

RETIRED DOCUMENT

This document is retired, effective April 1, 2026, corresponding with the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA) in-force date. As this document is retired, it is not considered **standard** or **guidance** under the HPOA. However, until it is replaced by a HPOA-compliant resource, licensees may find it useful as general information for their practice.



College of

HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC



Physical Therapists

Reporting Suspected Abuse of a Minor or Vulnerable Adult

Physical therapists must adhere to all legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes the requirement to report abuse or suspected abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

Abuse of a Child or Youth

The duty to report abuse or suspected abuse of a child or youth is described in Section 13 and 14 (1) of the [Child, Family and Community Service Act](#). The duty exists even if the information is confidential and reporting is prohibited under another Act. Anyone who contravenes this duty (or, conversely, knowingly reports false information) commits an offense.

If individuals are unsure of what constitutes abuse or neglect, the Act (Section 13) provides a detailed list of the circumstances (including physical, sexual, and emotional) in which a child requires protection.

Child protection social workers are designated by the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) to investigate and take appropriate action to ensure a child's safety. To make a report of abuse, neglect, or suspected abuse or neglect, individuals can call 1-800-663-9122 at any time of day or night.

Alternatively, the local Child Protection Services offices can be contacted. Office locations can be found using the search tool on the [Child Protection Services in BC](#) web page. Additional information about the actions taken by MCFD's Child Protection Division following a report are also described.

Abuse of an Adult

There is no legal requirement to report adult abuse in British Columbia. The [Adult Guardianship Act Section 46](#) states that anyone who has information indicating that an adult is suffering abuse, neglect, or self-neglect and is unable to seek support and assistance because of:

- physical restraint



- a physical handicap that limits their ability to seek help, or
- an illness, disease, injury, or other condition that affects their ability to make decisions about the abuse or neglect

... may report the circumstances to a designated agency. The reporting of this information is voluntary.

Designated agencies are identified in the [Designated Agencies Regulation](#); they include all regional health authorities and Community Living BC. Numbers to call in British Columbia are [provided on the website of the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia](#). Once a report about abuse or neglect of an adult has been received by a designated agency, the agency is legally obligated to make a report to the police if they believe that a criminal offence has been committed against that adult.

If individuals are unsure of what constitutes abuse or neglect of an adult, the Child, Family and Community Service Act (Section 1, Definitions) provides a list describing what constitutes abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.

Offering Support to an Adult in Other Ways

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) of British Columbia can assist in getting a vulnerable adult the support that they need. The PGT offers many resources around the protection of adults and elders, including the following additional resources:

- [BC Public Guardian and Trustee](#)
- [VICTIMLINK](#) toll-free, 24 hour-a-day, seven day-a-week support and referral service at 1 (800) 563-0808
- [Senior Abuse Information Line \(SAIL\) operated](#) by the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support at (604) 437-1940 or at 1 (866) 437-1940 (toll free), available from 8:00 am – 8:00 pm daily (excluding holidays)