

POLICY	Key Functions of a Community Visitor (child)
Date Effective	6 January 2015
Application	Community Visitors (child), Hub Managers

1. Policy Principles

The Public Guardian's role is to protect the rights and interests of relevant children and staying at a visitable location.¹ One of the ways the Public Guardian exercises his statutory obligation is to provide a Community Visitor Program to visit relevant children and children staying at a visitable location.² The main principles to be applied by Community Visitors when engaging with relevant children and children staying at a visitable site are:

Principles for relevant child and children staying at a visitable site.

- Best interests of the child is paramount.
- Child's family has primary responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- Child is a valued member of society and should be treated with respect and dignity.
- Child should be cared for in a way that protects them from harm and promotes their wellbeing
- Child is entitled to have their views heard and should be able to exercise their rights.
- Child should be able to have a relationship with their family and their cultural needs met.

s7 Public Guardian Act 2014

2. Functions of a Community Visitor (Child)

A Community Visitor has the following functions under the *Public Guardian Act 2014* when visiting or engaging with children and young people:

- Develop a trusting and supportive relationship with the child.
- Advocate on behalf of the child by listening to, given voice to, and facilitating the resolution of their concerns.
- Seek information and facilitate access by the child to support services that are appropriate to the child's needs.
- Inquire and report on the information given to the child about the child's rights.
- Inquire and report on physical and emotional wellbeing of the child.
- **A Visitable home:** report on the appropriateness of the home and if the child's needs are being met.
- **A Visitable site:** report on the appropriateness of the accommodation, if the child's needs are being met and if appropriate services are being provided.

s56 Public Guardian Act 2014

A CV is also to respect the privacy of children being visited and those also residing in the visitable home or visitable site³.

¹ Section 10 Public Guardian Act 2014

² Section 55(2) Public Guardian Act 2014

³ Section 69 Public Guardian Act 2014

2.1 Reporting

As soon as practicable after visiting a relevant child or a child staying at a visitable site, a Community Visitor must prepare a report on the visit and provide a copy to the Public Guardian.⁴ The Community Visitor must complete the required reports within 10 calendar days.

2.2 Advocacy

CVs are required to advocate for children by listening to, giving voice to, and facilitating the resolution of the child's concerns and grievances. If a CV is unable to resolve a child's concerns or grievances then a referral to a Lawyer/Advocate will be considered in consultation with Hub Manager.

2.3 Child Advocate Functions

CVs may also carry out child advocate functions.⁵ Before a Community Visitor can exercise approval must be provided by the Public Guardian.

3. Cross-references.

Public Guardian Policy: *Setting a Visiting Frequency (CV – Child)*

Public Guardian Policy: *Visits and Child Advocacy to children and young people in Youth Detention Centres.*

Public Guardian Policy: *Visits and Child Advocacy to children and young people in Adult Correctional Centres.*

⁴ Section 70 *Public Guardian Act 2014*

⁵ *s56 Public Guardian Act 2014*