Working alongside you

to support children and young people

Learn more about Community Visitors from the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) and how we work alongside foster and kinship carers to support children and young people in our communities.

Community Visitor Program
publicguardian.qld.gov.au

public guardian

What is the Office of the Public Guardian?

OPG is an independent organisation that works to protect the rights and interests of children and young people in out-of-home care, including those living in foster or kinship care.

Helping children and young people to understand their rights can make them more confident to express their views. So through our Community Visitor Program we work with children and young people in communities throughout Queensland to make sure their voice is heard. We believe it's important for our young ones to play a part in the decisions made about their lives.

We also help them with any issues or concerns they might have, and help them make complaints about decisions that have been made about them.

How does the OPG support the young people you care for?

If you're a foster or kinship carer, our Community Visitors (CVs) will visit your home to help and support the children and young people you are caring for.

As part of visits, Community Visitors make sure a child's:

- views and wishes are being heard
- interests are being met, and
- issues and concerns are raised.

They also ensure the child is receiving the services they are entitled to.

Community Visitors are completely independent from Child Safety.

OPG Community Visitors play an important and compulsory role in helping to look after the wellbeing of children in care. They will visit on a regular basis, but are available whenever a child or young person needs their support. Additionally, they make sure where the child is living is safe and secure and their basic needs are being met.

You can find out more about what happens during a visit and how a Community Visitor supports the child or young person in your care on the next two pages of this brochure.

The CV and me

What can a CV do to help a child I'm caring for?

A community visitor (CV) will:

- visit the child regularly
- listen to their views and wishes and help them voice these views to their child safety officer
- assist them to have a say in what is involved in their case plans, including their education, cultural contact, transition to independence plans, and the appropriate care and supports for their mental, emotional and physical health
- monitor the child's living arrangements
- discuss issues and concerns in private
- refer them to an OPG child advocate if they have any legal issues or concerns.

How does a visit from a Community Visitor work?

Community Visitors visit all children in foster and kinship care.

A CV must visit the child in your home. As we are required to monitor their living arrangements we will generally need to have a look around your house to make sure their environment is safe, secure and meets their needs.

A Community Visitor will:

- visit at a time that has been arranged with you and is at a time when the child will be there.
- have a private, one-on-one discussion with the child to build trust and rapport.

CVs can help with a wide variety of issues and provide support for children in numerous ways, but you should first seek assistance from child safety services if you are experiencing:

- issues with carer arrangements
- issues with a child's behaviour
- concerns with the child's contact arrangements with others.

CV's name: _____

Their number is: _____

A child or young person can contact a Community Visitor (CV) by:

- Phoning the Office of the Public Guardian on **1300 653 187**
- Using OPG quick message to request a call from their CV online (visit **publicguardian.qld.gov.au** to find out more)
- Texting **0418 740 186**
- Asking you to contact us on their behalf. If they do ask you to contact us, you must do so as soon as possible.

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