

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRENDS REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2024

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B. TECHNICAL NOTE

GENERAL

Age of survivor refers to the age of the survivor at the time the case was taken up by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) or a community agency to address safety and risk concerns.

Community agencies refer to Child Protection Specialist Centres (CPSCs), Protection Specialist Centres (PSCs) (including the Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection Specialist Centre) and Family Service Centres (FSCs). CPSCs and PSCs are community-based specialist agencies that provide services and support to families and persons who face abuse or neglect. FSCs are community-based agencies that provide social and emotional support to families in need.

New cases of abuse in a specified year refers to the year when the case was taken up by MSF or a community agency to address safety and risk concerns. The number of new cases may not equate to the unique number of survivors. For example, if a case was closed by MSF or a community agency, and subsequently re-opened due to new incidences of abuse, it would be counted as two cases. If a case is overseen by both MSF and a community agency, it would be reflected as a case each in both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 datasets.

Primary type of abuse refers to the type of abuse assessed to have significant impact, harm or injury on an individual, and is most likely to place the individual at risk in the short term, based on available information and evidence. An individual may be subjected to more than one type of abuse.

Statutory intervention refers to legal actions and measures that MSF takes to protect vulnerable persons, such as children and Vulnerable Adults, from abuse or neglect. For example, MSF can intervene under the Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) to investigate cases, place a child under supervision, or remove a child from his/her home and place the child in alternative care such as family-based care or residential care.

Tier 1 cases are those overseen by community agencies. Generally, these are cases that present with low to moderate safety and risk concerns for the vulnerable person. For example, where there is infrequent occurrence of verbal abuse, such as derogatory remarks, that does not escalate to physical violence or severe psychological abuse.

Tier 2 cases are those that require statutory intervention, overseen by MSF. Generally, these are cases that present with high safety and risk concerns for the vulnerable person which may warrant more intrusive intervention (e.g. removal of a child or Vulnerable Adult) to keep the individual safe. For example, where severe injuries (e.g. burns, fractures) have been inflicted on a child by the parents.

CHILD ABUSE

Age of child in Tier 1 child abuse cases is determined by the child's birth year. For instance, if a child was born in December 2006 and the case was taken up by a community agency in January 2024 (i.e. aged 17 years and 1 month), the child's age would be reported as 18 years, based on the child's year of birth.

Age of child in Tier 2 child abuse cases is determined by the child's birth date. For instance, if a child was born in December 2006 and the case was taken up by MSF's Child Protective Service (CPS) in January 2024 (i.e. aged 17 years and 1 month), the child's age would be reported as 17 years, based on the child's date of birth.

Family-based care comprises kinship care and foster care. Children under kinship care are cared for by their natural or extended family, while children under foster care are cared for by foster parents approved by MSF.

Incidence rate of Tier 2 child abuse is the total number of unique children (Singapore residents and non-residents) in new cases investigated by CPS per 1,000 population aged 0-17 years in that year.

Number of children under out-of-home care is as of 31 December of the specified year, regardless of the year the child's case was opened.

Number of foster families is as of 31 December of the specified year.

Number of Tier 1 child abuse cases refers to children aged below 18 years overseen by CPSCs, PSCs and FSCs due to child safety and risk concerns.

Number of Tier 2 child abuse cases refers to new cases investigated by CPS.

Residential care refers to care provided by Children's Homes for children in need of out-of-home care.

SPOUSAL ABUSE

Number of new spousal abuse cases refers to new cases overseen by PSCs and FSCs. This report excludes survivors not known to these community agencies but who seek protection in other forms (e.g. applying for a Personal Protection Order at the Court).

ELDER AND VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Elderly person refers to a person aged 65 years and above.

Incidence rate of Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse is the total number of unique elderly Vulnerable Adults (Singapore residents and non-residents) in new cases investigated by MSF's Adult Protective Service (APS) per 1,000 population aged 65 years and above who are unable to perform or who have a lot of difficulty in performing at least one basic activity (estimated based on the proportion of such residents from Census of Population 2020). Basic activities refer to seeing, hearing, mobility, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communicating.

Incidence rate of Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse is the total number of unique non-elderly Vulnerable Adults (Singapore residents and non-residents) in new cases investigated by APS per 1,000 population aged 18-64 years who are unable to perform or who have a lot of difficulty in performing at least one basic activity (estimated based on the proportion of such residents from Census of Population 2020). Basic activities refer to seeing, hearing, mobility, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communicating.

Vulnerable Adult is defined in the Vulnerable Adults Act as a person aged 18 years and above, and is by reason of mental or physical infirmity, disability or incapacity, incapable of protecting himself or herself from abuse, neglect or self-neglect.

SELF NEGLECT

Incidence rate of Tier 2 self-neglect cases is the total number of unique Vulnerable Adults (Singapore residents and non-residents) in new self-neglect cases investigated by APS per 1,000 population aged 18 years and above who are unable to perform or who have a lot of difficulty in performing at least one basic activity (estimated based on the proportion of such residents from Census of Population 2020). Basic activities refer to seeing, hearing, mobility, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communicating.

C. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strong and stable families are the bedrock of our society. Families should be where members feel safe and supported. Domestic violence offends our fundamental values as a society and must not be condoned. The Government has been working closely with community partners to put in place legal protection and comprehensive social service support, and invest in public education and training to tackle domestic violence.

This inaugural edition of the Domestic Violence Trends Report provides an overview of key domestic violence trends in Singapore, based on cases overseen by MSF and community agencies. It focuses on child abuse, spousal abuse, elder abuse, Vulnerable Adult abuse cases and cases where Vulnerable Adults neglected themselves. It examines incidence rates, demographic characteristics of survivors, and the types of abuse experienced by survivors. Unless stated otherwise, the trends in this report refer to the period from 2021 to 2023.

Domestic violence is a multi-faceted issue. There is a complex interplay of factors including socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, family dynamics, capabilities and responsiveness of social services, and changes in public awareness. During the reporting period, there have been efforts to raise public awareness of the issue and channels for reporting. These could have influenced the overall number of reported cases.

Cases reported have been categorised as Tier 1 or Tier 2:

- **Tier 1:** Cases overseen by community agencies that present with low to moderate safety and risk concerns for the vulnerable person.
- **Tier 2:** Cases overseen by MSF that present with high safety and risk concerns for the vulnerable person, which may warrant more intrusive statutory intervention to keep the individual safe.

There was an increase in new Tier 1 abuse cases from 2021 to 2023, suggesting greater awareness and willingness by survivors and the public to report abuse and seek help early. With continued awareness-raising efforts, the number of new Tier 1 cases is expected to remain high or increase in the short-term. Over the same period, new Tier 2 cases decreased. This suggests improved upstream detection and early intervention by community agencies, which helped to prevent cases from escalating in risk severity.

Nonetheless, every case is one too many. The Government will continue to work with community partners to strengthen support for survivors of domestic violence. All of us have a collective responsibility to keep domestic violence survivors safe and empower both survivors and perpetrators to come forward to seek help.



KEY TRENDS

Upward trend in new Tier 1 child abuse cases; slight downward trend in new Tier 2 cases

New Tier 1 cases showed an upward trend, which could be related to MSF's efforts to create greater awareness and encourage reporting of child abuse, leading to more cases being reported and attended to early. This reflects a more vigilant and responsive society, as well as increased support from community agencies working with families to address issues early. New Tier 2 cases saw a slight decline, and the incidence rate has remained stable and low, at less than 3 per 1,000 children.

Upward trend in new Tier 1 spousal abuse cases seen by community agencies¹

Collective efforts by community partners, MSF, and those of the Taskforce on Family Violence have helped to reduce the stigma associated with domestic violence. This could have led to an upward trend in new spousal abuse cases seen by community agencies, as more survivors came forward to seek help. The Government will continue to work with community agencies to support survivors and perpetrators, and facilitate family reconciliation, where possible.

Slight upward trend in new Tier 1 elder abuse cases; slight downward trend in new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

The slight upward trend in new Tier 1 cases could be due to better upstream detection and intervention (e.g. provision of support to caregivers) by community agencies for the elderly and their families exhibiting early signs of distress. In turn, this could have reduced the new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult cases. Incidence rates for new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases remained low in 2023, at less than 1 per 1,000 vulnerable elderly.

Downward trend in new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

New Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult cases fell by almost half from 2021 to 2023. The incidence rate was on a downward trend and remained low in 2023, at less than 1 per 1,000 population aged 18-64 years who were vulnerable.

Decrease in new Tier 2 self-neglect cases in 2023

New self-neglect Tier 2 Vulnerable Adult cases fell by almost half in 2023, after a slight increase from 2021 to 2022. The incidence rate remained low, at less than 0.5 per 1,000 population aged 18 years and above who were vulnerable.

¹ As spousal abuse cases are currently overseen only by community agencies, there are no Tier 2 spousal abuse cases.

D. INTRODUCTION

Violence against all persons should not be condoned, regardless of nationality, marital status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic background.

Over the years, the Government has been working closely with community partners to put in place legal protection and comprehensive social service support and investing in public education and training to tackle domestic violence. The multi-stakeholder Taskforce on Family Violence was set up in February 2020 to develop a comprehensive understanding of the domestic violence landscape in Singapore and to develop recommendations to tackle domestic violence. In October 2021, the Government accepted in principle all the recommendations by the Taskforce to raise awareness of early signs of domestic violence, improve immediate support for survivors, enhance protection for them, and prevent recurrence of violence by strengthening the rehabilitation of perpetrators.

Since 2021, the Government and our stakeholders have progressively implemented the Taskforce's recommendations to better address domestic violence, reflecting our ongoing commitment to safeguard individuals from domestic violence.



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence refers to violent, threatening, abusive or controlling behaviours within the context of family or intimate relationships that cause hurt or fear for one's safety and well-being. This takes various forms including physical abuse, emotional & psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

2021

- **February-May** – Launched a one-stop national helpline for anyone experiencing domestic violence. Renamed to National Anti-Violence and Sexual Harassment Helpline (NAVH) subsequently to better reflect service provision for all persons who experience any form of violence or abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment, in familial and non-familial settings.
- **June** – Established the Police Training Workgroup by the Police and MSF to enhance training for frontline Police officers handling family violence cases. The training curriculum was co-developed with members of the Taskforce.
- **October** – Formalised the Domestic Violence Awareness Training which equips individuals in the people, public and private sectors, including childcare centres and private education institutes, with the knowledge on different types of abuse and neglect, ways to detect violence early and how to provide an appropriate response. As of July 2024, more than 9,300 people had been trained.
- **November** – Refreshed the 'Break the Silence' (BTS) public education campaign to increase awareness of the types of abuse (including non-physical forms of abuse), introduce the hand "Signal for Help", and encourage survivors and bystanders to seek help.

2022

- **July** – Appointed selected Police officers from the Community Policing Unit to specialise in family violence cases.
- **September** – Deployed forensic-trained psychologists to Protection Specialist Centres to support survivors and perpetrators who present with mental health conditions.
- **December** – Launched an online text-based channel as an additional mode of reporting to NAVH.

2023

- **April** – Established the Sexual Crime and Family Violence Command for better oversight of the management of sexual crime and family violence cases. Launched a 24-hour Domestic Violence Emergency Response Team (DVERT) to respond jointly with the Police to high-risk cases with immediate safety concerns to the survivor. From April 2023 to July 2024, DVERT responded to 307 cases referred by the Police.
- **July** – Amended the Women's Charter to strengthen protection for survivors of family violence and to enhance rehabilitation and accountability for perpetrators.

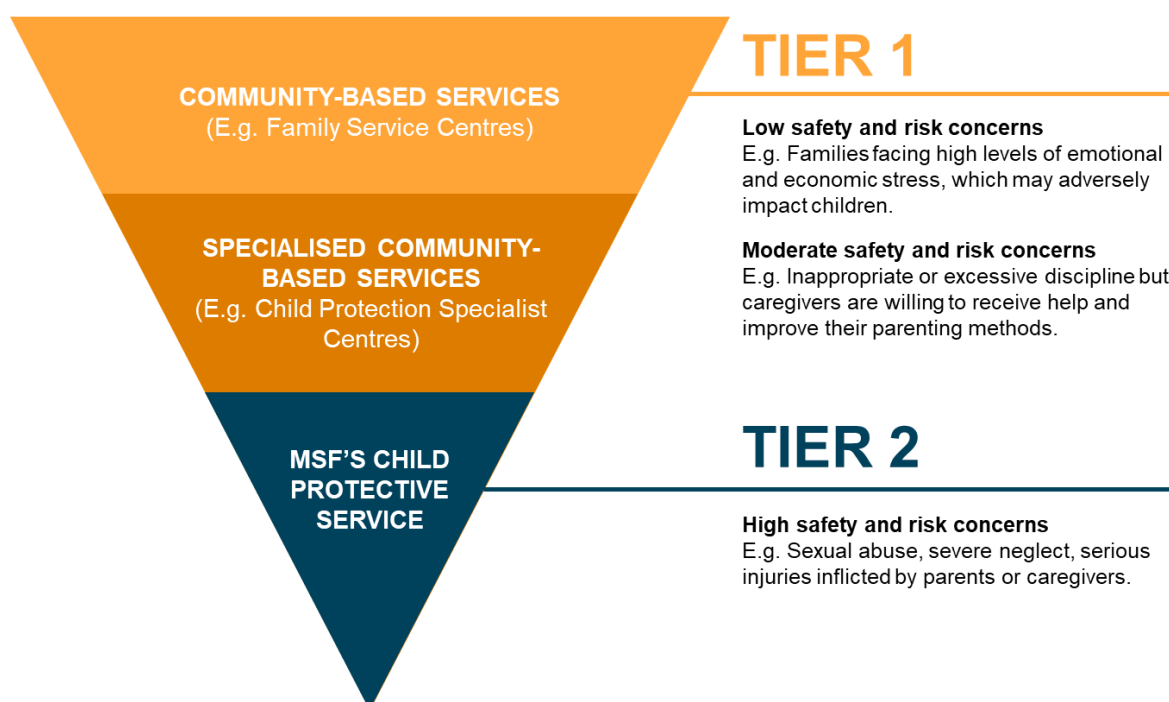
2024

- **June** – Introduced a module on reporting suspected child abuse cases in LifeSG, the integrated Government e-services mobile application. Launched a new BTS campaign to emphasise that domestic violence is not a private matter and to encourage survivors and the community to play a part in detecting domestic violence.

E. CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is any action or inaction by an individual (e.g. parent or caregiver) that endangers or damages a child's physical or emotional well-being. This may take the form of physical abuse, emotional & psychological abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. The Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) protects any person under the age of 18 years from abuse or neglect. This report refers to such individuals as "child" or "children".

Child abuse can be understood in terms of a range of child protection concerns. Tier 1 cases are overseen by community agencies such as the Child Protection Specialist Centres (CPSCs), Protection Specialist Centres (PSCs) and Family Service Centres (FSCs), while Tier 2 cases are overseen by MSF's Child Protective Service (CPS) for statutory intervention. Under the CYPA, MSF is empowered to investigate child abuse cases, place a child under supervision, or remove a child from his/her home and place the child in alternative care such as family-based care or residential care.



CHILD ABUSE RISK FACTORS

Research conducted by the National Council of Social Service and MSF on domestic violence identified salient risk factors associated with child abuse. These include family factors such as financial difficulties, parental offending histories, parental spousal violence, and parental mental health diagnoses. These factors are associated with familial environments with increased stress, conflicts, aggressive and/or impulsive behaviours.

Having one or more risk factors does not necessarily mean that the familial environment is dysfunctional or that an individual will perpetrate abuse. Family members, neighbours, and the community who are aware of families in need could help by reaching out to them or offering a helping hand where appropriate. Families are also encouraged to seek support early from FSCs in their neighbourhood.

