

# Woodlands trustee program

## Fact sheet

On March 31, 2018 the government of British Columbia announced that it would make ex gratia payments of up to \$10,000 to all former residents of Woodlands School including pre and post 1974 residents, if they did not receive that amount or more through the Woodlands Class Action.

## Background

The Ministry of Health is responsible for making the payments to the former residents. The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) will agree to act as trustee of payments to former residents if:

- the former resident is not able to manage the payment on their own and has no legal representative to assist, AND
- the former resident or their care provider has requested the assistance of the PGT; OR
- the former resident was represented by the PGT in the recent Woodlands Class Action.

## Role of the PGT as trustee

As trustee, the PGT will have authority to manage the payment and to make distributions to the former resident. The PGT cannot contract for services for the former resident or make payments to third parties.

The PGT will require the former residents for whom the PGT acts as trustee to have a bank account solely in their name into which the PGT will be able to make distributions from the trust, as appropriate.

A PGT financial officer will review all requests for disbursements and process payments from the former resident's trust account.

Requests for distribution can be made through the Woodlands Trustee Program email address at [woodlandsproject@trustee.bc.ca](mailto:woodlandsproject@trustee.bc.ca).

Former residents and their supports will continue to be responsible for accessing other benefits/ income sources, paying bills and filing annual tax returns on behalf of the former resident.

The PGT will close its file for the former resident once all trust funds are distributed from the former resident's account.

## Use of the funds

The PGT financial officer may require information about previous distributions from the former resident's trust before approving new requests. Funds may be requested for such things as:

- Medical/dental needs
- Furniture and equipment for the former resident
- Clothes and personal items
- Communication devices
- Special activities/trips
- Musical instruments/equipment

A request may be declined if:

- It is not clear that the request is for the former resident's benefit;
- Another more appropriate source of funding is available to meet the request; or

- The request is related to the purchase of a restraining device

In addition to ad hoc requests, some payments might be set up on a monthly or quarterly schedule to be deposited directly into the former resident's community bank account. Please request more information about this option from the PGT financial officer.

#### Appointment of a financial representative

If the former resident appoints a financial representative, the PGT should be advised immediately. In this case, the PGT will close its file for the former resident and will transfer the balance remaining in the trust to the former resident's representative.

For information about appointing a representative, please visit the Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry website.

## Referrals to the PGT

Referrals may be made after the former resident or their caregiver has confirmed that the former resident is eligible to receive the ex gratia payment from the Ministry of Health. For confirmation of eligibility to receive the ex gratia payment call toll free at 1-888-523-7192 or email [woodlands.care.facility.residents@gov.bc.ca](mailto:woodlands.care.facility.residents@gov.bc.ca).

Once confirmed, a request for the PGT to act as trustee can be made by email at [woodlandsproject@trustee.bc.ca](mailto:woodlandsproject@trustee.bc.ca) or by telephone at 1-877-511-4111.

If there is a need for more formal support, a referral to the PGT may be made to the Assessment and Investigation Services team by calling 1-877-511-4111.