



Government  
of South Australia  
Office of the Guardian  
for Children and  
Young People

# about the Office of the Guardian



*Guardian for Children  
and Young People  
Penny Wright*

The South Australian Guardian for Children and Young People is appointed under the 1993 Children's Protection Act to advocate for and promote the rights and best interests of the children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development.

To do this, the Guardian's team talk with children and young people in out of home care, their representatives and others with a direct interest in their welfare. We visit some children and young people where they are living and check how some are going when their circumstances are being reviewed.

We work directly with government and non-government agencies to address issues, we write reports on areas of concern and we provide independent advice to the Minister on issues affecting the children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister.

We also provide information and other products to children and young people in care under the banner of Oog, their safety symbol.

Most important, in everything we do, we seek out and listen to the voice of young people.

## ***Raising an issue with the Guardian***

If you are a child or young person under the guardianship of the Minister in South Australia we welcome your call.

To speak to someone at the Office freecall 1800 275 664 or 08 8226 8570 and if we are not there, leave a message and contact details and we will call back.

Generally it is best to talk first with your social worker, or if that does not work, with their supervisor or with the manager of the Department for Child Protection office.

If that does not work, make a complaint to the Department for Child Protection Customer Service on freecall 1800 003 305.

In the final instance, complaints can be made to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner on (08) 8226 8666 or free call 1800 232 007 [country areas].

## **The work we do**

### **Monitoring**

Our staff visit some children and young people in residential care and in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre. We talk to the residents, observe their situation and talk to their carers. We address issues with the care providers directly and with the Department for Child Protection as the situation requires and provide reports to the Minister. We follow up on issues at subsequent visits.

Our staff also audit some of the annual reviews of the circumstances of children and young people conducted at Department for Child Protection offices, monitoring the quality of their care and the effectiveness of case planning in meeting their needs.

Our observations and interventions are organised around the [Monitoring Framework](#) derived from the Charter of Rights (see below) and based on 12 quality statements encompassing our aspirations for children and young people in care.

Our observations during monitoring sometimes lead us to undertake individual advocacy or to advocate on systemic issues.

### **Individual advocacy**

The Office responds to concerns raised by children and young people in care themselves or by their advocates. In some cases matters are referred to a more suitable agency, while others are resolved quickly with a brief inquiry or conversation.

For more complex matters, the Office may launch an investigation and actively advocate for the best interests of the child or young person.

### **Systems advocacy**

Where there are shortfalls in the services provided, the Office will work to see them addressed. The Guardian can investigate any matter of concern and may produce reports on major issues, make recommendations and work directly to address policy and practice issues with government and non-government agencies. The Guardian's reports can be located via the search functions on our [website](#).

### **The Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care**

The Office promotes and reviews the [Charter of Rights](#). The text of the Charter was developed after consultation with children and young people, carers, social workers and people from government and non-government organisations. The Charter is at the core of the Office's monitoring and advocacy.

We publish and distribute the Charter, promote rights with other products and assist agencies to endorse the Charter and apply it in their policy and practice. See the [Charter of Rights pages](#) on our website for more information.

### **Information and materials for children and young people in state care**

The Office publishes a booklet, *Being in Care*, and a range of products featuring Oog, the safety symbol for children and young people in care. They are free for distribution to young people in care by organisations that have endorsed the Charter of Rights

Visit the [Requesting materials](#) page of our website.

## **Contacting the Guardian**

Phone 1800 275 664 (for children and young people) or 08 8226 8570

email [gcyp@gcyp.sa.gov.au](mailto:gcyp@gcyp.sa.gov.au)

fax 08 8226 8577

or visit our website [www.gcyp.sa.gov.au](http://www.gcyp.sa.gov.au)