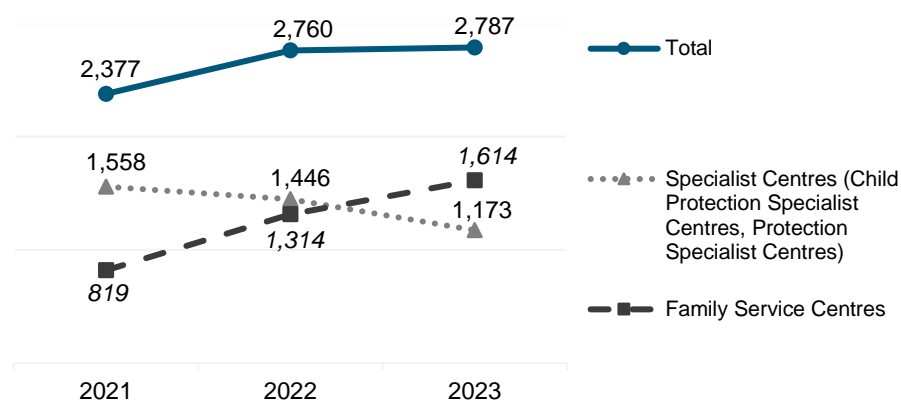
If you know of someone who is experiencing child abuse or domestic violence, do seek help by contacting the NAVH. You may call 1800-777-0000 or make an online report at <https://go.gov.sg/navh>.

E1. NEW TIER 1 CHILD ABUSE CASES

Upward trend in new Tier 1 child abuse cases

The number of new Tier 1 cases showed an upward trend (Chart 1). This may be attributed to MSF's and the community's efforts to create greater awareness and encourage the reporting of child abuse, leading to more cases being reported and attended to early. Community agencies and schools are better trained to identify early signs of abuse using evidence-based tools and are managing cases in the community, thus, reducing the need for statutory intervention. In 2021, MSF's annual "Break the Silence" campaign was aimed at unpacking the different types of abuse, including sexual abuse, and emotional & psychological abuse. It also encouraged witnesses, survivors, and perpetrators of violence to seek help. NAVH was launched in the same year to make it easier for the public to report abuse.

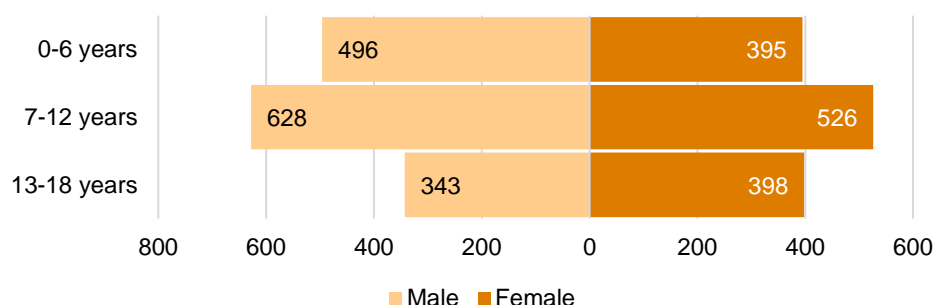
CHART 1: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 1 CHILD ABUSE CASES



Children aged 7-12 years made up the largest group of new Tier 1 cases; more males among new Tier 1 cases

In 2023, children aged 7-12 years made up the largest group of new Tier 1 cases (Chart 2). In comparison to children aged 0-6 years, primary school children are better able to articulate their experiences and seek help from trusted adults such as their teachers or school counsellors. This allows community agencies to monitor and support this group safely in the community. There were slightly more male children than female children among new Tier 1 cases.

CHART 2: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 1 CHILD ABUSE CASES BY AGE AND SEX (2023)²



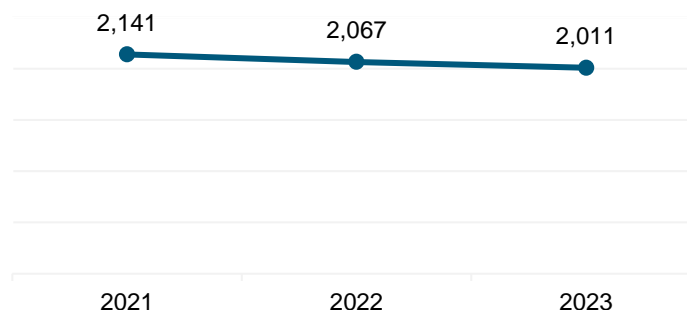
² Excludes 1 case with unavailable sex data.

E2. NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES

Slight downward trend in new Tier 2 child abuse cases, but higher than pre-COVID levels

The number of new Tier 2 cases showed a slight downward trend (Chart 3). While the number of new Tier 2 cases has fallen since 2021, the figures remain higher than before COVID. The number of new Tier 2 cases in 2021 represented an increase of 63% (from 1,313 in 2020 to 2,141 in 2021), which suggests increased stress and conflicts faced by families during the pandemic. It could also be attributed to stepped-up Government and community campaigns during this period to increase awareness of domestic violence and reporting of child abuse. MSF will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that children are safe in their families, and support is provided early to affected families.

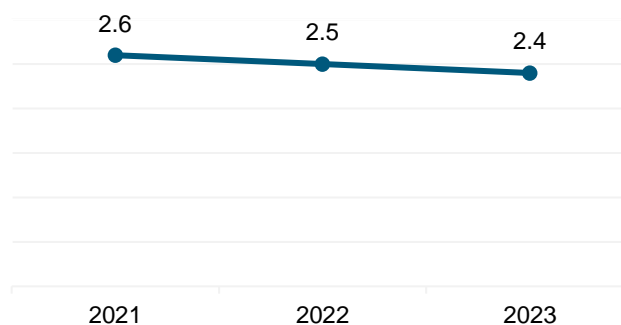
CHART 3: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES



Incidence rate of new Tier 2 child abuse cases remained relatively low

The incidence rate of new Tier 2 cases remained relatively low, at less than 3 per 1,000 children (Chart 4). This is low compared to other countries. For example, the incidence rate was 21 per 1,000 children in Australia in 2021-2022.³

CHART 4: INCIDENCE RATE OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES (PER 1,000 CHILDREN)

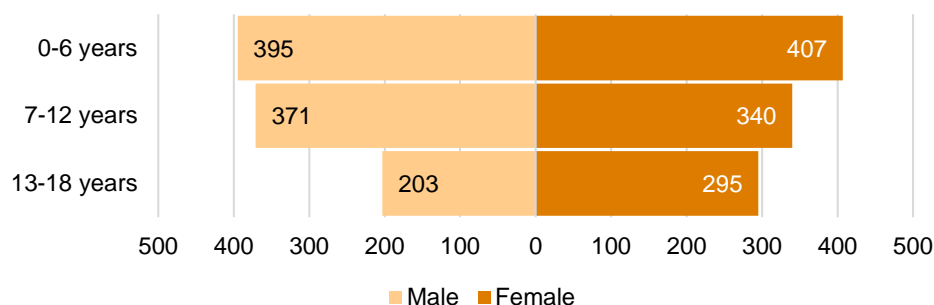


³ Refers to children for whom notifications were made to a child protection department alleging child maltreatment or harm to a child and were subjected to subsequent investigations as the notification met the threshold for further action. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024). Child Protection Australia 2021-2022, AIHW, Australia Government. Australia's child abuse incidence rate was the closest approximation to the Tier 2 child abuse incidence rate.

Children aged 0-6 years made up the largest group of new Tier 2 cases; more females among new Tier 2 cases

In 2023, children aged 0-6 years made up the largest group of new Tier 2 cases (Chart 5). Children aged 0-6 years tend to be more vulnerable and less likely to be able to keep themselves safe from harm, thus there were more cases which required MSF's intervention. There were slightly more female children than male children among new Tier 2 cases.

