

# The National Aged Care Advocacy Program Presenting Issues

Half-yearly report

July 2025 – December 2025

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# Services – summary of advocacy and information over time

OPAN members delivered a total of 32,025 instances of advocacy and information services to older people in the first two quarters of FY26. This is an increase of 33% compared with the same period of FY25, and 15% more than the last six months of FY25. This equates to a potential reach of services to approximately 2.41% of the aged care client population.<sup>1</sup>

26% of services were advocacy (8,176 cases), with information provisions accounting for the remaining 74% (23,849). The number of information provisions rose by 15% since the previous six months, whilst the number of advocacy cases increased by 14%, with 8,176 cases from July to December 2025 compared with 7,162 from January to June 2025.

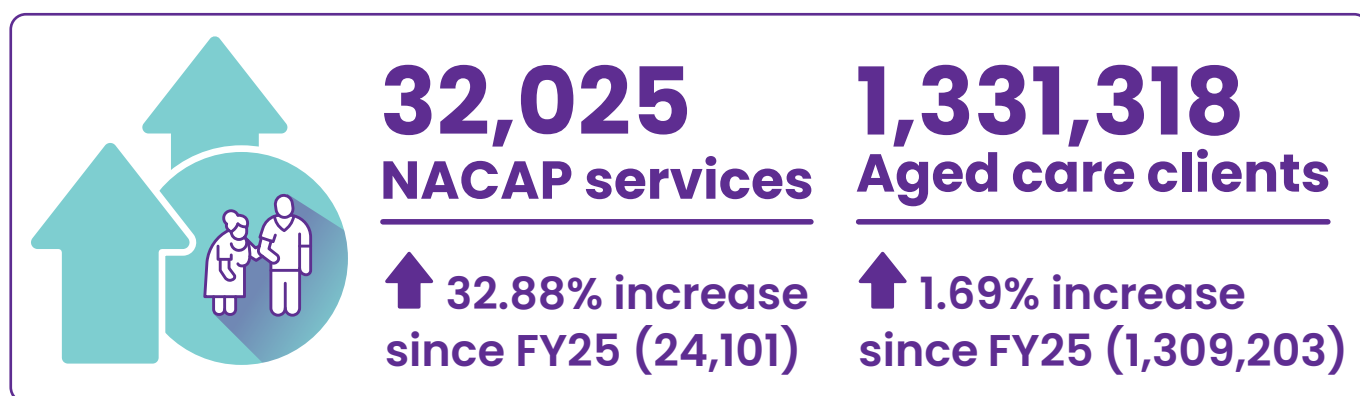


Figure 1. Total number of NACAP services vs total aged care client population



Figure 2. Potential reach per aged care client population by OPAN services

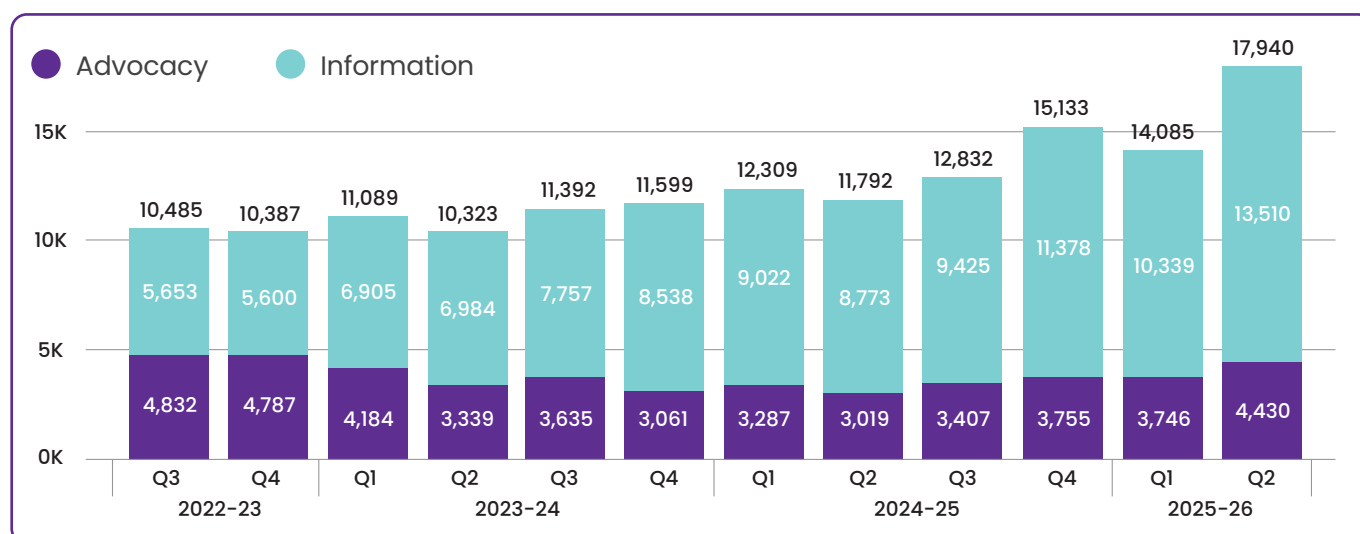
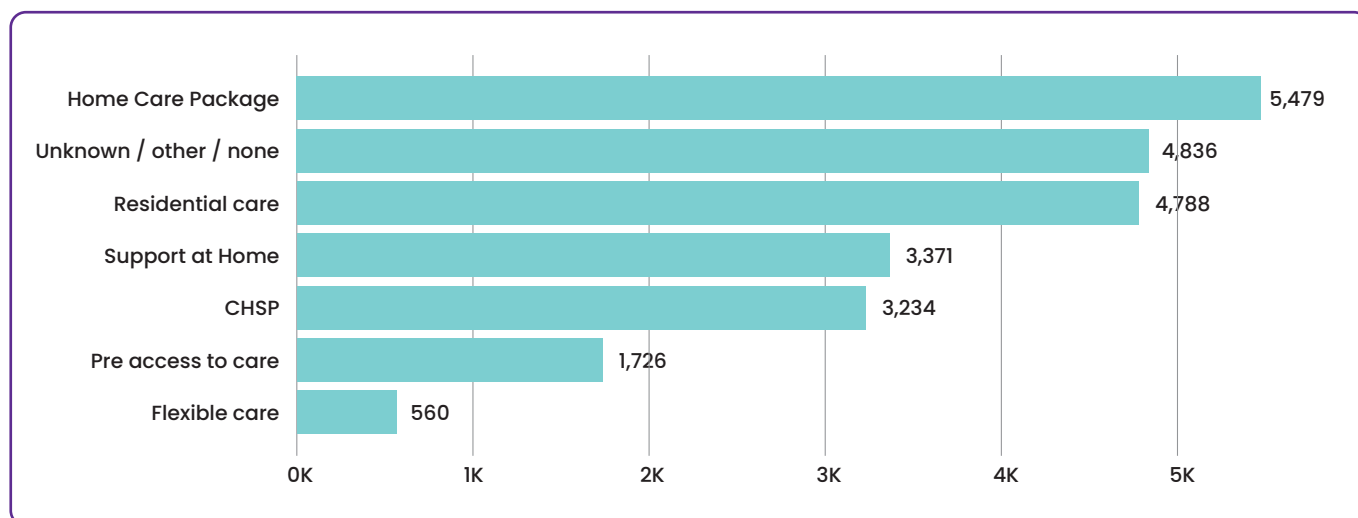


Figure 3. NACAP services by type since July 2022

<sup>1</sup> As highlighted at the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety the desire is to reach a minimum of 5% of older Australians receiving aged care accessing aged care advocacy services, therefore, a six month target would be 2.5% of the aged care client population.

# Information provisions by current aged care program type

When considering the client's self-identified current aged care type or types, Home Care Packages continue to be the most common aged care program seen in information provisions (5,479, 23% of information provisions). The aged care program was recorded as 'other/unknown/none' for 20% of information provisions (4,836 provisions), which is expected given the nature of the contacts. Residential aged care also made up 20% of information provisions (4,788 provisions). This was followed by the new Support at Home program (3,371 provisions, 14%) and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) (3,234 provisions, 14%). Flexible care accounted for only 2% of information provisions (560 provisions). This breakdown is largely consistent with FY25, aside from the introduction of the Support at Home program.



**Figure 4. Number of information provisions by current aged care type(s) of client**

Unsurprisingly, the proportion of people calling for information before accessing aged care was slightly higher for information provisions than advocacy cases (7% of information provisions compared with 5% of advocacy cases).

# Advocacy cases by aged care program type relating to client's issue

When considering the aged care type relating to the client's issue, Home Care Packages continue to be the most common aged care program seen in advocacy cases (2,400 cases, 30% of advocacy cases). This was followed by Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) (1,876 cases, 23%), Residential care (1,420 cases, 17%), and then Support at Home (1,415 cases, 17%). Flexible care accounted for only 2% of advocacy cases (134 cases). The aged care program was recorded as 'other/unknown/none' for 8% of advocacy cases (650 cases). This breakdown is largely consistent with FY25, although the introduction of the Support at Home program has decreased the proportion of existing aged care program types for which clients seek advocacy.

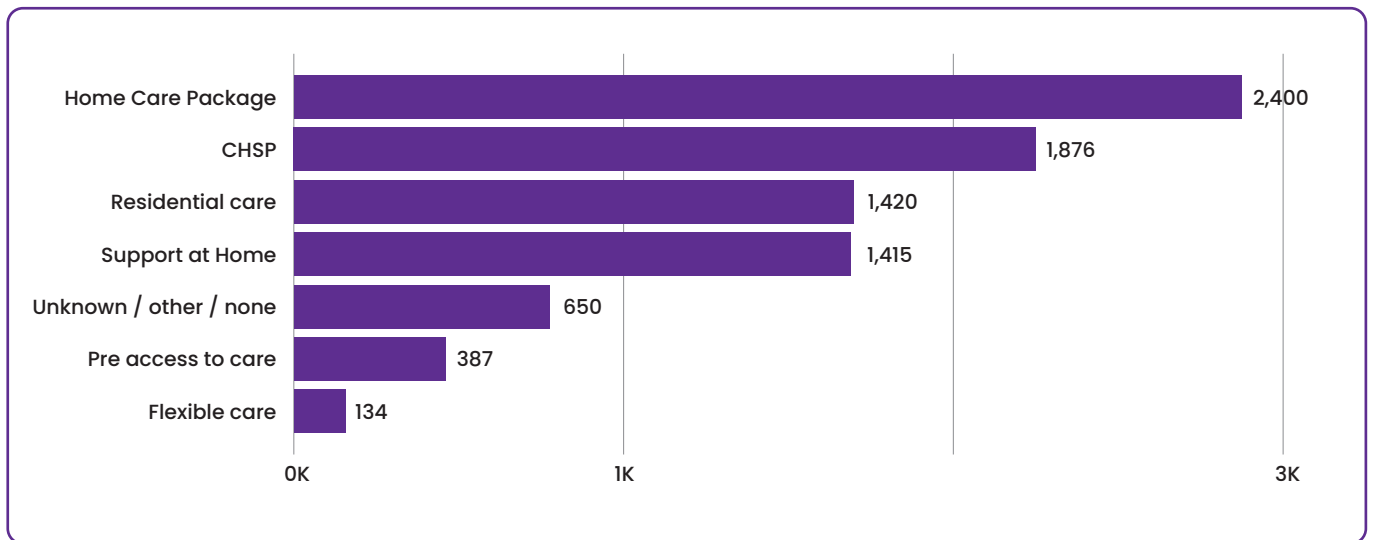
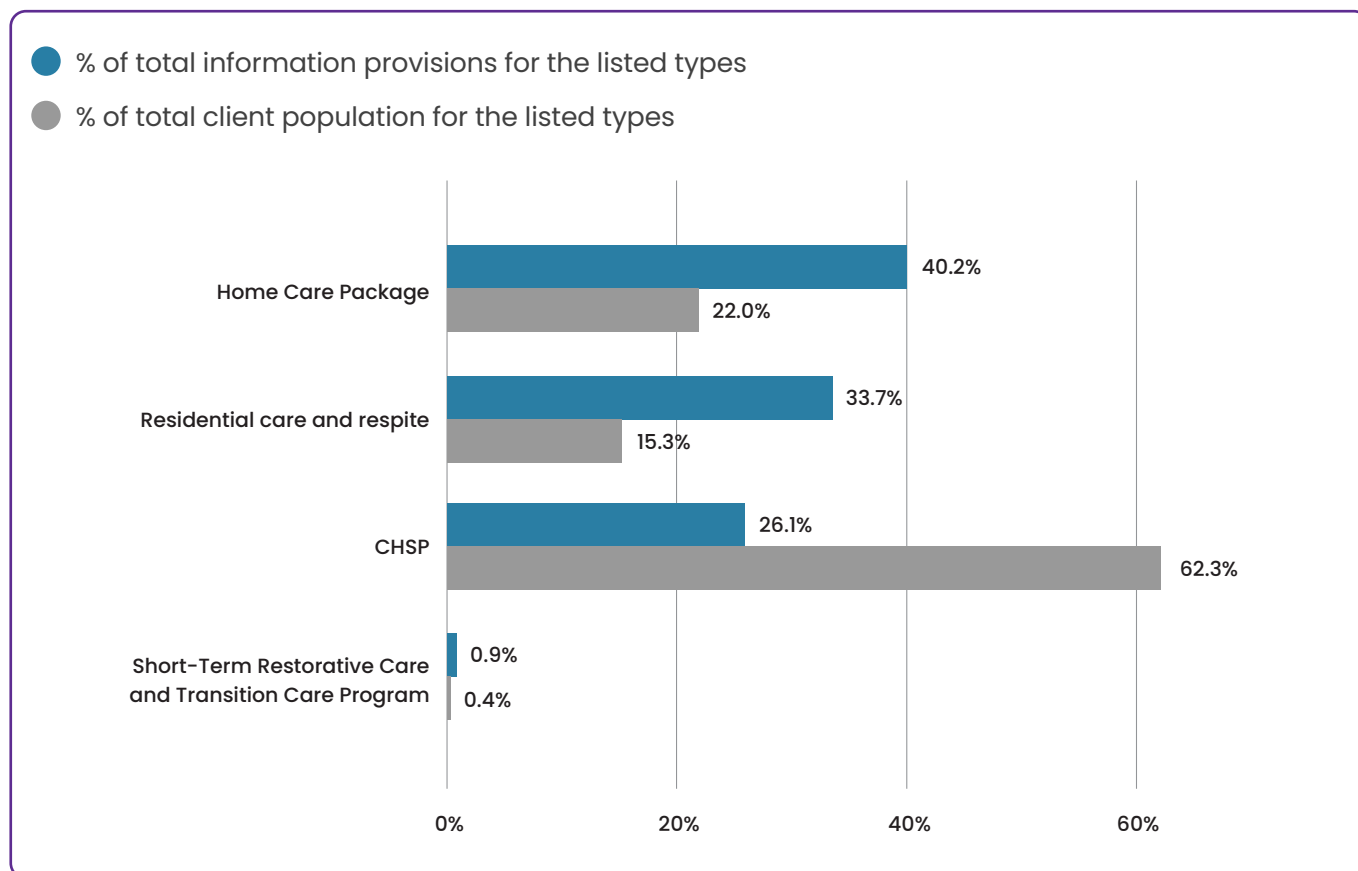


