

# The Revelstoke Community & Inter-Agency Protocol

## *Executive Summary*

For a complete copy of the Protocol document, please visit the City of Revelstoke's Community Social Development website at [www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org](http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org) or email Stephanie Melnyk, CRN Coordinator, at [revycrn@gmail.com](mailto:revycrn@gmail.com).

### Purpose of the Protocol

The Revelstoke Community Response Network (CRN) developed this “Community and Inter-Agency Protocol” as a reference for anyone helping adults at risk of abuse, neglect or self-neglect. The goal is to promote a coordinated response among agencies and community members in cases of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. Documentation of this process will hopefully create a more effective and sustainable social support network.

### The Adult Guardianship Act

The Adult Guardianship Act is one of four laws that comprise the “Adult Guardianship” legislation and is administered by the Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee. The Act includes a number of principles, including the right of all adults to:

- The basic requirements of life
- Protection from all kinds of abuse
- Information about their civil and legal rights
- Self-determination (to live their lives as they wish provided they do not infringe upon the rights or safety of others)
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Access community supports

The Act empowers the Public Guardian & Trustee to organize Community Response Networks. The role of the Revelstoke Community Response Network (CRN) is to facilitate education and prevention activities that build the community's capacity to address and prevent adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

### The Revelstoke CRN

The Revelstoke CRN belongs to a larger provincial network called the British Columbia Association of CRNs (BCACRN). While the Adult Guardianship Act applies specifically to vulnerable adults, local CRNs are not limited to that constraint. CRNs are intended to promote a coordinated response so support is offered to any adult in the community who is at risk of abuse, neglect or self-neglect.

The Revelstoke CRN's vision is that vulnerable adults in the community have a right to live in an environment where they are safe and protected from abuse, neglect and self-neglect. The CRN Committee meets on a monthly basis and participation is completely voluntary. Members of the CRN Committee believe that a collaborative approach increases the effectiveness of the community's ability to respond.

## The Revelstoke CRN (cont'd)

The Revelstoke CRN is not a front-line response agency in itself but most of the Committee members are. The following diagram outlines the many different organizations that respond to or support adults at risk of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. The more organizations that are represented at the CRN Committee level, the more we can work together to build a social support network in Revelstoke.



For more information about CRNs in British Columbia, please visit [www.bccrns.ca](http://www.bccrns.ca).

## The Role of Designated Agencies

Designated Agencies are those mandated under the “BC Adult Guardianship Act” to respond to concerns that a vulnerable adult is experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect. Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) and Interior Health (IH) are the Designated Agencies in British Columbia.

An adult is considered vulnerable when they *cannot seek help or assistance on their own* due to:

- A physical constraint
- A physical disability due to lack of mobility, difficulty communicating or other physical restriction
- Illness, disease, injury, cultural barrier or other condition that affects the individual’s ability to make decisions (mental illness, developmental disability, brain injury, Alzheimer’s disease)

Only vulnerable adults should be referred to a Designated Agency.

If the vulnerable adult has a developmental disability, the Designated Agency to be contacted is Community Living Services British Columbia. The Provincial office can be reached at 1-877-660-2522. CLBC services for Revelstoke and surrounding area are delivered from the Salmon Arm office which can be reached at 250-832-1718.

If the vulnerable adult does not have a developmental disability, the Designated Agency to be contacted is Interior Health Community Care. In Revelstoke, the Community Care Clinic can be reached at 250-814-2267.

The legal mandate of Designated Agencies gives them access to legal tools such as Restraining Orders and Support & Assistance Orders. They also have ways to gain access to a vulnerable adult when access has been denied.

Sometimes a designated agency may not need to be involved. For example, when informal support is enough or when the adult accepts other community services instead.

## The Right to Self-Determination

It is the right of all capable adults to choose to live at risk provided they do not infringe upon the rights and safety of others. In this context, “capable” means they are able to ask for assistance and able to appreciate the ramifications of their actions.

If the adult is capable, they should not be referral to a Designated Agency. However, a Designated Agency may be consulted as to the most appropriate course of action. Also, a referral for counselling should be considered if the individual is receptive.

## Guidelines for the General Public

There are many signs that someone may be in need of help. They include an alarming personal appearance, poor condition of their home, social problems, economic problems and suicide threats as well as many other indicators. Regardless of whether the person is vulnerable or not, if they are an adult at risk of abuse, neglect or self-neglect there is a support in Revelstoke that can help. Further guidelines for the general public are including in Section 4 of the “Community and Inter-Agency Protocol” document, including how to make a referral and the agencies that may respond.

## The Dynamics of Abuse, Neglect and Self-neglect

Experience tells us that abuse, neglect and self-neglect are complex phenomena. Each differs from the other and requires a different response. Some of the factors that should be considered in these situations include:

- the potential long term nature and effects of abuse and neglect
- the indicators of abuse, neglect and self-neglect and associated risk factors
- the cycle of family violence, dependencies and the power and control issues that can be involved
- health issues related to decreasing decision-making capability
- the cognitive, emotional and physical abilities of people of advanced age and people with disabilities
- the impact of cultural differences