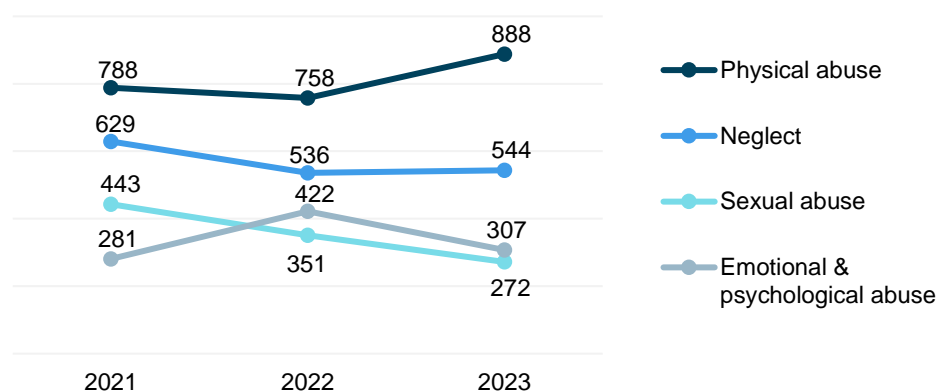
CHART 5: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES BY AGE AND SEX (2023)



Physical abuse was the most common among new Tier 2 cases

Among the new Tier 2 cases, physical abuse was the most common primary type of abuse reported (Chart 6). This reflects that physical abuse is often more easily detected compared to other forms of abuse. Although emotional & psychological abuse may not be as readily observable as physical abuse, the harm to a child is no less significant. Changes in a child's behaviour and mood, difficulties forming relationships, and reverting to behaviours typical of a younger age could be signs of emotional & psychological abuse.

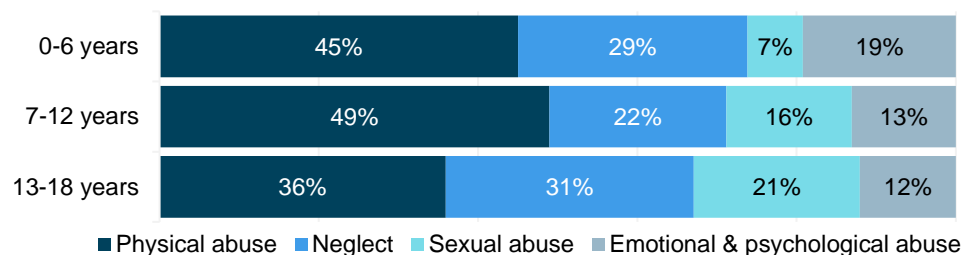
CHART 6: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES BY TYPE OF ABUSE



Physical abuse was the most common among new Tier 2 cases, across all age groups

In 2023, physical abuse was the most common primary type of abuse experienced by children across all age groups (Chart 7).

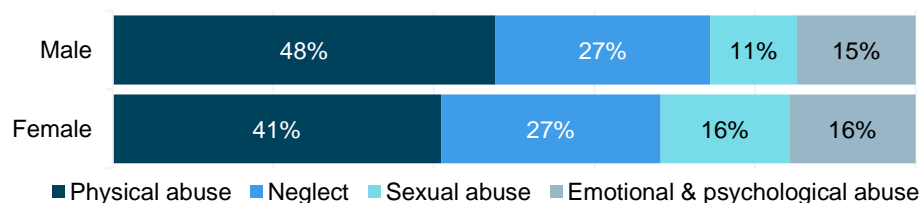
CHART 7: PROPORTION OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES BY AGE AND TYPE OF ABUSE (2023)



Physical abuse was more common among male children than female children in new Tier 2 cases

In 2023, physical abuse was more common among male children than female children. Sexual abuse was more common among female children than male children. Prevalence of emotional & psychological abuse and neglect were similar across both sexes (Chart 8).

CHART 8: PROPORTION OF NEW TIER 2 CHILD ABUSE CASES BY SEX AND TYPE OF ABUSE (2023)⁴



STRENGTHENING TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

Frontline professionals are trained to use evidence-based tools such as the Sector-Specific Screening Guide (SSSG) and Child Abuse Reporting Guide (CARG). SSSG is used by frontline professionals such as teachers who have regular contact with children. It provides guidance on situations when frontline workers should discuss child protection concerns with more experienced professionals in their agency. CARG is used by frontline professionals who are familiar with child protection concerns such as social workers and school counsellors. It provides guidance on appropriate follow-up actions to take, based on the concerns identified (e.g. to report concerns to NAVH). MSF also regularly reviews our screening and intake assessment tools to ensure that they remain accurate and effective in identifying cases with high safety and risk concerns.

In 2020, MSF introduced a framework for community agencies facing challenges in sighting children. The framework has been incorporated as part of the FSC Code of Social Work Practice Casework Practice Guide and guides community agencies on specified procedures to trace a child's whereabouts.

We have enhanced our protocols with community agencies supporting families with child protection concerns, including regular safety checks and monitoring of the children and their families. For example, they are now visited by case workers at least once a month for up to a year after the children are reunified with their families, to ensure their overall well-being. If parents refuse to engage with these community agencies, MSF will intervene and, if necessary, invoke statutory powers to ensure that case workers have access to these children.

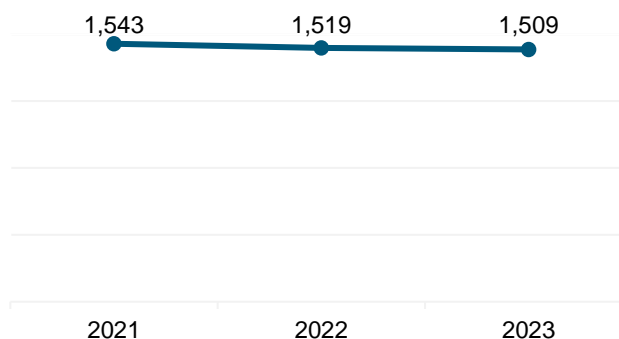
⁴ Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

E3. CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Slight downward trend in children in out-of-home care

As of 2023, there were a total of 1,509 children in out-of-home care (Chart 9). When the home environment is unsafe for the child, even with support from MSF and community agencies, the child may be removed as a last resort. These children are temporarily placed in out-of-home care, such as family-based care or residential care, until it is safe for them to return to their families.

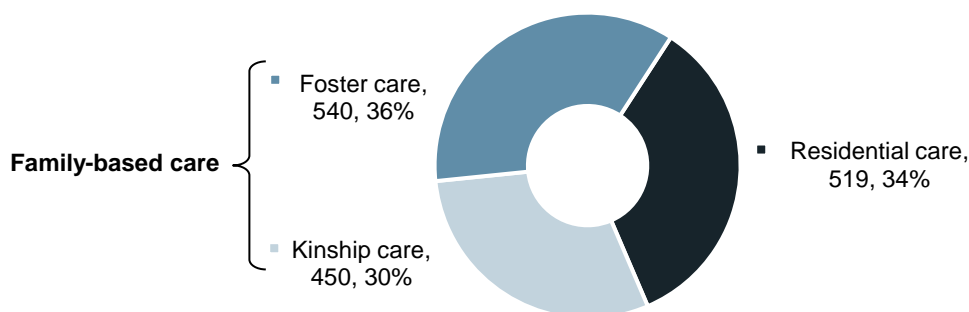
CHART 9: NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE



Almost two out of three children requiring out-of-home care placed in family-based care

MSF strives to place children requiring out-of-home care in family-based care, rather than residential care, as a safe and stable home environment is key to helping children grow into resilient individuals and realise their full potential. Studies have shown that children placed in family-based care fare better in the long term than those in residential care.⁵ The proportion of children in family-based care has gradually increased from 41% in 2013 to 66% in 2023 in line with efforts to place more children into family-based care (Chart 10). MSF will continue to engage and recruit more foster families.

CHART 10: NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY TYPE OF CARE (2023)

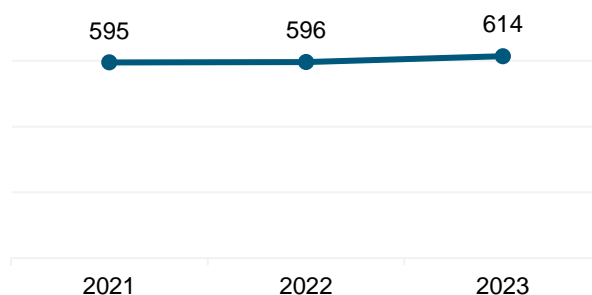


⁵ Li, D., Chng, G. S., & Chu, C. M. (2019). Comparing Long-Term Placement Outcomes of Residential and Family Foster Care: A Meta-Analysis. *Trauma, violence & abuse*, 20(5), 653–664.

