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- We will listen to your views and wishes, and help you speak to your child safety officer about what they are, or we can speak to your child safety officer on your behalf.
- We can help you with contact with your family, siblings or child safety officer.
- We can assist you to have a say in what is involved in your case plans, particularly in relation to your education, healthcare and counselling plans.
- We can refer you to an OPG child advocate for legal issues and concerns you have.

We do this by:

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What can a Community Visitor do for you?

Case Study

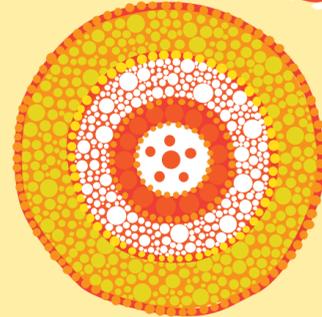
An example of how a Community Visitor and a Child Advocate work together:

An OPG community visitor received a call from a young person's refuge about Abby, a 17 year old young person who was homeless. Abby had been provided temporary accommodation at the young person's refuge but only until her court date which was in 2 days' time. After that, Abby wouldn't have anywhere to live.

The community visitor talked to Child Safety about Abby's need to feel safe in a secure place to live. Abby told the community visitor that she had been living on the streets and really wanted to stay in the young person's refuge and that Child Safety had not been able to find a placement for her. The only option given to her was to go back to a relative's house, a place where she didn't feel safe.

The community visitor introduced Abby to an OPG child advocate who worked with Abby to strongly advocate for a secure, safe placement. Within two days, funding was secured for Abby to stay in the young person's refuge. Abby was very relieved to have a permanent, secure place to stay and feel safe.

Through the actions of the young person's refuge, the community visitor and the child advocate, Abby's voice was not only heard, but acted upon.



Did you know?

The Department of Child Safety needs to make sure that your care team achieves the following standards:

- Your dignity and rights will be respected
- Your physical needs will be met, including food, clothes and shelter
- Your emotional needs will be considered, including the need to feel valued and have a positive self-regard
- Your cultural and ethnic needs will be met
- You will have access to services and activities that encourage your growth
- You will receive education, training or employment opportunities relevant to your age and ability
- You will receive positive guidance about your behaviour in a way that doesn't make you feel humiliated, threatened or frightened
- Any dental, medical and counselling services will be offered to you
- You will be given the opportunity to have contact with your family and others who are important in your life
- If you have a disability; specialised care and help will be provided to you

(This has been adapted from the Standards of Care for young people in the care of Child Safety Services Queensland, which you can view on their website).



t: 1800 661 533
sms: 0418 740 186
e: child@publicguardian.qld.gov.au
w: www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au

How can the OPG help you?

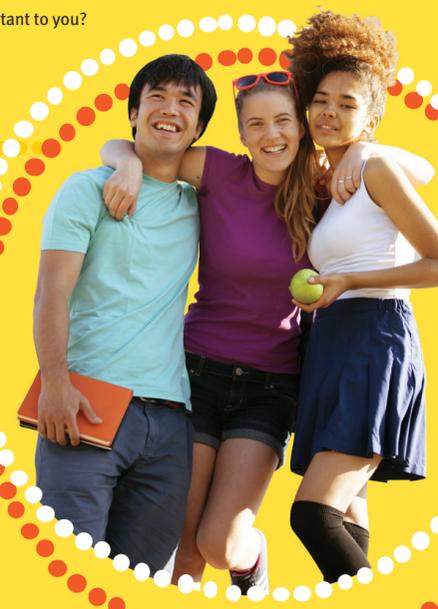
The OPG's Community Visitors and Child Advocates are here to help you!

Do you need help and support with:

- having a voice in the things that are important to you?
- any concerns that you have?
- information or advice about your rights while in care?

The OPG is independent from Child Safety and is here just for you!

There is no wrong way to contact the OPG. No matter how you choose to get in contact with us, we will find the best person to help.



How can a Child Advocate help?

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) Child Advocates are lawyers who protect the rights of children and young people in care.

How we can help you

- We will listen to you as what you have to say is important. We will take you seriously, and we can:
 - provide information and advice in care and help with issues that you might have. Most of the time, your community visitor can help with your concerns but there are other times where a child advocate-legal officer might need to help too.
 - support you—and if you want us to, speak for you—in legal meetings with Child Safety (or any other agency) to make sure that your needs are being met and your views and wishes are being heard
 - support you to attend and speak for yourself in a court or tribunal
 - speak for you in court or tribunals if you want us to.
- We will express your views and wishes to the court and/or Child Safety (or any other agency), even if others don't agree with what you have to say
- We will respect your privacy and keep your information confidential
- We MUST let Child Safety know if you tell us that you or any other child has been harmed or tell the police about any crimes that may have caused harm to you or another child

What will we do for you?

If you want to speak with either a child advocate or a community visitor from the Office of the Public Guardian you can contact us by phone, text message (sms), email or quick messages, through the 'Contact Us' page on the Office of the Public Guardian website.

Contact us

If you need help with a legal issue—for example you need to apply to a tribunal to review your care arrangements or you want to have your say in court—a community visitor may organise a child advocate to help you. You can also contact a child advocate directly if you need to.

When do we help you?

A community visitor from the OPG will visit you to check on you while you are in care and help with issues that you might have. Most of the time, your community visitor can help with your concerns but there are other times where a child advocate-legal officer might need to help too.

Charter of Rights You have the right to:

- Take part in making important decisions affecting your life—like where you live, contact with your family, school and health
- Live in a place that best meets your needs and respects your cultural background
- Have contact with your family and community
- Have regular reviews to see how you are going in care
- Access school or education that is right for you
- Access job training and get help finding a job
- Privacy
- Be given information about decisions and plans made about your life and your time in care
- Live in a safe and stable place
- Be involved in planning the kind of support and assistance you may need after leaving care, like where you will live, help from Centrelink, job training and education



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DARKNESS

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STARS