



# onguard

A regular newsletter for guardians in NSW

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## Did you know community visitors can assist to resolve issues for people living in disability accommodation and boarding houses?

If you are concerned about how a service is delivered or the quality of a service, you can contact the Official Community Visitors Scheme within the NSW Ombusman's office:

- 1800 451 524
- 02 9286 1000
- [www.ombo.gov.au](http://www.ombo.gov.au)

## Our Contact Details



Phone  
02 8688 6060

toll free (outside Sydney  
Metro area) 1800 451 510

Facsimile  
02 8688 9797

TTY  
1800 882 889

Email  
[informationssupport@opg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:informationssupport@opg.nsw.gov.au)

website  
[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opg](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/opg)

## Knowledge is power

The Private Guardian Support Unit (PGSU) helps private guardians in their role as substitute decision-makers for people under guardianship. Making decisions for others often involves complex communication and negotiation with a range of different agencies, especially agencies that deliver services to people with a disability. We can assist you to work with different agencies, or refer you to agencies that may be able to help you make the best decisions.

Based on our contact with you, we have developed a contact sheet listing the most common agencies we have referred guardians to. Also included are agencies that may not be common but which we believe are useful for guardians to know about. The contact sheet provides information about a range of services, such as advocacy, case management, complaints, counselling, respite and aged care placement. The sheet includes the name of the agency, their contacts details, the types of disability covered, and what services they provide. Please take a moment to have a look at the enclosed sheet and then store it with your guardianship papers for future reference.

The internet is a powerful tool that gives us quick access to information. Internet search engines, such as Google and Bing, allow you to become your own researcher and to locate services and publications in an instant. You may not be an expert on the net or be connected to it, but don't be put off by its apparent complexity. Using Google, for example, is relatively simple and can usually generate useful information by entering a few carefully chosen key words, and variations of key words. For example, if you type 'Private Guardian NSW', the first link provided will be the PGSU! Most libraries provide free internet access and librarians will usually be able to provide assistance to those who are not sure what to do.

If you, as a guardian, have to make a decision and you don't know or are unsure about how to go about it, support is available. A good start in the decision-making process may be to look at our contact list, call us, or surf the net.

## Guardianship: What's your story?

**G**uardians are a diverse group. You are spread across the state and are not required to have any particular background or educational qualification. To become a guardian you must simply have a personality that is compatible with the person you are the guardian for, not have a conflict of interest with the person, and be willing to do the job.

Guardians mostly work in isolation from each other. The common link is that you are legally appointed to make decisions for a significant person in your life who has some kind of disability that prevents them from making important decisions for themselves, like where to live and what medical treatment to have.

Guardianship orders are often made in situations where there is conflict or complexity in the person's life. The responsibilities are substantial. It is reasonable to say that being a guardian is a labour of love: a guardian must be motivated to enhance the person's quality of life, but that can often take time and effort. Appreciation from others, sometimes including the person under guardianship, is not always the end result of your labour. But that does not diminish the value of your efforts.

Guardians make significant decisions for people under guardianship. For example, decisions about accommodation often involve money and property, so a guardian may have to work with an appointed financial manager, who may or may not be the same person. Guardians may also have to liaise with Aged Care Assessment Teams when making decisions about in home and out of home care arrangements. Case managers may need to be called upon to oversee the care of a person with a brain injury or a mental health problem. There may be different family members wanting different outcomes for the same person. And a guardian may need to make difficult medical or health care decisions at the end of the person's life.

We often hear stories from Guardians that are

interesting and inspiring. So we think you may be similarly interested and inspired by the stories of your fellow guardians; stories that may bridge the gap between guardians working in isolation and foster a greater sense of a 'community of guardians'.

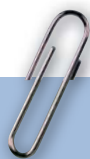
So we invite you to submit a guardianship story to us. It could be a difficult decision you made, a complex negotiation with a service provider, how you have improved your loved one's life, something humorous or an ethical dilemma. It's up to you. We will then publish your stories in future editions of *Onguard* in a 'Labour of Love' series.

### Labour of Love: frontline stories

Email your story (maximum of 500 words) to:  
[informationsupport@opg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:informationsupport@opg.nsw.gov.au)

Or post it :  
Private Guardian Support Unit  
Locked Bag 5116  
Parramatta NSW 2124

A small gift will be given to all those who submit a story, and the authors of all published stories will receive a \$50 gift voucher.



The Private Guardian Support Unit (PGSU) is a free and confidential information and support service for private guardians in NSW. PGSU is a branch of the Public Guardian and is part of the Department of Justice and Attorney General and is not part of the Guardianship Tribunal or NSW Trustee & Guardian. The PGSU publishes *Onguard* and *Now You're the Guardian*.

This document has been prepared by the PGSU for only general information purposes.

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This information can be provided in alternative formats such as braille, audiotape, large print or computer disk. Please contact the PGSU for assistance.

