

Who needs a community guardian?

An estimated 65,000 Western Australians have a decision-making disability. These include people with dementia, intellectual disability, mental illness and acquired brain injury.

An adult with a decision-making disability who does not have family or friends who can make personal, medical and lifestyle decisions for them and are living in stable, supported accommodation, might benefit from a community guardian.

Office of the Public Advocate

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

For information on guardianship, administration and advocacy go to www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au and for more information on community guardianship contact the Office of the Public Advocate.

Community Guardianship Program



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For alternative formats of this brochure,
contact the Office of the Public Advocate.

Many adults in Western Australia have limited capacity to make decisions.

These may include decisions about where they live, who cares for them or what medical treatment is appropriate.

Volunteers with the Office of the Public Advocate's Community Guardianship Program help some of these people.



What is the Community Guardianship Program?

The program recruits suitable people as volunteers to act as the decision-maker for an adult with a decision-making disability in their community.

The program raises community awareness of the rights of people with decision-making disabilities and promotes increased community responsibility for guardianship.

What does a community guardian do?

Community guardians are matched with an adult with a decision-making disability who requires a guardian.

Once appointed by the State Administrative Tribunal, the community guardian's role is to make informed decisions in the person's best interests.

Decisions may include consenting to medical treatment or dental work, making decisions that improve the person's lifestyle and wellbeing, making choices about their accommodation and support needs.

The Office of the Public Advocate provides ongoing training and support for community guardians.

“It's wonderful to be able to give individual attention to people and to do many activities I wouldn't ordinarily do. It's very rewarding and it's a two-way street, not only am I benefitting someone, but I get a great deal of enjoyment from it.”

Who can volunteer to be a community guardian?

Anyone who has an interest in helping a Western Australian adult with a decision-making disability can apply to be a volunteer community guardian.

Community guardians are people who:

- believe in the potential of people with disabilities
- are prepared to advocate for the rights of people with decision-making disabilities
- have critical thinking and problem solving ability
- can act in the best interests of people with decision-making disabilities
- preferably have had professional or personal experience with people with decision-making disabilities.

Applicants will undergo a national criminal record clearance.