Figure 5. Number of advocacy cases by current aged care type(s) relating to the client's issue

# Information provisions and clients per aged care program type



**Figure 6. Comparison of aged care types by proportion of information provisions for clients and proportion of client population**

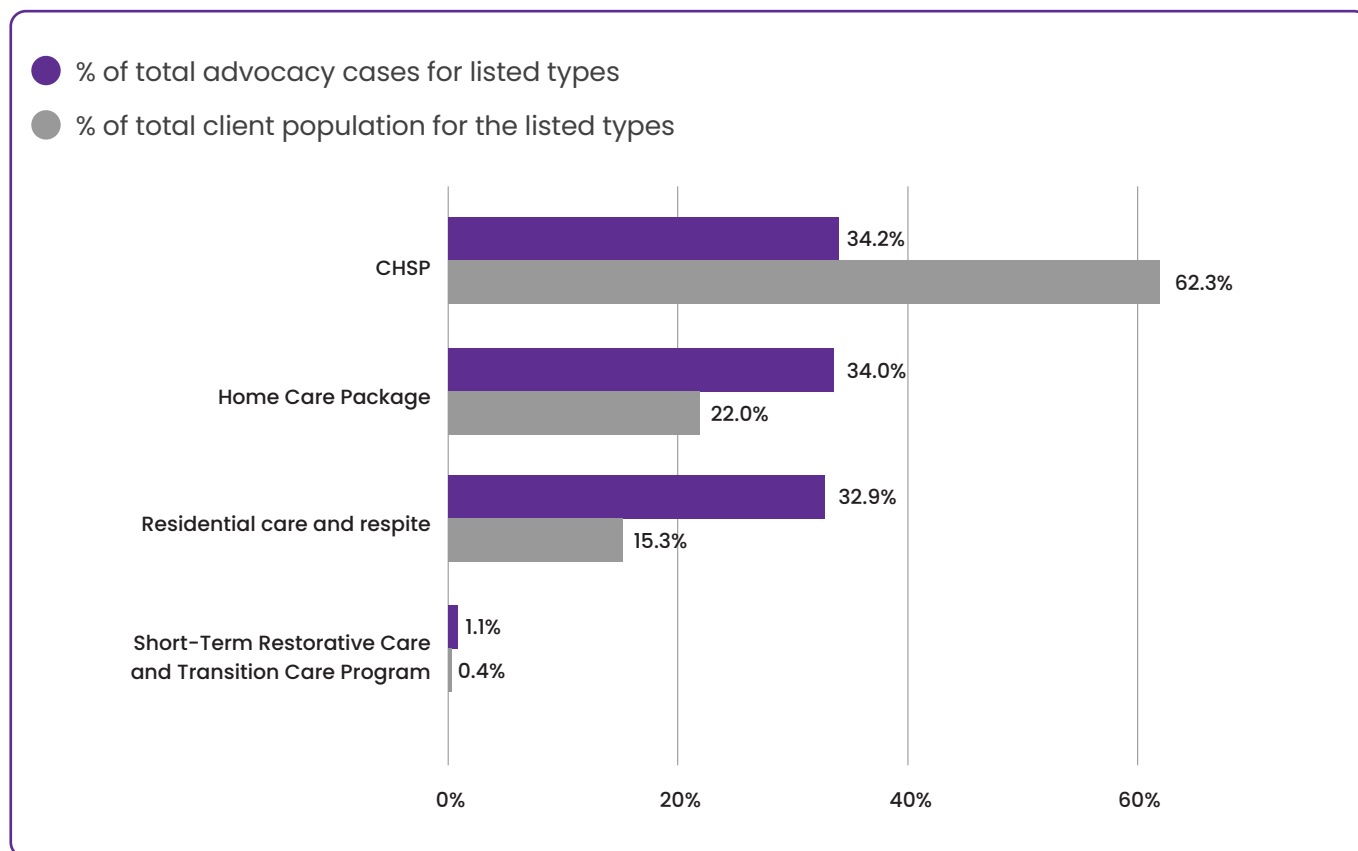
As highlighted in the *NACAP Presenting Issues Report 2024-25*, the proportion of OPAN services related to Home Care Packages and residential care continues to be disproportionately high in the first two quarters of FY26. This is demonstrated by comparing the aged care population data to the equivalent numbers for the aged care type relating to the client's issue for advocacy cases.

There were 1.8 times more information provisions relating to Home Care Packages than expected based on the aged care population size, accounting for 40% of information provisions provided and only 22% of the aged care population. Information provisions in relation to residential care, including respite, occurred 2.2 times more than expected (34%) based on the aged care population size.

In contrast, there were 2.4 times less contacts regarding CHSP services than would be expected based on the aged care population size.

Although the sample sizes were low, information provisions relating to flexible care programs Short-Term Restorative Care and Transition Care Program occurred at 2.3 times the frequency expected based on the aged care population size.

# Advocacy cases and clients per aged care program type



**Figure 7. Comparison of aged care types by proportion related to issues in advocacy and proportion of client population**

As highlighted in the recent Presenting Issues Report, the proportion of OPAN services related to Home Care Packages and residential care continues to be disproportionately high in the first two quarters of FY26. This is demonstrated by comparing the aged care population data to the equivalent numbers for the aged care type relating to the client's issue for advocacy cases.

There were 1.5 times more advocacy cases relating to Home Care Packages than expected based on the aged care population size, accounting for 34% of cases provided and only 22% of the aged care population. Advocacy cases in relation to residential care, including respite, occurred 2.2 times more than expected (33%) based on the aged care population size.

In contrast, there were 1.8 times less contacts regarding CHSP services than would be expected based on the aged care population size.

Although the sample sizes were low, advocacy cases relating to flexible care programs Short-Term Restorative Care and Transition Care Program occurred at 2.8 times the frequency expected based on the aged care population size.

# Services – referral source and primary contacts

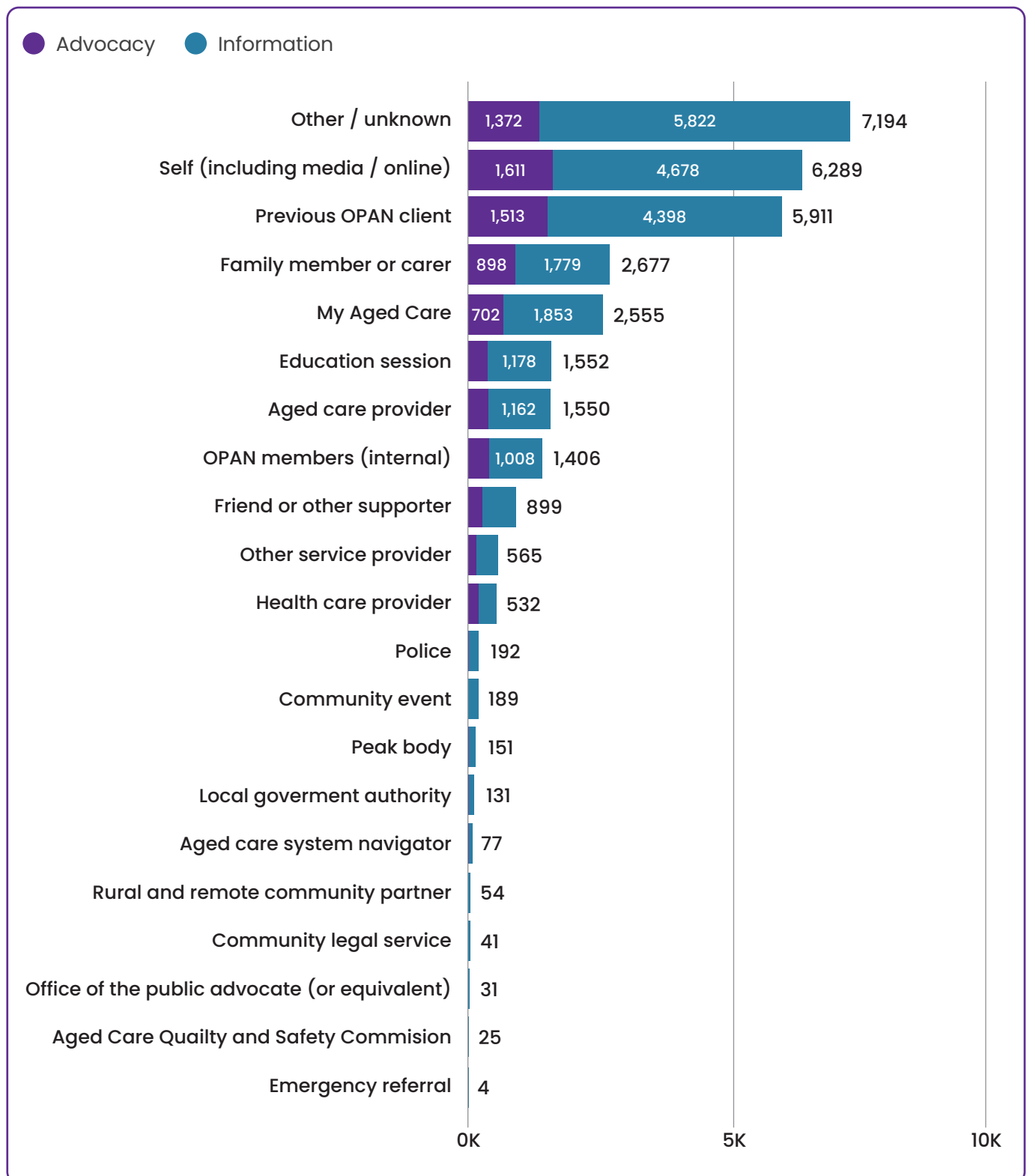
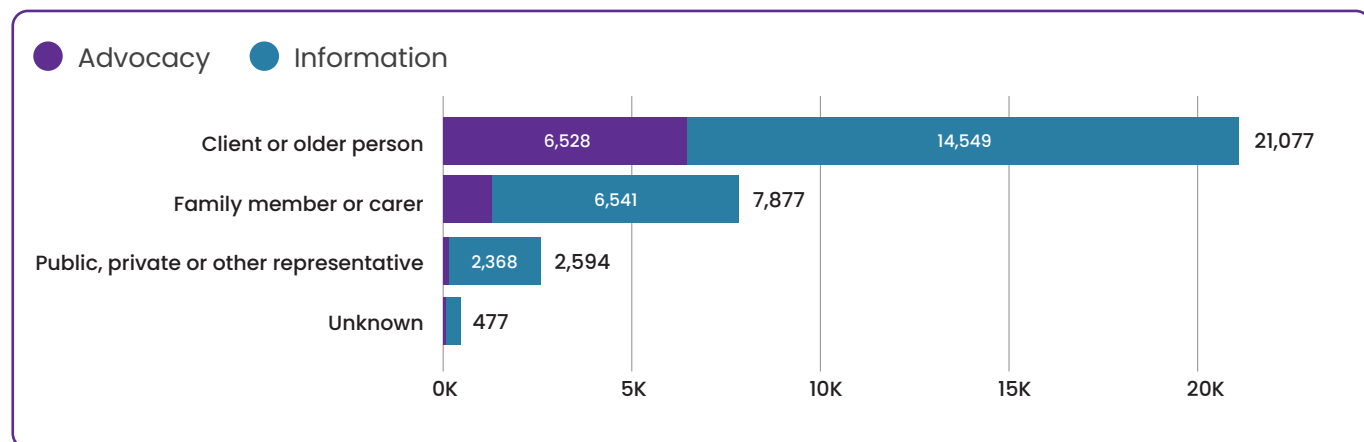


Figure 8. Number of services by referral source and service type

The distribution of referral sources to OPAN remained fairly steady in the first half of FY26. In cases where the referral source was known, most commonly, older people found out about and contacted network members themselves (i.e. a self-referral), including after searching online and hearing about OPAN in the media (20% of all services). Other common referral pathways included being a previous client of OPAN (18%) or a family member or carer (8%).



**Figure 9. Number of services by primary contact and service type**

Consistent with FY25, the most likely primary contact with OPAN continues to be the older person themselves, which makes up 66% of services (2% more than the same period last year). The older person’s family member or carer was the primary contact in 25% of cases (1% less than FY25). In 8% of cases, the primary contact was the older person’s public, private or other representatives (e.g. a substitute decision-maker, public guardian or public administrator), which is 1% less than FY25.

## Top advocacy issues

The nature of advocacy case work results in a deeper understanding of issues than with information provisions, and allows for key issues to be identified and reported by network members. The following pages therefore focus on issues identified through advocacy cases only, for those cases where the issue type could be determined at the time of reporting.<sup>2</sup> The top three issues, regardless of aged care type, remained the same in the first half of FY26 as the previous six months. Service delivery continued to be the top reported issue nationally, accounting for 41% of advocacy cases and 38% of issues from July to December 2025. Accessing aged care accounted for 37% of issues overall and 40% of advocacy, whilst 18% of issues were financial and featured in 20% of all advocacy cases. Abuse of the older person accounted for 4% of all issues and of almost 5% of advocacy, the same proportions as the previous six months.

**Table 1. Number of advocacy cases by issue category**

Issue category	Total advocacy cases
Service delivery	1,720
Accessing aged care	1,686
Financial	857
Abuse of older person	216
Other - in scope (NACAP)	113
Out of scope	111
EPOA / guardian info (not abuse)	41

<sup>2</sup> Data is reconciled following the end of each financial year. A large number of outstanding issue categories is to be expected half way through the financial year, due to the ongoing and complex nature of advocacy case work.

