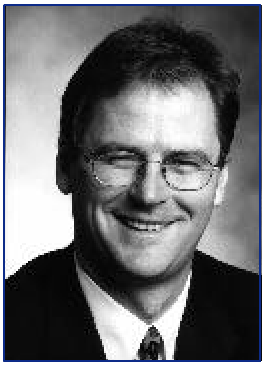
PGT AND YOU
Staying In Touch

PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Issue 2 Fall 2002

SERVICES TO ADULTS

Message From the PGT

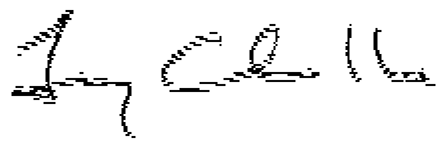


I am pleased to introduce the second issue of our Services to Adults newsletter, “Staying in Touch”. This edition will provide you with useful information the many projects that our Adults Services department has been involved with since the last newsletter was published.

The past year has been one of progress and client service improvement for our organization. We are working very hard to improve our services. This includes making our service faster, improving our telephone response and working even more closely with the family and friends of our clients.

We have prepared a detailed report on our work over the past year, the 2001 - 2002 Public Guardian and Trustee Annual Report. If you are interested, you can obtain a copy from your Case Manager or from the Publications page on our web site at www.trustee.bc.ca.

I welcome you to provide us with any feedback or comments you may have regarding our service as well as any suggestions you have for future issues of Staying in Touch.



Jay Chalke

Public Guardian and Trustee of BC

Welcome to the Second Edition

This edition of the newsletter will focus on the services we provide and how our office is keeping pace with government changes and protecting the interests of our clients. If you have questions after reading the newsletter, or if you have any suggestions on what you would like to see addressed in future newsletters, please feel free to contact your Case Manager, who would be happy to discuss these with you.

PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE’S VISION

“Rights, Choices and Security for all British Columbians”

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Case Manager?

The Case Manager manages your financial and legal affairs on your behalf. To make decisions about your funds or legal issues, your case manager consults with you and your support network to make sure the decisions reflect your wishes, values and beliefs as much as possible. If specifically authorized by the Courts, the Case Manager may also manage a client's personal affairs which includes health-care & personal-care decision making.

What is a Financial Assistant?

The Financial Assistant works closely with your Case Manager to administer your funds for you. The Financial Assistant makes sure that the PGT receives your income so that we can pay your bills and purchase items on your behalf.

What is a Regional Financial Officer?

This is our accountant on the team who has expertise in investment, tax and debt management.

What is Committee of Person?

The PGT acts as Committee of Person for 122 clients. When we are Committee of Person, the Case Manager is responsible for making complex health-care and personal decisions.

How does the PGT manage your money?

The PGT is responsible for managing all your assets. We do this by reviewing your situation and when necessary, we complete a personalized investment plan for you that considers your long-term needs. There are a variety of investment options (Pooled Funds, RRSP's, etc.) available and our financial and investment staff ensure the best option is chosen for you. If your money is invested in our Premium Money Market Fund, the average rate of return is 4.5%. If you want more information about these investment options, please visit our website at www.trustee.bc.ca.

Client Services provides service to 3,566 clients

Each Case Manager works with about 220 clients

The PGT has investigated over 350 legal issues this year for our clients

The PGT sold approximately 50 properties this year

The PGT makes over 600 health care decisions per year as Temporary Substitute Decision Maker

How does the PGT manage your Legal Affairs?

On a daily basis, the Case Managers and legal staff work to protect our client's legal interests. Some common legal matters that we deal with on behalf of our clients are:

- pursuing ICBC and WCB claims
- retaining counsel for clients who may have been charged with a criminal offence
- finalizing family legal matters i.e. divorces
- engaging in civil litigation to recoup funds that may have been mismanaged or fraudulently taken from our clients prior to our involvement

As required, the Case Manager and legal counsel will retain a lawyer on your behalf. Generally, all costs associated with the legal action are paid by you.

Service Improvements and Accomplishments at the PGT

At the PGT we have accomplished a great deal over the last year. This past year we set specific goals that were measured for service and that were audited by the Auditor General. Some of these goals were to:

- set up budgets within 3 months of receiving a new client
- secure property within 3 months of receiving a new client
- pay client bills within 15 working days
- process client income within 5 working days
- complete case plans for all Committee of Person clients

The case plans detail your wishes about travel, health, personal and property issues. This year our goal is to make sure every new Committee of Estate client has a case plan within 6 months of becoming our client. We are proud to say that we not only met a majority of last year's goals but in most cases, we exceeded them.

Our improved telephone system has been working extremely well since it was set up about two years ago. This system gives you the option of speaking to a staff member who will take a message instead of you leaving a message in your Case Managers' voicemail box when he/she is unavailable to take your call.

Our satellite office at Riverview has been in operation for about two years now and is serving our clients there very well.

Advocacy on your Behalf

During this time of public sector change and constraint, the PGT continues to advocate for all clients to coordinate the best quality service possible. We will continue to ensure that you receive all the benefits and funding to which you are entitled. Some examples of the proactive steps we have taken to advocate on your behalf are:

- sending a letter to the care facilities addressing the issue of facilities charging more user fees
- entering into service contracts for companion and music therapy services

When we enter into a contract on your behalf, we ensure it is with an agency and not a private individual to protect your safety, legal interests and to ensure you are not liable for extra costs.

Over the past two years, our staff and legal counsel have taken a key role in seeking compensation for clients that suffered trauma caused by sexual abuse at Jericho Hill School for Deaf and in developing individual legal suits for compensation for a number of clients who were sexually sterilized while patients at Riverview Hospital. These cases are underway at this time.

Addtionally, we identified clients who were infected with Hepatitis C from tainted blood products and ensured that they were registered with the appropriate class action suit. Some clients have already received compensation.

Woodlands Project Update

In July 2002, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) released ex-Ombudsman, Dulcie McCallum's report regarding allegations of abuse at the Woodlands School. The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia has been provided with some MCFD records that McCallum specifically identified. A special project team has been formed at the PGT and the team is currently contacting our clients and arranging interviews with them. The PGT's role is to ensure that our clients' legal and financial interests are protected throughout this process. If you have any questions about this project or would like to speak about your own circumstances with a member of the special project team, please call 1-800-663-7867. To view a copy of Ms. McCallums report, visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/media_site/woodlands_review.htm.

What's coming up in the Future

In the Spring of 2002, a review of Powers of Attorney and Representation Agreements was completed. The report's main recommendation was that Enduring Powers of Attorney should remain the main advance financial planning tool. Changes will be made to the laws about advance planning for financial and personal care decision making.

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Client Services:

If you require further information or you would like to speak with your Case Manager, please contact us at the appropriate telephone or fax number listed below:

Team 1 - Vancouver Island/Interior/Kootenays
Ph: (604) 660-4453
Fax: (604) 660-9498/9479

Team 2 – Vancouver/Richmond/West Vancouver/Burnaby/Sunshine Coast
Ph: (604) 660-2476
Fax: (604) 660-9498/9479

Team 3 – Surrey/Delta/Port Coquitlam/New Westminster/Fraser Valley/Northern BC/North Vancouver
Ph: (604) 660-4480
Fax: (604) 660-9498

If you need to contact a Client Services Manager, call (604) 775-0438.

Toll free number: 1-800-663-7867 (Enquiry BC)