Increase in foster families

The total number of foster families increased. MSF has been working with Fostering Agencies, community organisations, religious groups and private organisations to raise awareness about fostering and recruit more foster families. Correspondingly, the number of foster families has more than doubled since 2013, allowing us to place more vulnerable children in foster care. As of 2023, there were 614 foster families (Chart 11), compared to 243 foster families in 2013. Each foster family may foster more than one child.

CHART 11: NUMBER OF FOSTER FAMILIES



BE A FOSTER PARENT

MSF is looking for more families to step forward as foster parents and open their hearts and homes, so that more children in need can benefit from a family-based environment. Fostering can be a rewarding experience as foster parents can positively impact the children's lives.

Our foster parents are never alone in their fostering journey. We are committed to ensuring that you and the foster child receive the best support possible. Some forms of support you can receive as foster parents include financial support, assistance from a foster care worker, training courses, and support groups.

If you are keen to learn more about fostering, please scan the QR code and visit our website to find out more and to register your interest.



F. SPOUSAL ABUSE

The Women's Charter protects both men and women from family violence, including spousal abuse. Survivors of spousal abuse can seek help through various channels. They can call the Police, seek assistance from family members, friends, PSCs, FSCs, and/or apply for a Personal Protection Order under the Women's Charter.

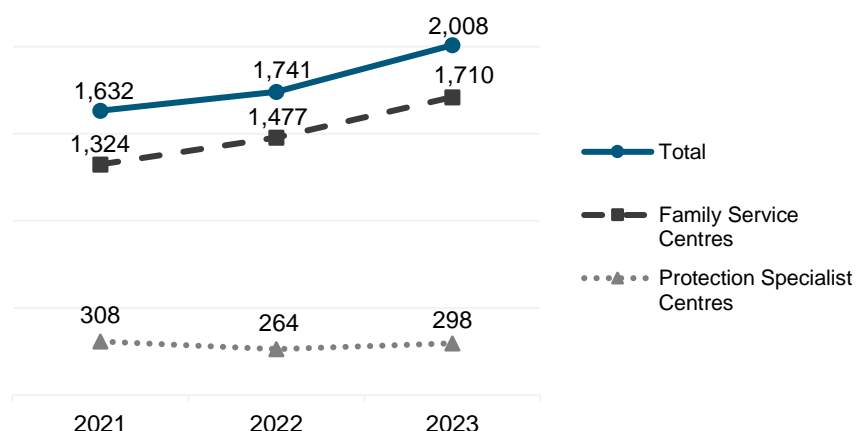
MSF provides support to survivors of spousal abuse through PSCs and FSCs. Community agencies oversee the abuse cases with low safety and risk concerns (e.g. jealous behaviours that do not result in severe emotional harm) to high safety and risk concerns (e.g. physical abuse resulting in permanent disability, non-consensual sexual acts that cause significant mental trauma, stalking and harassment). Unlike child and Vulnerable Adult abuse cases, spousal abuse cases are currently overseen by community agencies, as adults are better able to decide how to keep themselves safe with the community's support. Hence, there are no Tier 2 spousal abuse cases.⁶

F1. NEW SPOUSAL ABUSE CASES

Upward trend in new Tier 1 spousal abuse cases

Overall, there was an upward trend in the number of new spousal abuse cases supported by PSCs and FSCs, (Chart 12). This suggests the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to raise awareness about domestic violence and to make it easier for survivors and perpetrators to get help, with the progressive implementation of the recommendations by the Taskforce on Family Violence. These efforts could have helped to reduce the stigma associated with domestic violence and empower survivors and perpetrators to come forward to seek help.

CHART 12: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 1 SPOUSAL ABUSE CASES



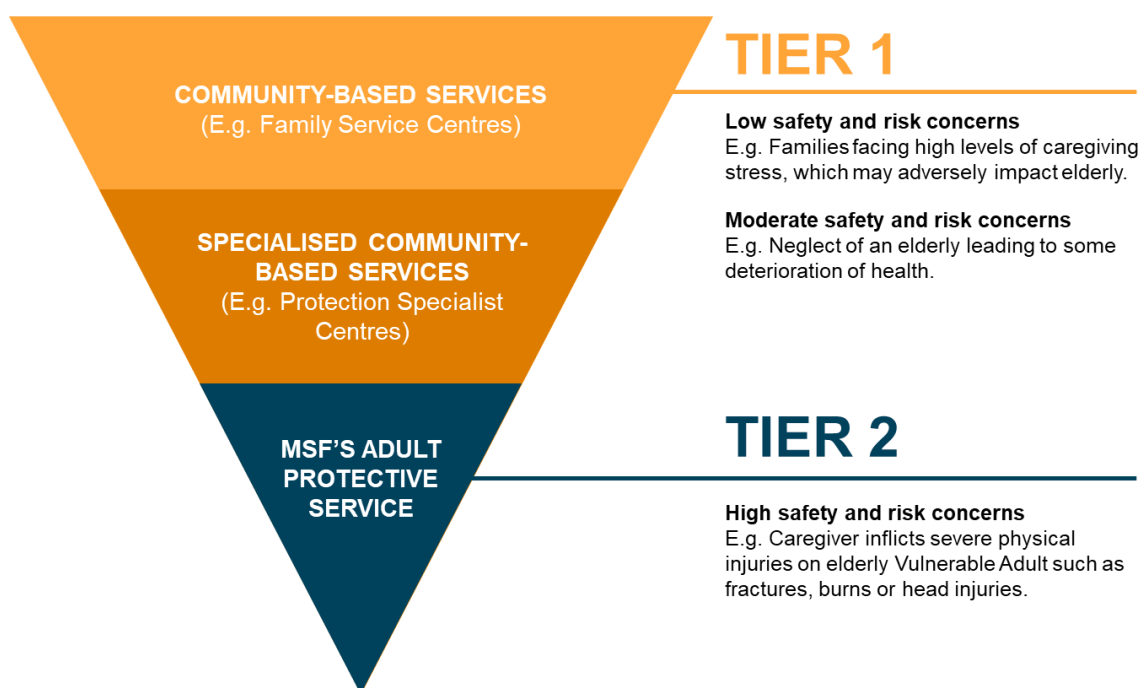
⁶ The family violence amendments to the Women's Charter passed in 2023 would strengthen the Government's ability to intervene in family violence cases where necessary, for the protection or personal safety of the survivor. Hence, there may be Tier 2 spousal abuse cases in the future.

G. ELDER ABUSE AND ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Elder abuse refers to any action or inaction that puts the safety or well-being of an elderly person at risk. The abuse is often carried out by a family member or caregiver whom the survivor trusts. An elderly person in this report is defined as someone who is aged 65 years and above.

Elder abuse can be understood in terms of a range of elder protection concerns. Some elderly are considered Vulnerable Adults under the Vulnerable Adults Act.

Tier 1 cases are overseen by community agencies such as PSCs and FSCs, while Tier 2 cases are overseen by Adult Protective Service (APS).

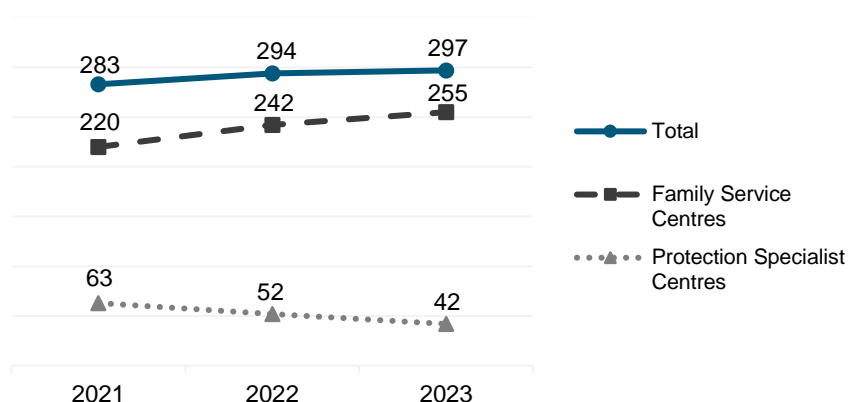


G1. NEW TIER 1 ELDER ABUSE CASES

Slight upward trend in new Tier 1 elder abuse cases

Overall, there was a slight upward trend in new Tier 1 cases (Chart 13). This could reflect the increased efforts by eldercare and healthcare agencies in detecting and referring cases to PSCs and FSCs. This allowed for early intervention in response to early signs of distress faced by elderly and families (e.g. supporting caregivers in caring for the elderly), which could have helped to prevent cases from escalating in risk severity.

CHART 13: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 1 ELDER ABUSE CASES⁷



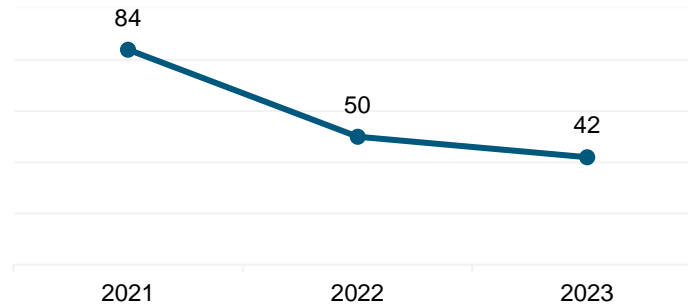
⁷ The figures exclude cases managed by eldercare agencies (e.g. eldercare centres, home-based services for elders, nursing homes) and healthcare agencies.

G2. NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES

Downward trend in new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

There was a downward trend in new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases (Chart 14), which could have been supported by community, eldercare and healthcare agencies working with Vulnerable Adults and their families to address the root causes of abuse or neglect, thereby preventing these issues from escalating and becoming more serious.

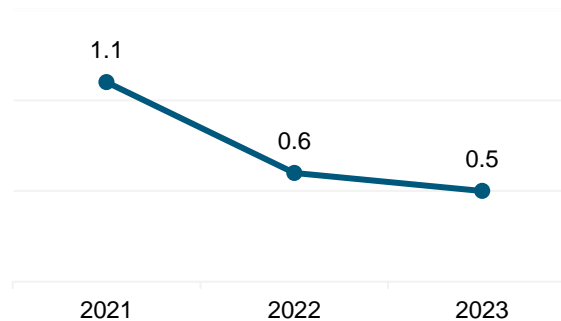
CHART 14: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES



Incidence rate of new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases remained low

The incidence rate of new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse was on a downward trend and remained low in 2023, at less than 1 per 1,000 vulnerable elderly (Chart 15).

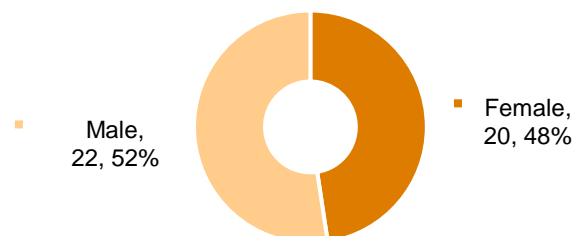
CHART 15: INCIDENCE RATE OF NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES (PER 1,000 VULNERABLE ELDERLY)



New male and female Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases were almost similar

In 2023, the number of new male and female Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases was almost similar (Chart 16).

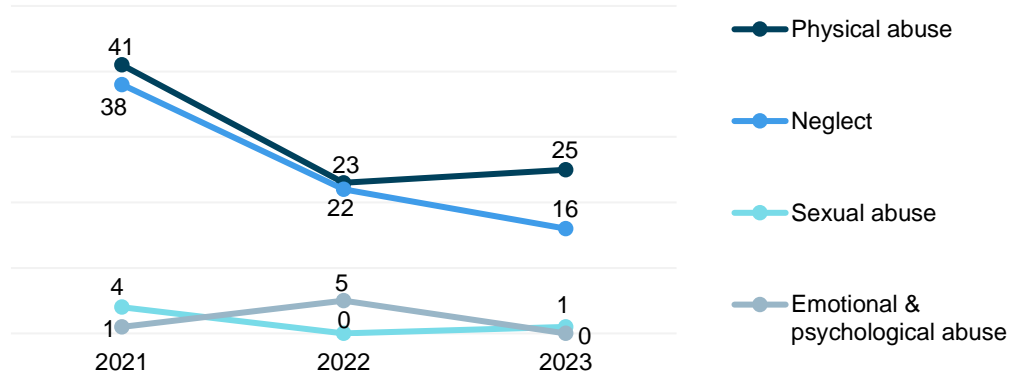
CHART 16: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY SEX (2023)



Physical abuse was the most common among new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

Physical abuse was the most common primary type of abuse among new Tier 2 cases (Chart 17). Similar to the physical abuse of children, physical abuse of elderly Vulnerable Adults is often more easily detected compared to other forms of abuse such as emotional & psychological abuse. Vulnerable Adults who experience emotional & psychological abuse may have low self-esteem, depression, trauma and anxiety. Some may have suicidal thoughts, feelings of isolation, helplessness, confusion, and live in a state of fear.

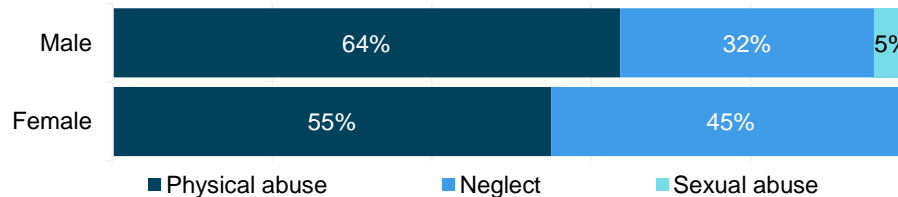
CHART 17: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY TYPE OF ABUSE



Physical abuse was the most common type of abuse among new Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases, regardless of sex

In 2023, physical abuse was the most common primary type of abuse experienced by elderly Vulnerable Adults across both sexes (Chart 18). There were no cases involving such Vulnerable Adults where emotional & psychological abuse was the primary type of abuse.

CHART 18: PROPORTION OF NEW TIER 2 ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY SEX AND TYPE OF ABUSE (2023)⁸



⁸ Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

H. NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

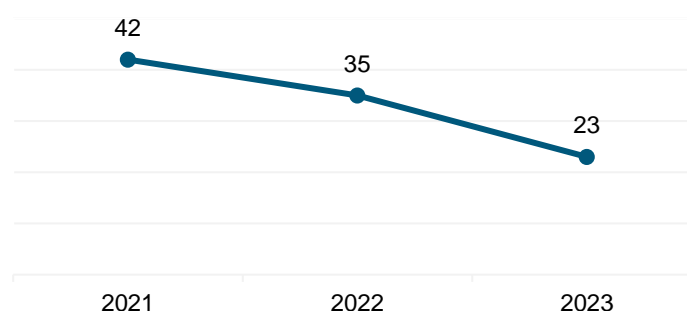
Besides elderly Vulnerable Adults (i.e. 65 years and above), there are also Vulnerable Adults who are not elderly (i.e. 18-64 years), who have disabilities or impairments that prevent them from being able to protect themselves. They are protected under the Vulnerable Adults Act and APS oversees these cases (i.e. Tier 2 cases).

H1. NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES

Downward trend in new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

New Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult cases fell by almost half from 2021 to 2023 (Chart 19). Nevertheless, MSF and community partners are mindful that the base is small in terms of absolute numbers, which may suggest that more efforts are needed to raise awareness of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse.

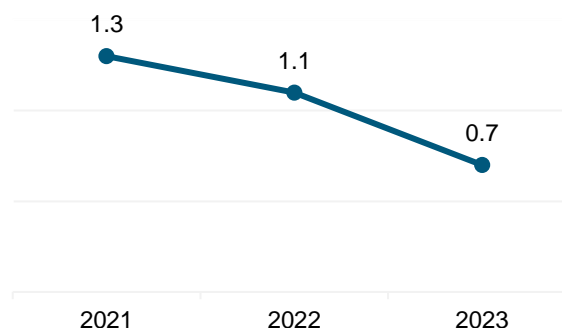
CHART 19: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES⁹



Incidence rate of new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases remained low

The incidence rate of new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse was on a downward trend and remained low in 2023, at less than 1 per 1,000 vulnerable population aged 18-64 years (Chart 20).

CHART 20: INCIDENCE RATE OF NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES (PER 1,000 VULNERABLE POPULATION AGED 18-64 YEARS)

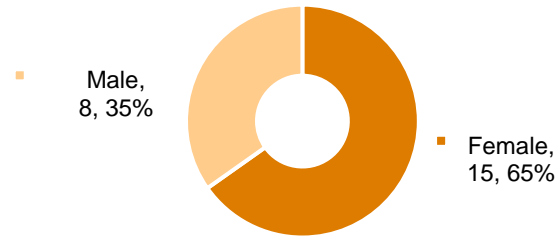


⁹ Only Tier 2 figures are reported. There may be Tier 1 cases overseen by FSCs and PSCs or cases managed solely by disability or healthcare agencies, which have not been included in the report as data on these cases is currently unavailable.

More females among new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases

In 2023, there were more females among new Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases (Chart 21). This trend mirrors global patterns, where females are disproportionately affected by abuse.

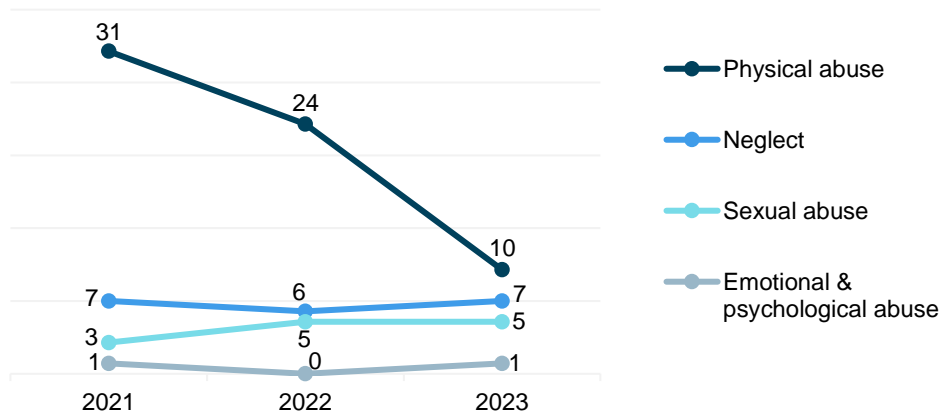
CHART 21: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY SEX (2023)



Physical abuse was the most common type of abuse among new Tier 2 cases

Physical abuse was the most common primary type of abuse among new Tier 2 cases, although there was a decrease in the number of cases. The decrease in physical abuse cases is likely due to proactive and early identification, which prevented cases from escalating in risk severity (Chart 22).

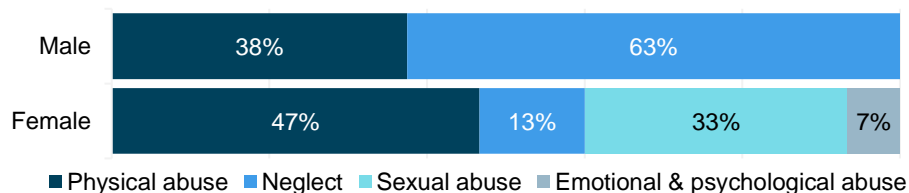
CHART 22: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY TYPE OF ABUSE



Neglect was more common among male non-elderly Vulnerable Adults, while physical abuse was more common among female non-elderly Vulnerable Adults in new Tier 2 cases

In 2023, neglect was more common among male non-elderly Vulnerable Adults (Chart 23). Physical abuse was more common among female non-elderly Vulnerable Adults, followed by sexual abuse. Those who were sexually abused were likely to have cognitive impairment and therefore lacked the mental capacity to provide consent to sexual activity.

CHART 23: PROPORTION OF NEW TIER 2 NON-ELDERLY VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE CASES BY SEX AND TYPE OF ABUSE (2023)¹⁰



¹⁰ Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

I. VULNERABLE ADULTS WHO NEGLECT THEMSELVES

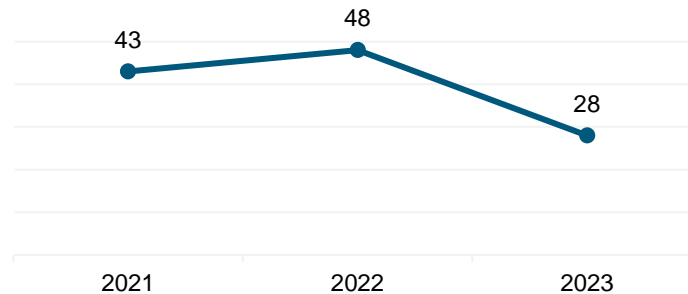
Cases of self-neglect involve Vulnerable Adults harming themselves as a result of neglecting their own basic needs, such as food, medical care, and a safe living environment. Consequently, they may live in extremely unsanitary or hazardous conditions, experience malnutrition or dehydration, or endure untreated physical or mental illness or injury. These Vulnerable Adults fail to perform essential tasks of daily living to care for themselves, impacting their safety and well-being. They are protected under the Vulnerable Adults Act and APS oversees these cases (i.e. Tier 2 cases). Cases of self-neglect were usually surfaced to MSF by community outreach workers or social workers who noticed signs of self-neglect. Such cases were also identified when the Vulnerable Adult was hospitalised for urgent medical care. The community plays a pivotal role in identifying cases of self-neglect, as their interactions with persons at risk of self-neglect allows them to notice signs of self-neglect that might otherwise go undetected.

11. NEW TIER 2 SELF-NEGLECT CASES

Decrease in new Tier 2 self-neglect cases in 2023

The number of new Tier 2 self-neglect cases dropped by almost half, from 48 cases in 2022 to 28 cases in 2023 (Chart 24). Similar to non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse, the small base in terms of absolute numbers may suggest that more efforts are needed by MSF and community partners to raise awareness of self-neglect.

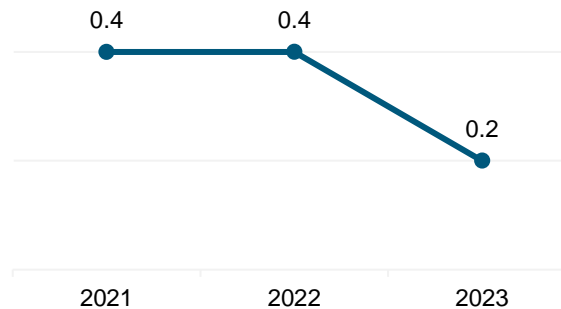
CHART 24: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 SELF-NEGLECT CASES¹¹



Incidence rate of new Tier 2 self-neglect cases remained low

The incidence rate of new Tier 2 self-neglect cases has been low, at fewer than 0.5 per 1,000 vulnerable population aged 18 years and above (Chart 25).

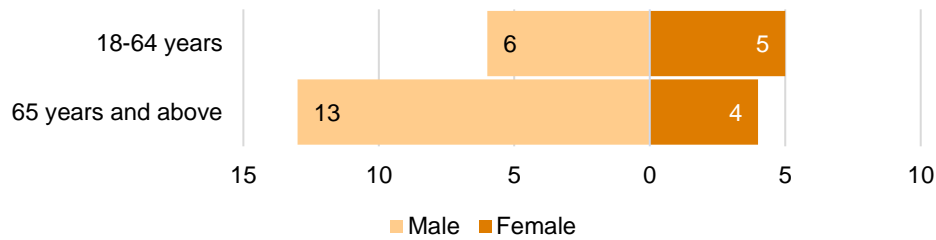
CHART 25: INCIDENCE RATE OF NEW TIER 2 SELF-NEGLECT CASES (PER 1,000 VULNERABLE POPULATION AGED 18 YEARS AND ABOVE)



¹¹ Only Tier 2 figures are reported. There may be Tier 1 cases overseen by FSCs and PSCs or cases managed solely by healthcare agencies, which have not been included in the report as data on these cases is currently unavailable.

