

Continuing Care *Living well in a place you call home*

Adult Protection Services

In Nova Scotia, Adult Protection Services are governed by the Adult Protection Act. This legislation, along with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, guides all aspects of Adult Protection Service delivery.

Who needs protection?

Adults 16 years and older who are living in a situation of significant risk of self-neglect, or experiencing abuse or neglect by others which results in serious harm to the person and their inability to protect themselves from abuse or neglect by reason of mental and/or physical incapacity. Adult Protection Services has the authority to intervene based on the following:

- The person is living at an immediate and significant level of risk and does not understand or appreciate the level of risk he/she is living in.
- The person does not have the physical capacity to protect him/herself from the assessed risk.
- The person has a permanent, irreversible condition that affects their physical or mental ability to protect themselves.

If I think an adult needs Adult Protection Services, should I report the case?

Yes. Regardless of how you learned of a suspected case of adult neglect and/or abuse, under the law, you must report it to the Department of Health and Wellness. No action will be taken against you when you call, unless you provide information with malicious intent or without reason and probable cause. The Adult Protection Act requires that you report information about an adult in need of protection.

How do I report a suspected case of adult neglect or abuse?

If you know of an adult in need of protection, you must immediately report it by calling 1-800-225-7225. Please leave your name and phone number. A staff member will contact you to discuss the case. If you feel the person's life is in danger, please call 911 immediately.

What happens when I report a suspected case of neglect or abuse?

The case will be assigned to an Adult Protection Worker who will follow up on your information.

If the Adult Protection Worker determines there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe the person is in need of protection, he/she will complete an assessment.

Based on the assessment, a care plan to mitigate the risks to the individual, which may include a referral for services in the home or placement in a long-term care facility, will be established.

What about financial abuse?

The Adult Protection Act does not cover financial abuse. Situations of alleged financial abuse would be handled by your local police department. They will investigate to determine if the financial abuse is a crime and will recommend the best way to proceed.

You should call your local police or the toll free Seniors Abuse Line at 1-877-833-3377.

There are many seniors groups, law enforcement agencies, and provincial departments that are proactively working to protect seniors from financial abuse.

Examples of adults who may be in need of protection:

- Mentally challenged adults who require care and support in areas of daily living, who are left alone, or whose needs are not being met.
- Adults diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease who do not appear to be managing their daily living needs, such as cooking, bathing, dressing, medication management, and who do not have support to assist with meeting their needs.
- Adults living in environments that have unsanitary conditions, excessive hoarding, blocked exits, no running water or heat, no food, and who may not understand and appreciate the risks to living in such an environment.

To learn more about Adult Protection Services, please call Continuing Care toll-free line at **1-800-225-7225**, or visit the Department of Health and Wellness website at novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs.