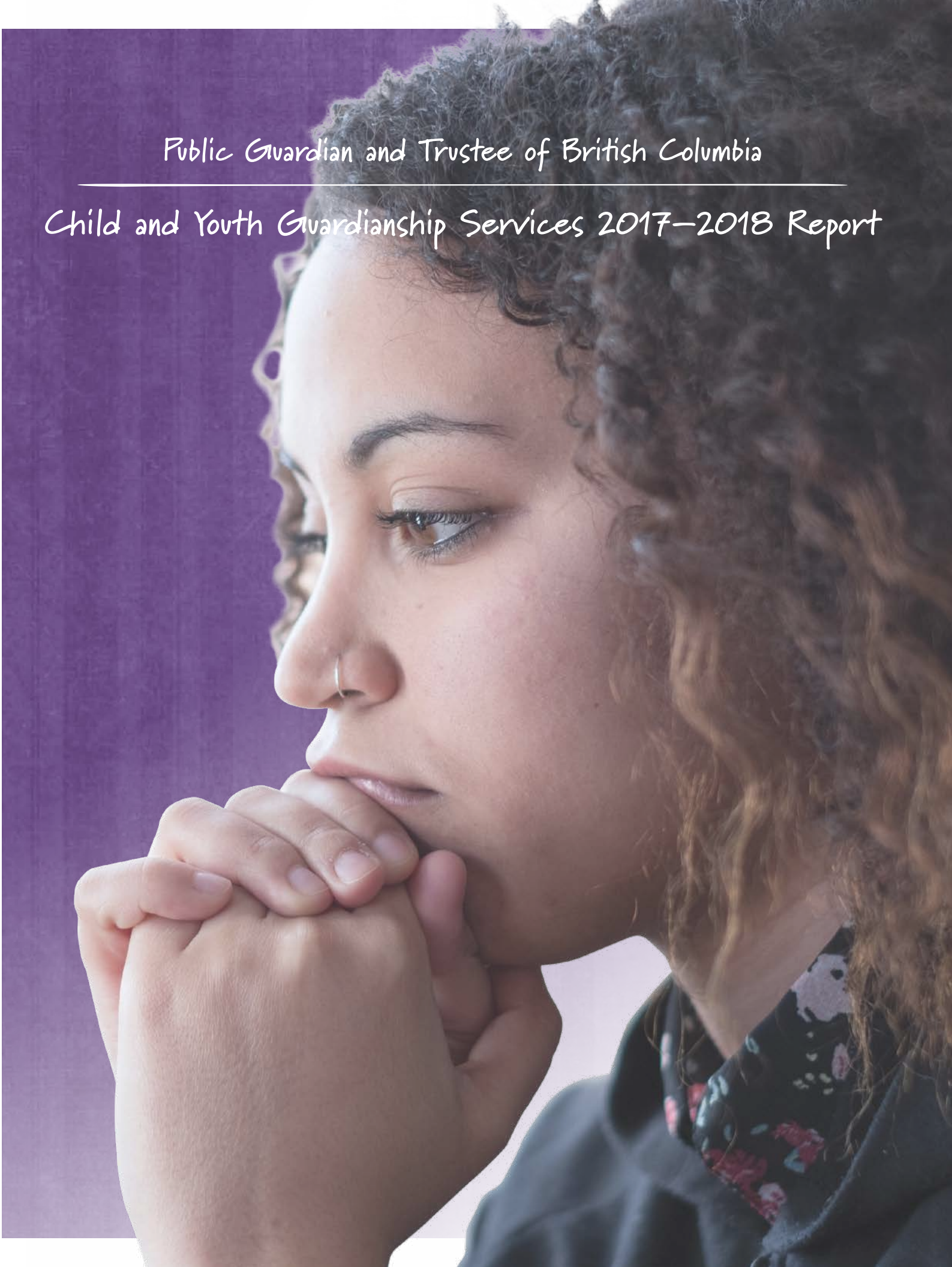


Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

Child and Youth Guardianship Services 2017–2018 Report



Values

Seven major values underpin the work of the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) and are reflected in all aspects of PGT performance:



Client Centred Service

We constantly strive to provide quality customer service to our clients.



Teamwork

We work with one another and with service partners in striving for seamless service delivery.



Staff Support

We acknowledge staff as our greatest resource and recognize and appreciate their expertise, professionalism and commitment.



Integrity

We act in accordance with the highest ethical, legal and personal standards.



Innovation

We challenge ourselves to seek new and improved ways to deliver service and assist clients.



Openness

We demonstrate responsibility and transparency to clients, government and the public through annual statutory public reporting on all aspects of our performance.



Respect

We treat clients, their family and friends in a courteous, respectful manner.



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Message from the Public Guardian and Trustee

I am pleased to release the tenth annual Child and Youth Guardianship Services Report which provides a status update about the work carried out by the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) on behalf of children and youth in government care.

Under provincial law the PGT has an important role to serve as property guardian to children and youth who are in continuing care, undergoing adoption or who have no legal property guardian. In this role, the PGT secures financial benefits to which a child may be entitled, protects a child's legal interests in civil law matters and acts as trustee of a child's funds and other assets until the child reaches the age of majority. By acting as property guardian, the PGT attempts to address the gap created where children and youth in care are unable for any one of a variety of reasons to receive the support of their parents or guardians to protect their legal and financial interests. As property guardian, the PGT strives to build the potential for children and youth in care to have more positive futures. Over time, our work is resulting in an increasing number of youth leaving care with financial resources of their own to support their aspirations as young adults.

We recognize that the work we do as property guardian brings with it a responsibility to also provide appropriate transition supports to youth leaving care so that at the age of majority, our young clients have the basic knowledge and skills they will need to ultimately manage their affairs on their own. For this reason, our transition planning for the children and youth we serve begins several years before a youth leaves care. Each young person's financial management and legal needs are assessed by PGT staff who consider what resources may be available to provide support where required.

It was this exercise which led PGT staff to identify an opportunity for the PGT to provide continued financial management support to youth even after they reached the age of majority in situations where the PGT had held assets in trust for them when they were children. In consultations with current and former youth in care and with youth serving agencies, PGT staff heard that an extended period of PGT trusteeship could provide a positive benefit to youth leaving care. It would allow more time for youth to acquire necessary skills and confidence to manage their own assets and as well, reduce some of the pressure youth leaving care faced in transitioning to independent living.

To make this potential opportunity a reality, the PGT advocated for a change in the law which would enable the PGT to continue to serve as trustee of assets on behalf of a youth about to leave care, for a fixed period of time if the youth wished to have the PGT's continued assistance. We are pleased that government was receptive to our proposal for law reform and recently passed relevant legislative amendments which will come into force later this year. The new law will enable the PGT to provide continued financial management support to youth leaving care who request this assistance.

We look forward to developing this new role to best meet the needs of youth leaving care as we continue to build our overall capacity to provide effective property guardianship services.

Catherine M. Romanko
Public Guardian and Trustee



Child Protection and Guardianship

The delivery of child protection and guardianship services in BC involves the following public agencies, government bodies and courts. While all share the common goal of supporting children at risk, each has a unique role.

Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT)

As property guardian, the PGT protects the legal and financial interests of children and youth in continuing care and is coguardian with MCFD and DAAs of these children.

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

As personal guardian, MCFD takes children at risk into care and ensures their day to day needs are met; is coguardian with the PGT for children and youth in continuing care.

Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies (DAAs)

Aboriginal agencies with statutory delegated authority for child protective services for Indigenous children and youth at risk as well as non statutory voluntary services; some DAAs have personal guardian responsibilities and are coguardian with the PGT for children and youth in continuing care.

Supreme Court of British Columbia

With respect to matters of property guardianship, the Supreme Court may hear matters of custody, property interests and claims for damages for personal injury.

Provincial Court of British Columbia

With respect to matters of property guardianship, the Provincial Court grants child protection orders including continuing custody orders, may order transfer of guardianship, and adjudicates small claims involving personal injury.

Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

A committee established by the BC Legislature to provide legislative oversight on provincial services to children.

Children's Forum

An information sharing forum for BC senior officials with an interest in child protection and related services which includes the PGT, MCFD, RCY, Chief Coroner, Provincial Health Officer and Ombudsperson.

Representative for Children and Youth (RCY)

The Representative is responsible for supporting children, youth, young adults and their families in dealing with the child and youth serving system, for advocating for improvements to the system and for providing oversight of public bodies that deliver services and programs to children and youth.



PGT Overview

This is the 10th annual report regarding child and youth property guardian services provided by the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT). The purpose of this report, which covers the period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, is to describe PGT services, key activities and outcomes related to supporting children and youth in continuing care of the Province of BC. The report also outlines emerging and continuing opportunities and challenges related to serving children and youth as property guardian.

The PGT is a corporation sole established under the *Public Guardian and Trustee Act* with a unique statutory role to protect the interests of British Columbians who lack legal capacity to protect their own interests.

The mandate of the PGT is to:



Protect the legal and financial interests of children under the age of 19 years;

Protect the legal, financial, personal and health care interests of adults who require assistance in decision making; and



Administer the estates of deceased and missing persons.



The PGT provided services with 267 full time equivalent employee positions and served approximately 26,000 clients throughout 2017-2018. It managed \$1 billion of client trust assets during this period. The PGT self funds a large percentage of its actual expenditures through fees charged on client income and assets under PGT administration with supplementary government funding that supports public services such as regulatory and oversight activities.



PGT Child and Youth Services

Through its **Child and Youth Services (CYS)** Division, the PGT protects the legal and financial interests of children and youth under a number of provincial laws. CYS responsibilities can be grouped into the three broad service categories of property guardian, trustee and protective legal reviews.

Number of Clients:



4,818

Property Guardian

As property guardian, the PGT protects the legal and financial interests of children and youth in the continuing care of the Province, those undergoing adoption, without a legal guardian, and in some cases, children in temporary care.



8,855

Trustee

As trustee, the PGT invests and manages funds for children and youth from a number of different sources, including personal injury settlements or court awards, life insurance payments, inheritances where no other trustee is appointed and part of the wages paid to child and youth actors. Funds are typically held in trust until the youth reaches 19 years of age, but may be used earlier if it is in the best interests of the child or youth.




2,969

Protective Legal Reviews

The PGT reviews all proposed settlements of claims for damages of children and youth for personal injury, a variation of a will or trust and claims made under the *Family Compensation Act* to ensure outcomes are in the best interests of the child or youth.

The most common claims reviewed by the PGT relate to motor vehicle accidents. The PGT also investigates concerns about trusts and estates in which children or youth may have an interest.

PGT guardianship duties and trustee duties respecting children and youth may overlap in some cases where, for example, a child or youth in continuing care is also the beneficiary of an estate. In such cases, the PGT is property guardian for the child or youth and also acts as trustee of the child or youth's interest in the estate.

 = graphically represents one thousand clients



Public Guardianship Services in BC

When children lose a parent or legal guardian and have no one to act as their guardian, the province assumes the duties of guardian. These children and youth are among the most vulnerable members of society.

BC law divides the duties of public guardianship into two parts:

PERSONAL GUARDIANSHIP

The duty to find safe homes for children and youth and to make decisions about their personal and health care needs.

This role is performed by **MCFD** or **DAAs**.

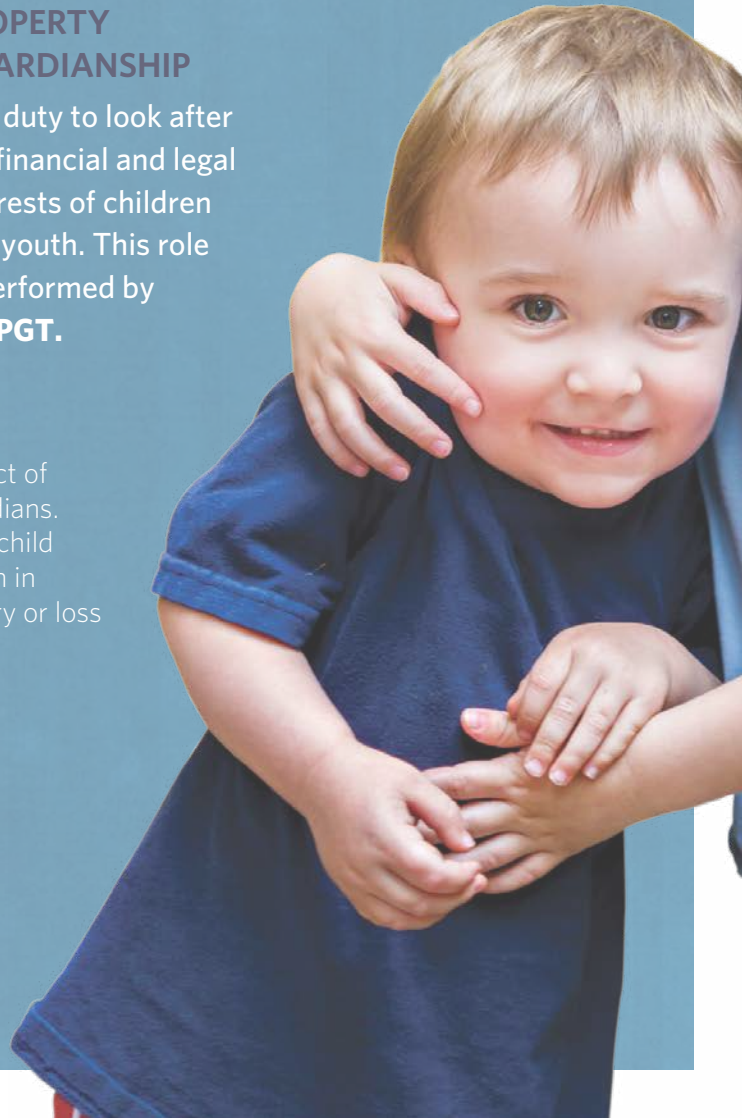


PROPERTY GUARDIANSHIP

The duty to look after the financial and legal interests of children and youth. This role is performed by the **PGT**.



Guardianship duties are divided because of the inherent conflict of interest between the duties of the personal and property guardians. In some cases, protecting the legal and financial interests of a child or youth may require taking legal action against the coguardian in situations where coguardian negligence may have caused injury or loss to a child or youth.



PGT Property Guardianship Services

The PGT is property guardian for all children and youth who are in the continuing care of the Province under the child protection provisions of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, undergoing adoption, without a legal guardian, or for whom the court has ordered the PGT to be property guardian under a temporary custody order.

There are 43 PGT staff positions that provide all CYS services, including property guardianship services. Collaboratively, staff ensure that financial benefits to which individual child and youth clients are entitled are collected and viable legal claims are pursued. In order to carry out many of its property guardianship duties, the PGT must rely heavily on information it receives from MCFD and DAAs, particularly from social workers who have day to day interactions both with the children and youth for whom they are personal guardian as well as their caregivers.

There are numerous ways in which the PGT receives information from MCFD and DAAs about legal and financial issues for children and youth. The information received may pertain to the current circumstances of the child or youth, but can also be information regarding past events.