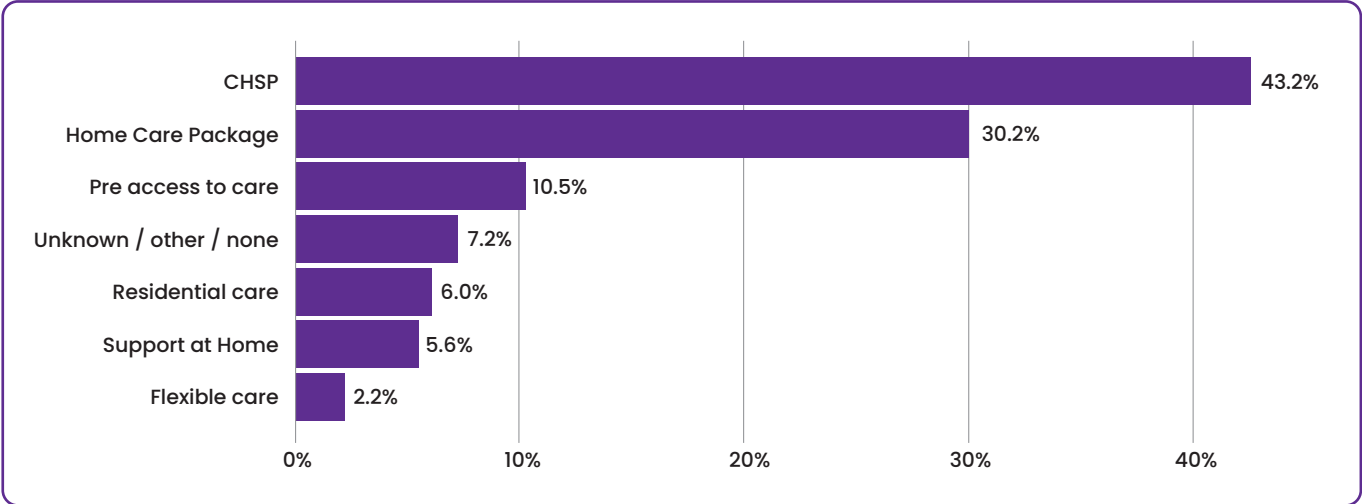


Figure 10. Proportion of accessing aged care advocacy cases by aged care type

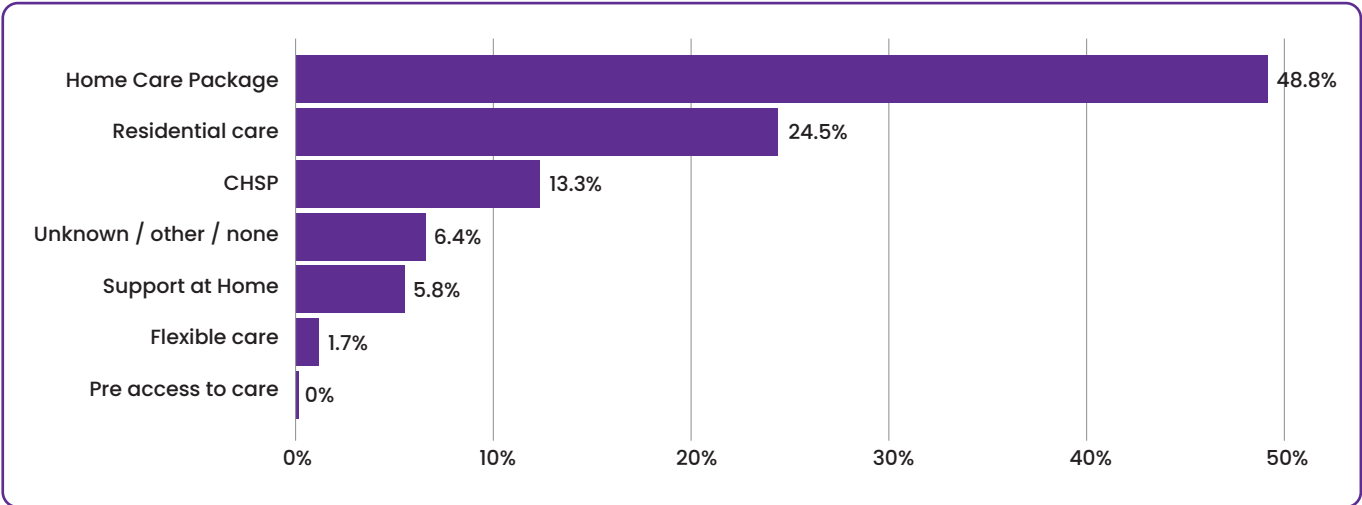


Figure 11. Proportion of service delivery advocacy cases by aged care type

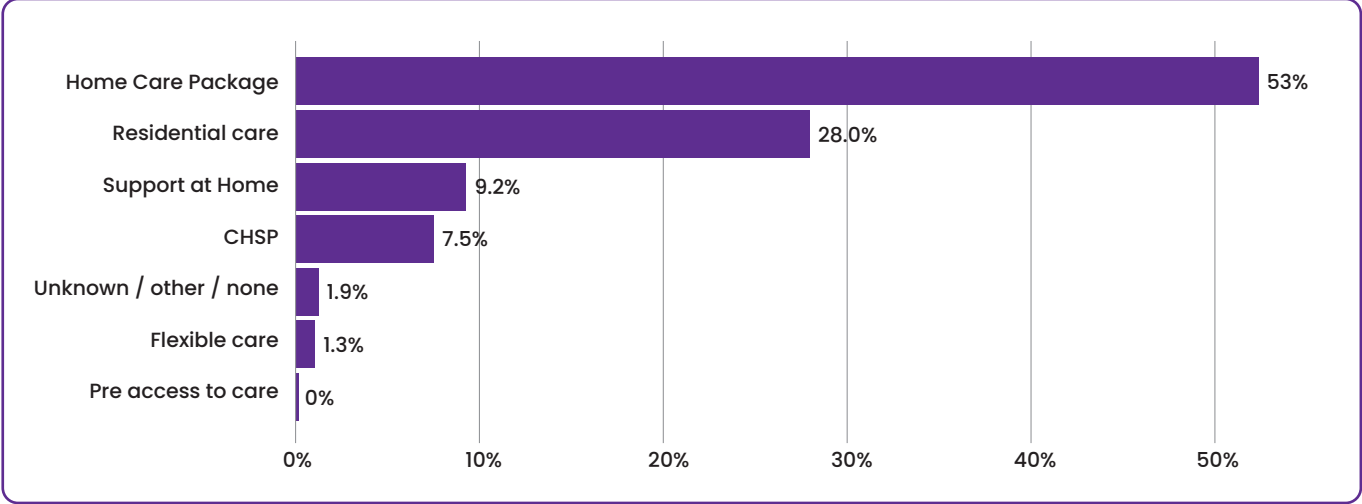


Figure 12. Proportion of financial advocacy cases by aged care type

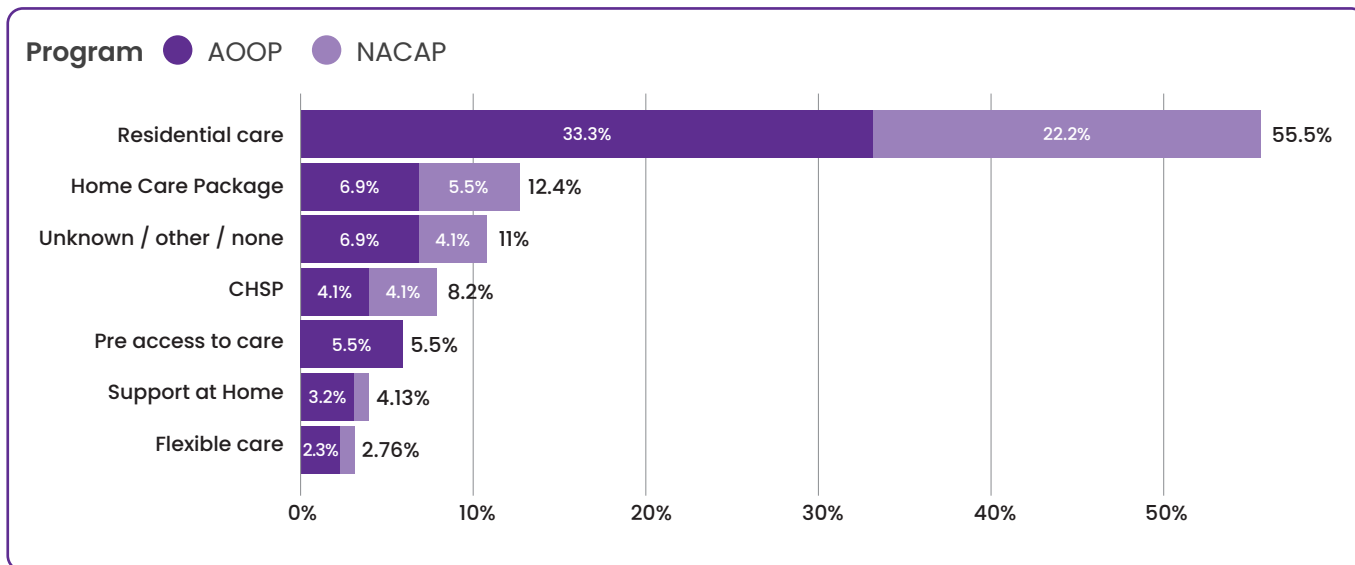


Figure 13. Proportion of abuse advocacy cases by aged care type<sup>3</sup>

## Top advocacy issues – accessing aged care

There were 1,686 advocacy cases and 2,228 issues raised relating to accessing aged care in the first half of FY26, which is a 5% decrease in issues since the same period last year. Such cases were most frequently in relation to accessing CHSP, which accounted for 43% (728) of access-related cases. These 728 cases also accounted for the majority (75%) of all advocacy cases relating to CHSP. 30% of advocacy for accessing aged care was in relation to Home Care Packages, which