

# The Public Guardian

## **Who is the Public Guardian?**

The Public Guardian is an independent statutory officer responsible for protecting the rights and interests of children and young people in the child protection system. This includes children and young people who are living in foster or kinship care, residential care, detention, mental health facilities or correctional facilities.

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) provides individual advocacy through its community visitors and child advocate—legal officers. Community visitors and child advocates help and support children and young people by ensuring that their views and wishes are being heard and that their needs are being met

## **How can a child community visitor help?**

OPG community visitors play an important role in child advocacy. They are available whenever a child or young person needs their help, support or advice; this could be about their care arrangements, their rights, or simply matters that are concerning them.

Every child coming into care, or re-entering care, receives a visit from a community visitor and then regular visits are determined based on the child or young person's individual needs.

Some examples of what a community visitor might help a child with are:

- making sure their needs are being met in the place they are living
- expressing a child or young person's views to their child safety officer
- helping to resolve problems or disputes
- helping them become independent when they leave care.

## **How can a child advocate—legal officer help?**

Through a statewide team of legal officers, the OPG provides children and young people in the child protection system with advice, information, help and support by:

- providing information and advice about legal matters they are concerned about
- helping them to have their views heard and taken into consideration when decisions are made that affect their care arrangements at family group meetings, court and tribunal hearings
- providing support in court conferences and organise legal and other representation
- helping bring an application before a court or tribunal in relation to decisions made by child safety, or in relation to child protection orders
- helping a child or young person who is having trouble regarding suspensions or exclusions from school



Interpreter

### **Contact us for more information**

Office of the Public Guardian

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*If you would like to contact us and have a matter explained in your language, please call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Public Guardian.*