



ADULT GUARDIANSHIP AND CLBC:

What to do if you believe someone with a developmental disability is being abused or neglected and needs assistance

The *Adult Guardianship Act*, Part 3 provides the legal authority for ensuring that adults who may require protection from abuse, neglect or self-neglect have access to timely response and support. This law is designed to promote every adult's right to self-determination but it also recognizes the need for quick response and action should an individual be in any danger related to abuse or neglect. This includes those circumstances where an individual's ability to request, accept or receive support may be limited by their own circumstances or by those who are supporting them.

CLBC is identified as a '*designated agency*' under Part 3 of the *Adult Guardianship Act* which gives it the duty and responsibility to respond to and investigate situations involving allegations of abuse, neglect or self-neglect of adults with developmental disabilities. Health Authorities are also *designated agencies* and respond to issues involving individuals with mental illness, residents of health care facilities, individuals with physical disabilities and seniors.

Although individual capacity for choice is paramount for both CLBC and the Public Guardian and Trustee, there are times when individuals with developmental disabilities require extra support due to the immediate circumstances of their lives. Specifically, individuals may be vulnerable to abuse or neglect, sometimes unintentional, that exposes them to unacceptable risks. In some situations, individuals may not have families, friends or other apparent networks of support to ensure their safety and well-being. The support and assistance offered by CLBC will vary depending on a number of factors including access to personal supports and the particular wishes and requirements of an individual.

If you are aware of a situation where it appears that an adult with a developmental disability is experiencing abuse or neglect, please notify your local CLBC office. CLBC staff are responsible for responding to these concerns including conducting an investigation, where appropriate, and determining how best to resolve the issues raised and support the individual.

If you decide to raise a concern or make a report, your identity will always remain anonymous unless you indicate otherwise.

Although reporting allegations of abuse or neglect of an adult is not mandatory in British Columbia, CLBC encourages anyone who suspects it is occurring to report it as soon as possible

to the nearest Community Planning and Development Office. You will not be expected to remain involved or required to participate in any investigation or legal action but your simple act of notifying CLBC could make a very significant difference in the life of an adult during a vulnerable period of their life.

To assist you in determining whether you should notify your local Community Planning and Development Office of suspected abuse, self-abuse or neglect of an individual with a developmental disability, the following are the definitions provided by the Public Guardian and Trustee whose office is responsible for administering the Adult Guardianship Act:

Abuse means deliberate mistreatment of an individual that causes the person:

- physical, mental or emotional harm
- damage to, or loss of, assets
- intimidation, humiliation, physical assault, sexual assault, overmedication, withholding medication, limiting privacy, denying access to visitors, etc.

Neglect means

- failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance or attention to an adult that causes or is soon likely to cause serious physical, mental or emotional harm or otherwise put the individual at risk

Self-neglect means:

- failure of an adult to take care of her or himself to the extent that it causes or is soon likely to cause serious physical or mental harm or damage or loss to assets or property.

Please find local office contact information at:

www.communitylivingbc.ca/your_community/community_contacts.htm.