

Information Sheet

Protecting the human rights of adults with decision-making disabilities

7. Public Advocate — Customer feedback and service standards

The Public Advocate is an independent statutory officer appointed under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990* to promote and protect the human rights, dignity and autonomy of adults with decision-making disabilities and to reduce their risk of neglect, exploitation and abuse.

The Office of the Public Advocate is committed to providing services which:

- promote personal dignity, independence and choice wherever possible
- are accessible and sensitive to people's individual needs
- meet professional and service standards.

What to expect

Accessible services

Our office is located at the David Malcolm Justice Centre, 28 Barrack Street, Perth, with access via level 23. The office is open between the hours of 8.30 am and 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday. The Public Advocate has a statewide Telephone Advisory Service for people who have a personal or professional interest in the human rights and needs of adults with a decision-making disability.

A Telephone Advisory Service Officer can be contacted on **1300 858 455** from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm on weekdays and recorded information on guardianship, administration, enduring powers of attorney and enduring powers of guardianship can be accessed on the same number. An emergency after-hours service is also available for people for whom the Public Advocate is appointed guardian.

We visit all customers for whom we provide guardianship services and people who are the subject of an investigation as required. Our staff visit country areas to ensure information and support is accessible to people outside the metropolitan area.



Timely service

We will answer your enquiries promptly. If we cannot attend to your needs immediately, we will do so as soon as is practicable. If we are unable to help you, we will refer you to other relevant services.

Respect

We will treat you with courtesy and respect and will not release personal information to any unauthorised party unless required to ensure the safety of an adult with a decision-making disability or to fulfil our guardianship responsibilities.

Provision of information

To enable greater choice and to ensure accountability, we provide a range of information including brochures, guides, kits, easy read factsheets, information sheets and Public Advocate position statements. These are all accessible via our website www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au.

Feedback

Feedback from customers is welcomed and encouraged. It is important that people contact the Office with suggestions, compliments and complaints regarding services. By doing so they:

- provide positive feedback and recognition to staff when they have assisted a client
- provide valuable information on improving services
- may prevent a negative service experience from occurring again
- offer the Office an opportunity to improve its services.

We treat all complaints seriously and will deal with them as soon as possible with the aim of finding a satisfactory resolution. This includes requests for reviews of guardianship decisions made by the Public Advocate or the delegated manager or guardian.

If you wish to appeal the decision of the State Administrative Tribunal to appoint the Public Advocate, the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1990* allows for decisions made by the Tribunal to be reviewed. The review process must be done by application to the State Administrative Tribunal.

If you wish to lodge a complaint about the services provided by the Office of the Public Advocate or request a review of an internal decision or actions of a staff member, we recommend that you follow these steps:

1. Contact the member of staff who provided the service. The member of staff must then alert their supervisor to the complaint and the outcome.
2. If this is not possible or the complaint is not resolved by the relevant member of staff, you can raise the matter with the appropriate manager.
3. If this is not possible or the complaint is still not resolved, you can raise the matter with the Public Advocate.

Feedback can be submitted by phone, email, letter, or online through the 'How to Provide Feedback' section on the ['About Us'](#) webpage of the Office's website.

Additional support can be found in the [Easy Read Factsheet – How to give feedback and make a complaint](#).

The Office of the Public Advocate undertakes to:

- respond to all grievances within 10 working days of the complaint being lodged
- keep records of all relevant proceedings including details of the grievance, the investigation, methods of resolution and customer feedback
- advise the relevant people (in writing) of the outcome and any corrective action to be taken.

If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Public Advocate in relation to your complaint you may lodge a complaint with the State Ombudsman.

Information requests

If you wish to access information held by the Office of the Public Advocate, you should contact the Freedom of Information Co-ordinator in writing or by phone on **9278 7300**. A formal request must be submitted in writing. If your request is denied, an application for review may be lodged with the Public Advocate. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Public Advocate regarding the release of information you may lodge a request for a formal review with the Information Commissioner.

Advocacy support for people with disability

In lodging a complaint, you may appreciate the support of another person or agency to help you present your case. We respect your right to choose an advocate to support you. A number of agencies provide advocacy support specifically for people with disability and their carers.

The Australian Government's Department of Social Services provides information on its National Disability Advocacy Service online at www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap.

The Department of Communities, Disability Services also provides funding to a number of independent advocacy organisations. Information, including a directory of service providers can be found online at www.disability.wa.gov.au/individuals-families-and-carers/for-individuals-families-and-carers/services-supports-and-eligibility-new/services/services-provided-by-the-commission/advocacy.

Contact Details

Office of the Information Commissioner

Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 6551 7888
Country callers: 1800 621 244

Ombudsman

2nd Floor, Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 9220 7555
Freecall: 1800 117 000

For further information contact

Office of the Public Advocate

PO Box 6293, EAST PERTH WA 6892
Telephone: 1300 858 455
Email: opa@justice.wa.gov.au
Web: www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au

State Administrative Tribunal

GPO Box U1991 PERTH WA 6845
Level 6, State Administrative Tribunal Building
565 Hay Street PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: (08) 9219 3111 or 1300 306 017
Email: sat@justice.wa.gov.au
Web: www.sat.justice.wa.gov.au
eCourts portal: <https://ecourts.justice.wa.gov.au>

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July 2023