was 30% (510) of all Home Care Packages cases. Accessing aged care is also the most common issue in flexible care advocacy cases, occurring in 38% (38) of cases. Access issues were the second largest proportion of all cases involving the new Support at Home program, accounting for 37% (94) of all Support at Home cases and 6% of all accessing aged care cases.

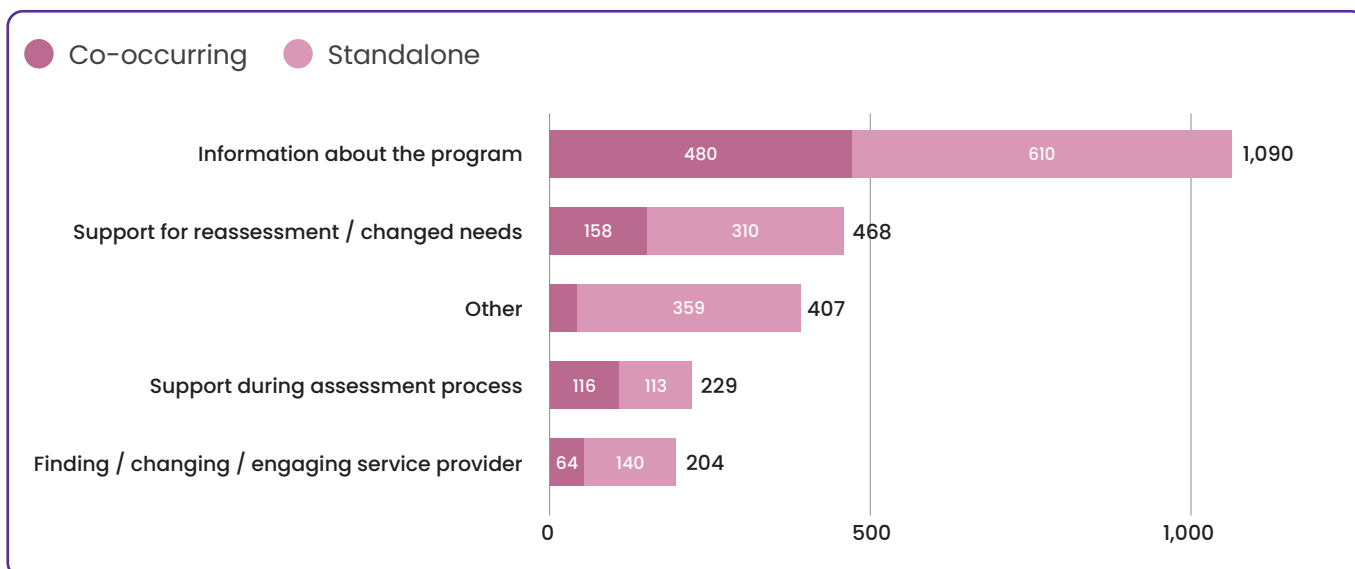


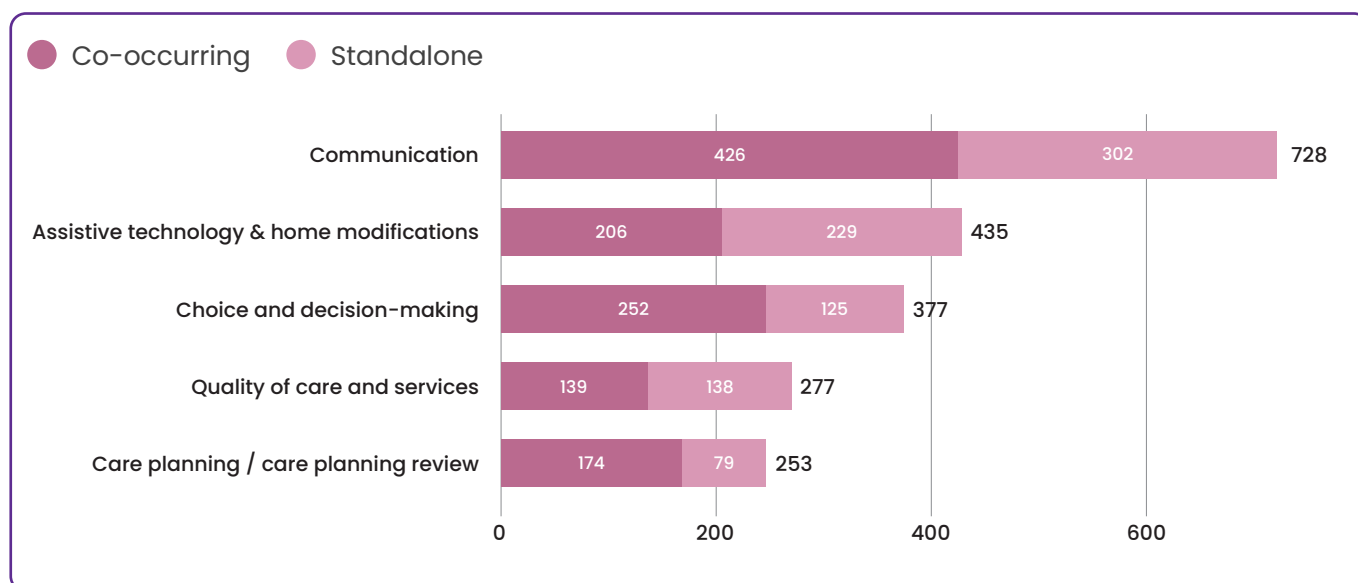
Figure 14. Top five accessing aged care issues by category (count of issues)

<sup>3</sup> **Figure 13:** **AOOP** = NACAP Abuse of Older Persons Program, includes older persons at risk of abuse or experiencing abuse in any setting. They may be in the community, or in an aged care setting, as long as the abuse is not related to the provision of aged care services; **NACAP** = National Aged Care Advocacy Program, includes older persons at risk of abuse or experiencing abuse which is directly related to the provision of aged care services.

The most common presenting issue in accessing aged care cases continues to be regarding general information about programs, accounting for 49% (1,090) of access issues and 56% (936) of cases. 44% of these issues co-occurred with another access issue, most notably support for reassessment or changed needs, which featured alongside 34% (162) of information related access issues. There were 432 cases related to support for reassessment or changed needs for the reporting period, contributing to 21% (468) of access issues overall. 16% of access advocacy issues were raised by people living with a disability, 13% by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and 7% by people living with cognitive decline.

## Top advocacy issues – service delivery

The first half of FY26 saw 1,720 advocacy cases relating to service delivery, with a total of 2,302 service delivery issues recorded. 32% of these cases had more than one issue recorded, with 483 issues other than service delivery recorded in addition. 285 of these were accessing aged care issues, 161 were financial issues and 27 were issues that were outside the scope of NACAP.

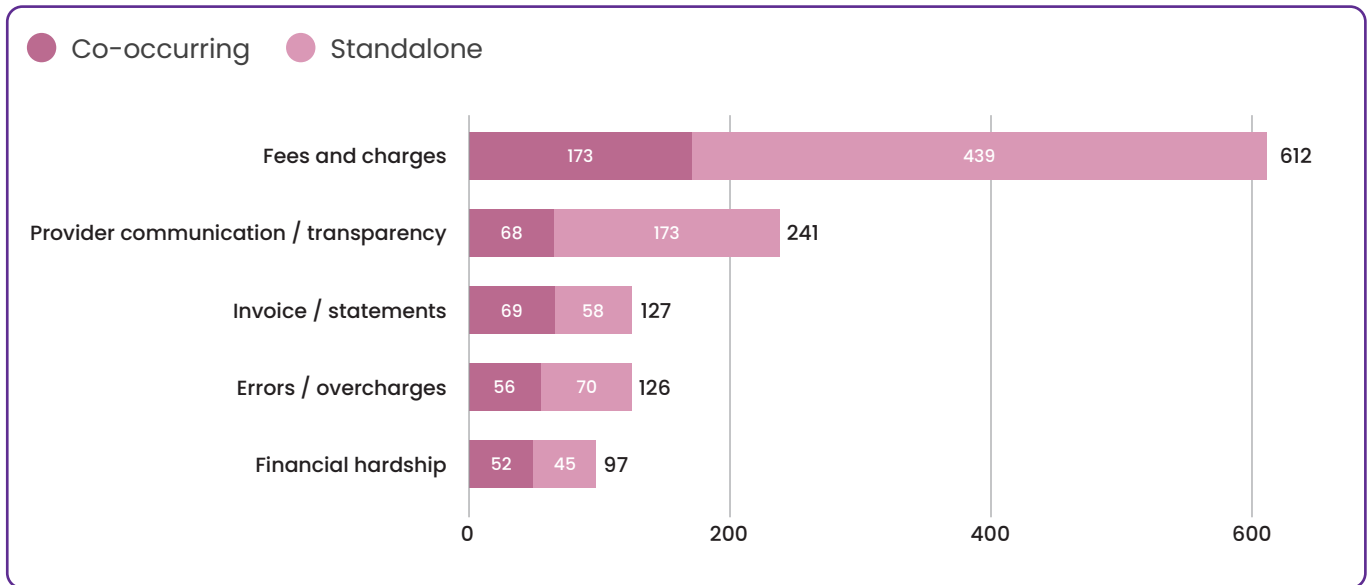


**Figure 15. Top five service delivery issues by category (count of issues)**

The majority of the top service delivery issues had one or more co-occurring service delivery issues. 32% of service delivery cases (728) had a communication related issue, and 23% of these also had a choice and decision-making issue. 15% co-occurred with complaints support issues, 15% of communication issues co-occurred with care planning or care planning review issues; 15% co-occurred with coordination or management issues and 14% co-occurred with complaints support issues. Issues relating to assistive technology and home modifications contributed to 19% (435) of service delivery cases and were most commonly seen in Home Care Packages cases. Choice and decision-making issues contributed to 16% (377) of service delivery cases overall and was most commonly seen in Home Care Packages or residential care cases. Service delivery is an issue in the majority of Home Care Package, residential care and Support at Home cases (50%, 49% and 40% respectively). It is the second highest recorded issue in flexible care and CHSP cases (33% and 23% respectively). 17% of service delivery related advocacy cases were raised by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, 14% by people living with a disability and 7% by people living with dementia.

# Top advocacy issues – financial

There were 857 financial related advocacy cases in the first half of FY26. Around a third of advocacy (33%, 282 cases) involving financial issues co-occurred with other issue categories, the majority of which were accessing aged care issues (41%). This is a significant increase since the same period last year, when the proportion of financial advocacy co-occurring with accessing aged care issues was 24%. The proportion of financial advocacy co-occurring with service delivery issues has decreased slightly from 42% to 40%.



**Figure 16. Top five financial issues by category (count of issues)**

The most common presenting financial issues continue to be those related to fees and charges, accounting for 61% (521 cases) of financial advocacy and 55% (612) of issues. 28% of fees and charges related cases co-occurred with another financial issue, which is a significant decrease from the same period last year (44%). The most common was financial hardship, co-occurring in 7% (45 issues) of fees and charges issues. This is a change since the same period last year, when the most common co-occurring issues were relating to invoices and statements, although this was the next most common (7%, 44 issues) co-occurring issue with fees and charges in this reporting period. The majority of financial advocacy cases are in relation to Home Care Packages (53%, 454 cases), and this accounts for 27% of all advocacy cases relating to Home Care Packages. Residential care features in 28% (240 cases) of financial advocacy cases, and this is the second most common type of issue presenting within advocacy relating to residential care, accounting for 28%. 14% of financial issues were raised by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, 11% by people living with a disability and 9% by people living with dementia.

OPAN member organisations by state or territory:



OPAN is funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing through the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP).