

# Adult Protection Services

September 2011

## CONTINUING CARE FACT SHEET

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

### Who might need 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 the abuse or neglect by reason of mental 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 mental and/or 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.

### Do I have to report a suspected case of an adult in need of protection?

Yes. The Adult Protection Act requires that you report information about an adult in need of protection to the Department of Health and Wellness, even if the information is confidential or privileged. No action lies against a person who provides information unless the information is provided for malicious reasons or without a reason or probable cause.

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

If you know of an adult in need of protection, you must report it immediately to the Department of Health and Wellness by calling 1-800-225-7225. If you feel the person's life is in danger, call 911.

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

The referral will be assigned to an Adult Protection social worker for further investigation. If the Adult Protection social worker establishes there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe the individual is an adult in need of protection, the Adult Protection worker will assess the situation and develop a care plan to mitigate the risks to that individual. This could include referral for services in the home or placement in a Department of Health and Wellness or Department of Community Services facility.

## 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.

## Examples of adults who may be in need of protection

- A mentally-challenged adult who requires care and support in areas of daily living, who is left alone or whose needs are not being met.
- An adult diagnosed with Alzheimer's who does not appear to be managing their daily needs, such as cooking, bathing, dressing, medication management, and who does not have any support to assist with meeting those needs.
- An adult who is living in an environment that has unsanitary conditions, excessive hoarding, blocked exits, no running water or heat, no food, and the individual may not understand and appreciate the risks of living in such an environment.

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For more information or to see a copy of the Adult Protection Act:

Phone: 1-800-225-7225 (toll free)

Website: [www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs)