

Resource 21

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian: Q & A

What is the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian?

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian promotes and protects the rights, interests and wellbeing of all Queenslanders under 18.

The Commission is independent, and is not attached to any agency that provides services to young people.

What does the Commission do?

- speaks out for and supports children and young people, especially those having a hard time
- keeps an eye on laws, policies and practices that affect young people
- investigates and helps solve complaints about services for young people
- provides a statewide Community Visitors Program to support kids living in out of home care
- conducts research on issues affecting children and young people
- carries out Working With Children Checks to make sure those working with children and young people are suitable
- reviews, researches and maintains a register of child deaths.

What is the role of the Child Guardian?

The Child Guardian's role is to oversee services for, and decisions about, children in the child safety system.

How does the Commission help young people?

Under the law passed to set the new Commission up in 2000 (*Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000*) the Commission:

- consults with children and young people so they can take part in decisions affecting them
- listens to and seriously considers their concerns, views and wishes
- makes sure the Commission is easy for young people to access
- makes sure the Commission is sensitive to young people's cultures and values, especially those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Is the Commission there for everyone under 18?

Yes, the Commission was set up to help and support all Queensland children and young people. However, the Commission gives priority to those who:

- can't protect themselves
- have no-one to act on their behalf
- live in out-of-home care or detention centres, or
- are disadvantaged by disability, living in an isolated area, homelessness or having no money.

How does the Commission's Complaints and Investigations Unit work?

Anyone under 18, or an adult acting on their behalf, can complain to the Commission about services affecting children or young people which:

- don't meet the standards set down in law
- don't meet departmental guidelines
- are unsafe, or
- badly affect a child or young person

These services may be provided by government or community-based organisations.

You can make a complaint about things which affect you, another young person, or a group of children and young people.

All complaints are treated seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. The person making the complaint will be consulted about what they want, and kept up-to-date on follow-up actions.

All communication with the Commission is confidential.

What do Community Visitors do?

Community Visitors visit children and young people who live in out-of-home care. They provide help and support and listen to any concerns they have.

What is the Working with Children Check?

The law requires that people who work with children under 18 must have a criminal history check called the Working with Children Check.

If they pass the check, they get a blue suitability card, or 'blue card', which they must produce to work with children.

Contacting the Commission:

Address: Level 22 T&G Building
141 Queen Street Brisbane

Postal address: PO Box 12671
Brisbane George Street
Queensland 4003

Telephone: (freecall)1800 688 275 or (07) 3247 5525

After hours: If you call after hours, please leave a message with your name and telephone number and someone from the Commission will contact you the next working day.

Website: www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au

Email: wmaster@childcomm.qld.gov.au