



Review of the *Ageing and Adult Safeguarding Act 1995 (SA)*

Fact Sheet 5 – Functions of the Adult Safeguarding Unit

About the Adult Safeguarding Unit (ASU)

The ASU is established by the *Ageing and Adult Safeguarding Act 1995* ('the Act') and became operational on 1 October 2019. Situated within the Office for Ageing Well, it has a legal mandate to respond to reports of abuse of all adults who may be vulnerable to abuse.¹ The ASU is the first of its kind in Australia.

Some of the key functions of the ASU under the Act include:

- Providing confidential information and advice
- Responding to reports of suspected or actual abuse made to the ASU Phone Line
- Promoting and advocating for the rights and interests of adults who may be vulnerable to abuse
- Coordinating responses with State authorities and other persons and bodies when responding to reports of suspected abuse of a vulnerable adult
- Advising Ministers, State authorities and other bodies on matters relating to the abuse of vulnerable adults
- Preparing and publishing reports on matters relating to the abuse of vulnerable adults

In carrying out its work, the ASU must have regard to the Act's Principles, the Charter of the Rights and Freedoms of Vulnerable Adults, and the Code of Practice.

Current issues

The ASU's expansive functions range from advocacy to early prevention, to responding to reports of abuse. One concern is whether the ASU can effectively discharge all these functions and whether each of these functions are best suited to the ASU.

In some cases, there are already other services available to respond to the needs of these other vulnerable cohorts, such as those provided by Family and Domestic Services or homelessness services, but this is not the case for older people or adults living with disability who may be vulnerable.

Consultation Questions

1. Are the present functions of the ASU suitable and appropriate to achieve its aims? Should they have a more specific focus?
2. Do the functions of the ASU complement or duplicate other services?

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¹SA Health, 'Adult Safeguarding Unit' (Web Page) 03 April 2022

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