abuse: what is it, what are the signs; knowing the rights of older people

B. Recognising and responding to concerns of elder abuse: once it is recognised, what are the responses of our organisation

C. Referral/response agency: our organisation will be a responder and support elder abuse concerns

D. Interagency collaboration/partner agency: we will partner or collaborate with other organisations in preventing and or responding to elder abuse.

While raising awareness of elder abuse is considered to be the starting point, development of an elder abuse prevention and response action plan beyond this should reflect responses from the self-assessment/audit, and identify opportunities where these actions can be integrated into organisational policies, procedures and protocol.

Good practices should be selected on the basis of being relevant, appropriate and achievable for your organisation. There may be instances where the suggested good practices extend beyond organisational roles and responsibilities. In this case, partnerships with key organisations are recommended to enable the development of referral pathways and escalation protocol to respond to concerns of elder abuse.

The table provides links to recommended resources which can assist in the development of an action plan and inform policies, practices or protocol. These resources are available online at: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/stopelderabuse and can be downloaded from the Information, Services and Resources page.

The table is also an interactive fillable PDF for you to document your progress, activities and outcomes for good practice.

Organisation response	Actions – suggested good practice	Recommended resources
A. Awareness raising	☐ Provide information/staff resources	☐ South Australian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Older People
		☐ Elder abuse – Risk factors
		☐ Elder abuse – Types, signs and indicators
	☐ Include in induction/training for all staff ☐ Review organisational practices for opportunities to integrate elder abuse awareness	☐ Knowing Your Rights – A Guide to the Rights of Older South Australians
		☐ Living a Positive Life – for older South Australians
		☐ Living a Positive Life – for older people of Aboriginal backgrounds
		☐ Stop Elder Abuse campaign resources
		☐ Staff awareness training with approved provider

Organisation response	Actions – suggested good practice	Recommended resources
B. Respond to concerns of elder abuse	☐ Identify information/staff resources	☐ As above ☐ Elder abuse prevention
	☐ Develop principles for responding to elder abuse	☐ Elder abuse – Response to abuse of older people principles
	☐ Develop staff protocol for reporting concerns ☐ Organisational lines of approval, supervision and support ☐ Protocol for supervisors; joint decision-making ☐ Develop organisational policy and protocol for escalating action to suspected elder abuse ☐ Staff protocol for documentation of information ☐ Include in induction/training for all staff ☐ Identify financial and/or legal responsibilities ☐ Protocol to secure banking details etc of clients ☐ Review organisational practices for opportunities to integrate elder abuse awareness and response	☐ Workers – Communication when you have concerns of elder abuse ☐ Workers – Response matrix to risk, vulnerability and elder abuse ☐ Workers – Response to concerns of elder abuse ☐ Workers – Screening, risk assessment, vulnerability and abuse ☐ Workers – What if a person does not consent to taking action? ☐ Workers – What is duty of care ☐ Workers – What is decision-making capacity ☐ Workers – What is mental capacity ☐ Workers – When can you share information ☐ Workers – Where can you report elder abuse

Organisation response	Actions – suggested good practice	Recommended resources
C. Referral/ response agency	☐ Identify staff information, training, resources	☐ Elder abuse – Response to abuse of older people principles ☐ Elder abuse – Risk factors ☐ Elder abuse – Types, signs and indicators
	☐ Review and develop policies informing legal responsibilities	☐ Workers – What if a person does not consent to taking action? ☐ Workers – What is duty of care ☐ Workers – What is decision-making capacity ☐ Workers – What is mental capacity ☐ Workers – When can you share information ☐ Workers – Where can you report elder abuse
	☐ Develop staff protocol for responding to concerns including: – organisational lines of approval and supervision – protocol for supervisors	☐ As above
	☐ Review client confidentiality policies	☐ As above
	☐ Review or develop referral pathways, including support to escalate action to suspected elder abuse	☐ As above ☐ Elder Abuse – information, services and resources
	☐ Raise community awareness	☐ As above ☐ Stop Elder Abuse campaign resources
D. Partner agency	☐ Develop policies supporting partnered/collaborative approaches and participation in networks, education, research and system reform	☐ As above
	☐ Develop protocol for shared referrals, shared responses; response pathways; escalating referrals to other agencies	☐ As above

Step 4

Implement and communicate the changes

This section includes suggested practices to help organisations implement and communicate the action plan once it is developed.

Action – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
☐ Set up a working group (if relevant)	
☐ Identify key staff to action and promote the changes	
☐ Identify what resources may be needed e.g. staff time, printed materials	
☐ Ensure clear roles and responsibilities and timeframes for implemention	

Step 4

Implement and communicate the changes – continued

Action – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
☐ Develop a communication strategy and identify how changes will be communicated and monitored during implementation, and by whom	
☐ Identify opportunities to align delivery of outcomes to other events or opportunities within the organisation	
☐ Connect to other elder abuse initiatives and networks of participating agencies	

Step 5

Evaluate the impact

As part of your action plan, it is suggested you include an evaluation plan to measure if your actions achieved your objectives. Below are suggested considerations.

Action – suggested good practice	Response/comments/actions
☐ Identify the impact/outcomes that you expect. For example: • increased staff awareness about the signs of elder abuse • increased response to concerns of elder abuse • access of information and services • seeking advice to concerns • increased referrals from other agencies	
☐ Evaluate organisational performance and effectiveness at key points during the implementation phase. Did your actions achieve the desired outcomes?	
☐ Connect to other elder abuse initiatives and networks of participating agencies	

5 steps to good organisational practices to prevent abuse of older South Australians

List of Resources

Recommended resources
☐ Elder abuse – Response to abuse of older people principles
☐ Elder abuse – Risk factors
☐ Elder abuse – Types, signs and indicators
☐ Elder abuse – Working with people from diverse backgrounds
☐ Elder abuse – Working with people from Aboriginal backgrounds
☐ Knowing Your Rights – A Guide to the Rights of Older South Australians
☐ Living a Positive Life – older South Australians
☐ Living a Positive Life – Aboriginal elders
☐ Safeguards to support carers at risk
☐ Safeguards for carers at risk of financial abuse
☐ South Australian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Older People
☐ Workers – Communication when you have concerns of elder abuse
☐ Workers – Response matrix to risk, vulnerability and elder abuse
☐ Workers – Response to concerns of elder abuse
☐ Workers – Screening, risk assessment, vulnerability and abuse
☐ Workers – What if a person does not consent to taking action?
☐ Workers – What is duty of care
☐ Workers – What is decision-making capacity
☐ Workers - What is mental capacity
☐ Workers – When can you share information
☐ Workers – Where can you report elder abuse

Resources can be downloaded at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/stopelderabuse

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