



A Guide to Establishing Elder Abuse Collaboratives in NSW

'Collaborating to prevent the abuse of older people who live in the community'

Prepared by:

The NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit (EAHRU)

2015





1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide in establishing interagency partnerships that will drive a state-wide response to the abuse of older people at the local level. These partnerships will be referred to as Elder Abuse Collaboratives. The Elder Abuse Collaboratives provide a way of engaging agencies across various localities within NSW to develop local/regional protocols and practice guidelines aimed at responding and preventing abuse of older people who live in the community and aligned with the Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy 2015.

Responsibility for interagency practice and cooperation should be articulated in service system agreements and regional protocols negotiated between respective support agencies and service providers in consultation with the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit (NSW EAHRU).¹

While local protocols and guidelines may differ in each part of NSW, they have potential to provide links, opportunities, information exchange, education, awareness and social change throughout NSW. Resourcing support will be provided by the NSW EAHRU, although no funding forms part of the partnership.

2. Definition of elder abuse

The definition of elder abuse in the context of the NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives is abuse of older people living in their own homes in the community rather than residential aged care. Elder abuse is further defined using the World Health Organisation's definition as articulated in the NSW interagency policy as:

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. Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.²

1 Family and Community Services, *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy November 2015*, p.14

2 Family and Community Services, *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy November 2015*, p.9

3. Background

In November 2015, the New South Wales government re-released 'Preventing and Responding to Abuse of Older People - NSW Interagency Policy 2015' (NSW interagency policy). This policy influences changes across the community in relation to identifying and responding to the abuse of older people in NSW.

The NSW interagency policy replaces the NSW 2007 protocol on elder abuse which had adopted a 'lead agency' model. This change recognised a greater need for inter-agency cooperation statewide in responding to elder abuse.

The NSW interagency policy highlights roles for both the NSW EAHRU and government and non-government agencies. Agency roles articulated in the policy can be summarised to include actions in identifying and responding to abuse such as staff training and support and in aligning agency policies and procedures to the NSW interagency policy. In addition, agencies are encouraged to act in accordance with regional partnerships and service systems developed by their agency to reflect the state-wide policy.

4. The NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit

The NSW EAHRU is a specialist service and is a central point whose role is specifically outlined in the NSW interagency policy. In the context of collaborative practice this role includes:

- relationship building, including working with key government and non-government agencies and support services to develop a state-wide response to the abuse of older people.

Other roles of the NSW EAHRU include:

- telephone service, with a central toll-free number available across NSW
- service planning and development including community awareness, promotion of the EAHRU, education activities and supplemented by a website
- data collection, management and reporting sourced from caller activity, promotional and education activities, with service gaps and unmet need identified through community/service engagement
- development of a suite of resources.

5. Parties to the NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives

Service providers and agencies across NSW are many and varied and include, but not limited to, agencies and service providers within government and non-government sectors such as:

- Emergency services (NSW Police and NSW Ambulance)
- Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care Package providers
- Local Health Districts

- Medical personal in private practice
- Legal and justice services such as legal aid, community legal and NSW Trustee and Guardian
- Community welfare, counselling and advocacy services
- Multicultural and Aboriginal services
- Domestic and family violence services
- Social housing organisations and associations including public housing.

The NSW EAHRU acknowledges that many services across NSW have been working to keep older people free from abuse prior to the Unit being established and that in some metro and regional areas collaboration already exists.

6. Benefits of NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives

Collaboration generally refers to individuals or organisations ‘working together’ to address problems and deliver outcomes that may not as effectively be achieved by working alone.

The NSW interagency policy supports an interagency approach by adopting a societal approach to understanding the abuse of older people.³ A collaborative practice in the context of this approach can galvanize the efforts of relevant local agencies and builds capacity of these agencies in identifying, responding and preventing abuse of older people by:

- early intervention
- strengthening referral pathways
- increasing support for older people
- sharing of good practice
- creating awareness of elder abuse that promotes reporting to service providers.

7. Principles of intervention in responding to elder abuse

Participating agencies are committed to the principles of intervention that guide agency practice at the agency level and local/regional interagency partnerships in responding to the abuse of older people living in community settings. These principles are outlined in the NSW interagency policy and extracts can be found by reviewing:

Appendix 1: Principles for intervention in responding to elder abuse

Appendix 2: Principles for interagency practice.

8. Scope

At 30 June 2012 there were 1.02 million people aged 65 and over living in NSW. It is predicted the number of people aged 65 years in NSW will double from 1.02 million

³ Dow, B. and Joosten, M. *International Psychogeriatrics* (2012), 24:6, 853-855
C _ International Psychogeriatric Association.

in 2012 to 2.3 million in 2050 (24% of the population).

As the population ages the incidence of abuse is also expected to increase. The extent of elder abuse in the community is unclear with estimates suggesting prevalence to be between 0.5 and 5% of people 65 and over. In NSW this is 50,000 people.

The NSW EAHRU plans to target its efforts to establish Elder Abuse Collaboratives in areas with the greatest population numbers of older people. In these areas there will be a greater likelihood of more service providers and incidences of abuse. The Australian Bureau of Statistics outlines these local government areas at:

www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf:3235⁴

9. Establishing an Elder Abuse Collaborative

For successful collaboration, planning considerations include:

- a common agenda and shared vision
- a common understanding of the problem
- clear boundaries about the scope of the group
- strategic action
- feedback mechanisms
- central support.⁵

Key outcome areas

The NSW EAHRU developed the following outcomes for Elder Abuse Collaboratives:

1. Local protocols and service agreements for responding to older people experiencing abuse developed, aligned with the NSW Interagency policy and communicated.
2. Awareness increased of the role of the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource unit.
3. Local staff capability to respond to elder abuse improved through increased awareness and education.
4. Resources and practices in responding to abuse of older people developed and shared.

Roles and responsibilities

The overarching outcome for the NSW EAHRU and all agencies is to support older people live in safety through collaboration and operating within the parameters of the NSW interagency policy.

Interagency communities operate to suit local circumstances and existing resources.

4 <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3235.0Main%20Features152014?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3235.0&issue=2014&num=&view=>

5 Phillips, D., Splansky Juster, J., and FSG Collective Impact Forum, 'Committing to Collective Impact: From Vision to Implementation', *Community Investments*, Spring 2014, vol. 26, Number 1 pps 11 – 17

As such, the NSW EAHRU wishes to support these initiatives and not be prescriptive about how local collaborative action should unfold.

The NSW EAHRU will act as a central support to establish new collaboratives and participate in existing Elder Abuse Collaboratives within Local Government Areas or Local Health Districts. These may be elder abuse specific or as part of other domestic and family violence or vulnerable person approaches.

For specific roles and responsibilities and a suggested Terms of Reference for participating agencies and the NSW EAHRU, review:

Appendix 3: A guide to establishing a local Elder Abuse Collaborative

Appendix 4: Sample Terms of Reference (ToR).

Section 10: Action plan for an Elder Abuse Collaborative.

Management support at agency level

Endorsement for individual participation from managers at the agency level demonstrates a clear commitment to participating in an Elder Abuse Collaborative. Considerations in participating in a collaborative are:

- how well the collaboration will align with the purpose of their organisation
- how likely it is to be successful and achieve its objectives
- any costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration
- the risks and likely impact of the collaboration on the organisation
- the partner/s and the likely partnership benefits
- reporting on outcomes.

Information sharing

Partnership or interagency agreements are documents that record the agreed terms and conditions of collaboration between separate agencies and/or sectors. The term 'agreement' is sometimes used interchangeably with guidelines and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). There can be both legally binding and non-legally binding agreements. MOUs are non-legally binding agreements.

The MOU between the NSW EAHRU and NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives will be signed regarding any sharing of information. Information sharing is in relation to the NSW EAHRU obtaining copies of minutes and also covers copyright in relation to sharing resources developed by either the Organisation or the NSW EAHRU for the purposes of raising awareness to promote preventative strategies to reduce the abuse of older people in New South Wales.

The signing of the MOU provides assurance to both parties about information, tools and resources distributed within areas and between service providers as agreed in the MOU; that information sharing is mutual within the partnership - including but not limited to keeping all parties informed on activities.

To view the MoU review **Appendix 5.**

10. Action plan for an Elder Abuse Collaborative

The following table provides a guide for developing an action plan for local Elder Abuse Collaboratives across NSW. Actions include, but are not limited to:

Outcomes	Roles NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives	Roles Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit	Measure of success
<p>1. Local protocols and service agreements developed, aligned with the NSW Interagency policy and communicated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local service system agreements and protocols including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a point of contact for local agencies to seek advice or to make a referral - provide the NSW EAHRU with a point of contact if a local abuse matter needs to be resolved - information sharing. • Drive the alignment of individual agencies policies with NSW interagency policy. • Promote the NSW interagency policy and create awareness of elder abuse. • Document case studies improvements in referrals. • Identify links to other committees and avenues such as DFV and build on work achieved locally. • Review and broaden membership as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meetings at the state level. • Share outcomes of state based partnerships and also innovative practices of NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives using social media or directly with membership. • Share links to DFV inter agencies and planning days or other relationship building activities/forums. • Report state information as negotiated to local Elder Abuse Collaboratives. • Promote work of local Elder Abuse Collaboratives in reporting to FACS and at other forums as negotiated. 	<p>The NSW EAHRU has contacts for elder abuse matters at regional/local levels.</p> <p>Increased numbers of elder abuse reports.</p> <p>Referral pathways documented in local service system agreements and protocols.</p>

Outcomes	Roles NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives	Roles Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit	Measure of success
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the NSW EAHRU as appropriate. Highlight outcomes of local Elder Abuse Collaboratives to EAHRU via regular reporting as negotiated. Identify and report local limitations, gaps, actions and recommendations on a quarterly basis to the NSW EAHRU. Report to the NSW EAHRU systemic and local issues. 		
<p>2. Awareness increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote local Elder Abuse Collaborative activities within own agency. Identify ways to highlight elder abuse within existing local area such as DFV networks. Seek and share support and resources to agencies in the local community and with older people such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> host awareness talks working with local government to create older people friendly communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share promotional activities via social media and website as well as via direct communication to members of local Elder Abuse Collaboratives. Endorse the work of the local Elder Abuse Collaboratives using social media as agreed and negotiated. Inclusion of NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives tab on the NSW EAHRU website. Share and promote World Elder Abuse Awareness 	<p>Increased number of awareness activities across the state.</p> <p>Increased number of agency entrants to state based WEAAD art competition.</p> <p>Increased endorsements on EAHRU facebook page.</p> <p>Increased numbers of older people seeking support who are experiencing abuse.</p>

Outcomes	Roles NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives	Roles Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit	Measure of success
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local media campaigns - promote best practice stories • Share information from the NSW EAHRU with members by tabling at meetings and distributing within membership and more broadly in the community. • Initiate and engage in local projects and programs related to prevention of abuse of older people such as World Elder Abuse Awareness day (WEAAD) 15 June each year. • Collaborate with the NSW EAHRU as appropriate. • Report distribution to the NSW EAHRU; numbers and agencies targeted. 	<p>Activities 15 June annually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences and Symposiums advertised • Collaborate with the local Elder Abuse Collaborative as appropriate. 	
<p>3. Local staff capability to respond to elder abuse improved through increased awareness and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify topic experts locally. • Educate staff within own agency. • Use Facilitators guide and other tools developed by the NSW EAHRU to train staff or host community awareness workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the education of staff in responding to elder abuse by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distribution of the Facilitators Guide to Identifying and Responding to Abuse of Older People. 	<p>Increased numbers of staff trained locally.</p> <p>Staff evaluations from training indicate an increased awareness of abuse.</p>

Outcomes	Roles NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives	Roles Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit	Measure of success
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align agency policy with NSW interagency policy. Present case studies at each meeting Participate in events for prevention of elder abuse such as conferences, workshops, symposiums. Collaborate with the NSW EAHRU as appropriate. Report numbers of staff trained to the NSW EAHRU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate and training of staff using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> face to face sessions webinars e-Learning subject matter experts as requested. Collaborate with the local Elder Abuse Collaborative as appropriate. 	
<p>4. Resource and practices developed and shared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect information and resources on elder abuse available in the community and those supplied by the NSW EAHRU. Develop and distribute resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Response Guideline and Toolkit developed and distributed. Expertise shared via case studies. On going support through provision of resources developed at state level such as brochures, fact sheets 	<p>Statewide and local resources published on EAHRU website.</p>

Appendix 1: Principles for intervention in responding to elder abuse

The following principles are an extract from the NSW interagency policy⁶

- older people who are at risk or have experienced abuse are to be:
 - provided with information about all relevant options available to them, including services trained to support and empower them and equipped to help them end abuse when it occurs
 - encouraged and assisted to make decisions, including a decision not to act.
 - respected and given the choice to accept or refuse services if they are competent to make that decision.
- every effort must be made to ensure the views of the older person are taken into account even when they cannot make their own decisions.
- responses to the abuse of older people will be in the interests of the older person at risk or who has been abused and focused on ensuring safety and ongoing protection from violence and abuse.
- many forms of abuse of older people are crimes. Legal remedies and protections are available for older people who have experienced: violence, sexual assault, physical assault, domestic violence, abuse, threats, fraud, neglect, stalking, intimidation and harassment.
- responses to the abuse of older people will be consistent with the NSW Charter of Victims Rights (Refer to Appendix One) which is accompanied by the NSW Code of Practice for the Charter of Victims Rights.
- responses to the abuse of older people will as far as possible take account of the needs of the older person in relation to Aboriginality, culture, disability, language, religion, gender and sexuality.
- the needs of the older person at risk of abuse or who has been abused and the abuser must be kept separate at all times. This is particularly important in situations where the abuser has been the victim's carer or has complex needs.
- when the safety of others is involved, confidentiality cannot be offered unconditionally. In situations where a report to NSW Police is required, the consent of the person involved is not necessary.
- any person should be able to report abuse of older people without fear of retaliation or retribution and in a supportive environment.

6 Family and Community Services, *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy November 2015*, p.12

Appendix 2: Principles for interagency practice

The following principles are an extract from the NSW interagency policy⁷:

The identification, assessment, protection and care of older people who have been abused are an interagency and multi-disciplinary responsibility. A prompt response to the abuse of older people is a priority for all government, non-government and community organisations.

Responsibilities for interagency practice and cooperation should be articulated in service system agreements and regional protocols negotiated between respective support agencies and service providers in consultation with the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit.

The local agreements and protocols should provide detailed guidance, including:

- the first point of contact from which agencies in the area can seek advice or to which they can make a referral in different situations
- when and what type of information can be shared, consistent with relevant legislation
- developing resources and training for staff in consultation with the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit.

All relevant agencies and service providers should review their local policies, procedures and training materials addressing the abuse of older people to ensure alignment with this policy and any revised local or regional protocols and practice guidelines. They also need to be familiar with the role of the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit (EAHRU).

⁷ Family and Community Services, *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy November 2015*, p.14

Appendix 3: A guide to establishing a local Elder Abuse Collaborative

Some recommended steps to initiate a collaborative would include links being made between local agencies and the NSW EAHRU. Further steps could include:

Step	Roles NSW Elder Abuse Collaboratives	Role of the NSW Helpline and Resource Unit
Scope <i>Ideas and dialogue</i>	Agree demographic in which the collaborative will operate and analyse any local statistics on elder abuse using ABS; LGA; Centrelink or LHD population health data etc.	In partnership.
	Identify key agencies and people who could be involved and consumer participation.	Advise on key stakeholders.
	Convene a larger forum about elder abuse to create the interest for collaboration and interagency partnership approaches.	Make a presentation.
Formalise	Call for expressions of interest in establishing a NSW Elder Abuse Collaborative.	In partnership.
	Membership formalised and contact details sent to the NSW EAHRU	Distribute the NSW interagency policy and other resources to all members.
	Determine an agency to be a point of contact for the NSW EAHRU, chair and minute taker.	In partnership as negotiated.
Organise for impact	Mapping exercise describing the nature of the relationship.	In partnership as negotiated.
	Terms of Reference tabled and agreed and sent to the NSW EAHRU.	Participation in initial meetings.
	MOU discussed and signed.	Participation in initial meetings.
	Action plan developed.	Further education to membership on signs, risk factors and behaviours related to elder abuse and role of partnership as negotiated.
	Agenda items established.	Further education to membership on signs, risk factors and behaviours related to elder abuse and role of partnership as negotiated.
	Implement action plan	Regular resources sent.
	Meeting minutes distributed to the NSW EAHRU.	Deliver on action items, raise issues centrally as negotiated.
Strategies and Actions	Report on projects, plans, meetings and outcomes to the NSW EAHRU (where negotiated).	Support and promote projects as negotiated.
	Review ToR, MOU, membership, update plan and evaluate.	In partnership as negotiated.
Manage Change		

Appendix 4: Sample Terms of Reference - Elder Abuse Collaborative

Elder Abuse Collaborative

"Your location" Dated:

- Ensure all stakeholders are invited to participate
- Determine your membership
- Define geographic boundaries
- Elect a chairperson/spokesperson
- Elect a secretary for minute taking
- Determine frequency of meetings
- Establish a code of conduct e.g. confidentiality, privacy, community safety etc.
- Set action items
- Aim to create a seamless approach to referral pathways and case management where required
- Work within the limits of each agency
- Respect the choices of older people.
- Discuss case studies
- Keep abreast of new information in relation to elder abuse
- Determine the best options locally for responding and reporting
- Work in partnership driven by the principles of prevention (early identification) responding (being timely) reducing (campaigns/media etc.)
- Review the Terms of Reference "your time frame", membership
- Consider ways that you will evaluate effectiveness both quantitative and qualitative.
- Plan annual directions and programs.

Appendix 5: Agreement for the Sharing of Information

PARTIES

Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit, a division of Catholic Healthcare Limited

ABN 69 064 946 318 of Level 4, 16-18 Bridge Street,
EPPING NSW 2121

(The **NSW EAHRU**)

AND

(The **Organisation**)

BACKGROUND

- a. The NSW EAHRU entered into a Funding Agreement with the Department of Family and Community Services (the **Department**) in 2013 pursuant to which it will provide information, support and referrals for people who experience, witness or suspect the abuse of older people living in the community in New South Wales.
- b. The Organisation is a community group in New South Wales that promotes preventative strategies to reduce elder abuse in New South Wales.
- c. The NSW EAHRU has proposed, and the Organisation has agreed, to share information in regard to elder abuse in New South Wales on the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

IT IS AGREED:

1. **Obligations of the Organisation**

- 1.1 At the request of the NSW EAHRU, the Organisation will provide the NSW EAHRU with copies of its meeting minutes in regard to elder abuse in New South Wales, or any other information as reasonably requested by the NSW EAHRU (**Information**).

2. **Obligations of the NSW EAHRU**

- 2.1 At the request of the Organisation, the NSW EAHRU agrees to grant the

Organisation a license to use any materials developed by the NSW EAHRU for the purposes of raising awareness to promote preventative strategies to reduce the abuse of older people in New South Wales (**Materials**).

3. Information provided by the Organisation

- 3.1** The NSW EAHRU must only use the Information to comply with its obligations under the Funding Agreement. For the avoidance of doubt, the Information must not be used for any commercial purposes.

4. Materials provided by the NSW EAHRU

- 4.1** Copyright in the Materials provided by the NSW EAHRU is and will remain the property of the NSW EAHRU.
- 4.2** The Organisation must not alter the Materials in any way without the prior written consent of the NSW EAHRU.
- 4.3** The Organisation may only use or reproduce the Materials for purposes that are directly related to the prevention of elder abuse in the community. For the avoidance of doubt, the Material must not be used for any commercial purposes.

5. Privacy

- 5.1** The Organisation must ensure that the Information does not fall within the definition of “Personal Information” in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1** Confidential information means any information of a confidential nature acquired by the Organisation and its personnel in the course of this Agreement. This includes, but is not limited to, trade secrets, know-how, information imparted in circumstances of confidence or labelled confidential regardless of when a person becomes aware that the information is confidential (**Confidential Information**).
- 6.2** Confidential information does not include information that:
- a.** was publicly available before the date of this Agreement;
 - b.** becomes publicly available after the date of this Agreement, except by breach of this Agreement;
 - c.** the Organisation obtained from a third party without breaching any obligation of confidence; or the Organisation was already aware of before the NSW EAHRU provided the Confidential Information; and

- d. the Organisation was already aware of before the NSW EAHRU provided the Confidential Information.

6.3 The Organisation must:

- a. ensure that all Confidential Information is kept confidential and is not copied, published, disclosed or discussed with any person other than employees nominated by the NSW EAHRU; and
- b. if required by the NSW EAHRU ensure all personnel of the Organisation enter into a deed of confidentiality with the NSW EAHRU in a form prescribed by the NSW EAHRU;

6.4 On the End Date of or on termination of this Agreement, the Organisation and its personnel will immediately return all Confidential Information in whatever form (including all electronic materials) to the NSW EAHRU.

7 Review and Variation

7.1 The parties agree to meet quarterly or at such other times as the parties agree, to discuss this Agreement.

7.2 Any variations to this Agreement must be agreed by the parties in writing.

8 Commencement and Termination

8.1 This Agreement commences on the Date of Commencement and ends after 12 months.

8.2 Either party may terminate this Agreement by providing 14 days written notice to the other.

8.3 The NSW EAHRU may terminate this Agreement if the Organisation breaches a term of the Agreement.

EXECUTION

Date of Commencement: _____

THE NSW EAHRU

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ORGANISATION

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

References

Family and Community Services (2015), *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people NSW interagency policy 2015*.

Dow, B. and Joosten, M., *International Psychogeriatrics* (2012), 24:6, 853–855
C _ International Psychogeriatric Association 2012.

Phillips, D., Splansky Juster, J., and FSG Collective Impact Forum, 'Committing to Collective Impact: From Vision to Implementation, *Community Investments*, Spring 2014, vol. 26, Number 1, pps 11 – 17.

Websites:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats>

www.ageing.nsw.gov.au/publications

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/collaboration>

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/>

<http://www.communitydoor.org.au/consumer-participation-1>

<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/resources/>

http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/en