Among new Tier 2 self-neglect cases, most were elderly males

Elderly males form the majority of Vulnerable Adults who neglected themselves in 2023 (Chart 26). A high proportion of them had physical infirmities which affected their ability to perform daily tasks, leading to self-neglect. Elderly Vulnerable Adults may also experience social isolation and cognitive decline, which can impair their judgement and awareness of risks. They may also be reluctant to burden others. This reluctance may deter them from performing self-care tasks or seeking help, leading to the deprioritisation of their own health and safety. Younger Vulnerable Adults (i.e. aged 18-64 years) who neglect themselves tend to have mental infirmities that impair their cognitive ability, making it challenging for them to perform self-care tasks or to seek help.

CHART 26: NUMBER OF NEW TIER 2 SELF-NEGLECT CASES BY AGE AND SEX (2023)

J. CONCLUSION

We must not condone domestic violence.

The Government and community agencies will continue to work together to keep families safe. Community agencies are ready and equipped to support both survivors and perpetrators to address domestic violence in the home. In cases where families are uncooperative or where safety and risk concerns for vulnerable persons are high, the Government has the authority to invoke statutory powers to keep survivors safe.

With the support of our community partners, much work has been done to better protect survivors and rehabilitate perpetrators. However, more can be done. These efforts include raising public awareness, improving operational processes, training and building sector capabilities in the use of evidence-based tools, and enhancing legal protection for survivors. The Government will continue to invest resources in these areas. We are also working towards enacting a Domestic Violence Act, to extend better protection to all in familial and non-familial relationships.

As public awareness increases and more professionals are trained to detect cases of domestic violence, it is likely that there will be more reports of such cases. We seek the public's support for our case workers and frontline professionals who work tirelessly to protect survivors of domestic violence.

But domestic violence is not a private matter, nor is it only or primarily for professionals to address. All of us have a part to play in building a society where everyone can feel safe. We all bear a collective responsibility to stop domestic violence. If you are experiencing domestic violence or see it happening, please report it, so that we can work together to save lives. Seeking help early can save lives and foster healthy family relationships.

Together, we can build stronger and more stable families in Singapore.

K. ANNEX

Table A: New Tier 1 child abuse cases by age and sex

	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	2,377	2,760	2,787
Age and sex of child			
- 0-6 years	738	861	891
o Male	368	448	496
o Female	370	413	395
- 7-12 years	926	1089	1154
o Male	507	572	628
o Female	419	517	526
- 13-16 years	593	652	613
o Male	271	273	291
o Female	322	379	322
- 17-18 years	115	156	128
o Male	56	74	52
o Female	59	82	76
- Further breakdown unavailable	5	2	1

Table B: New Tier 2 child abuse cases by age, sex and type of abuse

	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	2,141	2,067	2,011
Age and sex of child			
- 0-6 years	735	786	802
o Male	364	401	395
o Female	371	385	407
- 7-12 years	785	749	711
o Male	398	356	371
o Female	387	393	340
- 13-16 years	540	476	427
o Male	220	182	175
o Female	320	294	252
- 17-18 years	81	56	71
o Male	35	25	28
o Female	46	31	43
Type of abuse			
- Physical abuse	788	758	888
<i>Age of child</i>			
▪ 0-6 years	325	318	361
▪ 7-12 years	306	305	348
▪ 13-16 years	136	116	158
▪ 17-18 years ¹²	21	19	21
<i>Sex of child</i>			
▪ Male	408	403	462
▪ Female	380	355	426
- Neglect	629	536	544
<i>Age of child</i>			
▪ 0-6 years	210	217	231
▪ 7-12 years	204	158	158
▪ 13-16 years	185	143	133
▪ 17-18 years	30	18	22
<i>Sex of child</i>			
▪ Male	311	246	259
▪ Female	318	290	285
- Sexual abuse	443	351	272
<i>Age of child</i>			
▪ 0-6 years	96	68	56
▪ 7-12 years	175	143	112
▪ 13-16 years	153	127	87
▪ 17-18 years	19	13	17

¹² CYPA was amended in 2019 to extend protection to children from aged below 16 years, to below 18 years.

	2021	2022	2023
<i>Sex of child</i>			
▪ Male	159	116	105
▪ Female	284	235	167
- Emotional & psychological abuse	281	422	307
<i>Age of child</i>			
▪ 0-6 years	104	183	154
▪ 7-12 years	100	143	93
▪ 13-16 years	66	90	49
▪ 17-18 years	11	6	11
<i>Sex of child</i>			
▪ Male	139	199	143
▪ Female	142	223	164

Table C: Children in out-of-home care

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Children in foster care	309	335	362	430	509	535	545	543	541	540	540
Children in kinship care¹³	207	221	192	354	229	295	288	338	485	467	450
Children in residential care	749	691	680	643	631	631	597	554	517	512	519

Note: Represents all children in out-of-home care as of 31 December of the specified year, regardless of the year the child's case was opened.

Table D: Foster families

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	243	282	357	420	456	498	530	564	595	596	614

Note: Represents the number of foster families as of 31 December of the specified year.

Table E: New Tier 2 elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases by sex and type of abuse

	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	84	50	42
Sex of elderly Vulnerable Adult			
- Male	31	16	22
- Female	53	34	20
Type of abuse			
- Physical abuse	41	23	25
<i>Sex of elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	17	8	14
▪ Female	24	15	11
- Neglect	38	22	16
<i>Sex of elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	13	6	7
▪ Female	25	16	9
- Sexual abuse	4	0	1
<i>Sex of elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	1	0	1
▪ Female	3	0	0
- Emotional & psychological abuse	1	5	0
<i>Sex of elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	0	2	0
▪ Female	1	3	0

¹³ Number of cases placed in kinship care from 2013-2020 is an estimate based on the total number of open child abuse investigation and intervention cases as of 31 December of each year, multiplied by the percentage of children placed in kinship care. Actual figures are reported for 2021-2023.

Table F: New Tier 2 non-elderly Vulnerable Adult abuse cases by age, sex and type of abuse

	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	42	35	23
Age and sex of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult			
- 18-29 years	14	10	7
o Male	6	6	4
o Female	8	4	3
- 30-39 years	3	7	5
o Male	1	4	2
o Female	2	3	3
- 40-49 years	4	4	3
o Male	0	2	1
o Female	4	2	2
- 50-64 years	21	14	8
o Male	9	4	1
o Female	12	10	7
Type of abuse			
- Physical abuse	31	24	10
<i>Age of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ 18-29 years	10	8	5
▪ 30-39 years	3	3	2
▪ 40-49 years	3	4	1
▪ 50-64 years	15	9	2
<i>Sex of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	11	13	3
▪ Female	20	11	7
- Neglect	7	6	7
<i>Age of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ 18-29 years	1	0	1
▪ 30-39 years	0	2	2
▪ 40-49 years	1	0	1
▪ 50-64 years	5	4	3
<i>Sex of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	4	3	5
▪ Female	3	3	2
- Sexual abuse	3	5	5
<i>Age of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ 18-29 years	3	2	1
▪ 30-39 years	0	2	1
▪ 40-49 years	0	0	1
▪ 50-64 years	0	1	2
<i>Sex of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	1	0	0
▪ Female	2	5	5
- Emotional & psychological abuse	1	0	1
<i>Age of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ 18-29 years	0	0	0
▪ 30-39 years	0	0	0
▪ 40-49 years	0	0	0
▪ 50-64 years	1	0	1
<i>Sex of non-elderly Vulnerable Adult</i>			
▪ Male	0	0	0
▪ Female	1	0	1

Table G: New Tier 2 self-neglect cases by age and sex

	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL	43	48	28
Age and sex of Vulnerable Adult			
- 18-29 years	1	0	1
o Male	0	0	0
o Female	1	0	1
- 30-39 years	1	1	1
o Male	1	0	0
o Female	0	1	1
- 40-49 years	5	3	2
o Male	2	2	2
o Female	3	1	0
- 50-64 years	13	14	7
o Male	10	9	4
o Female	3	5	3
- 65 years and above	23	30	17
o Male	12	18	13
o Female	11	12	4