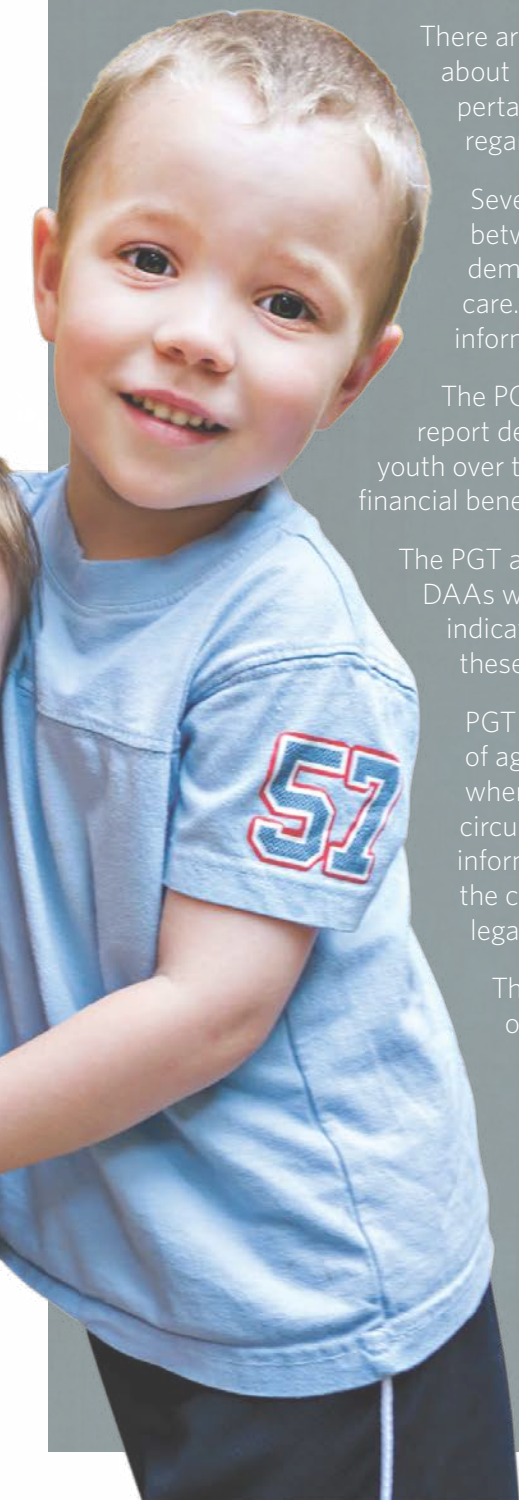
Several communications processes are in place to facilitate information sharing between the PGT, MCFD and DAAs as coguardians. MCFD forwards a monthly demographic report advising the PGT which children and youth are in continuing care. Once notified the PGT requests MCFD and DAAs to complete an initial information form about the legal or financial issues affecting the child or youth.

The PGT requests this information to be updated annually and also creates its own report describing the property guardianship services it has provided to the child or youth over the past year. These annual reviews support ongoing activities such as pursuing financial benefits, investigating potential legal claims and collaborating on transition services.

The PGT also receives copies of Initial Reportable Circumstance reports from MCFD and DAAs which are reviewed and referred to legal counsel if the information in the report indicates further investigation and possible legal action is required. The PGT refers to these reports as critical incident reports (CIRs).

PGT property guardianship services end by law when the child reaches 19 years of age, when the child is adopted, when guardianship of the child is transferred, when the child is returned to the parent(s) or when the child dies. In any of these circumstances, the PGT does a complete file review to ensure that all pertinent information is communicated and if needed, appropriate supports are in place for the child or youth with respect to the ongoing management of their finances and/or legal issues.

The following sections of this report describe the key activities and outcomes for the year April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

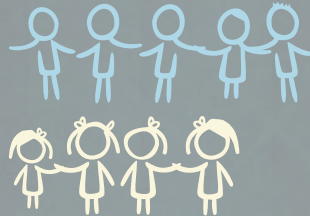


PGT Property Guardianship Services

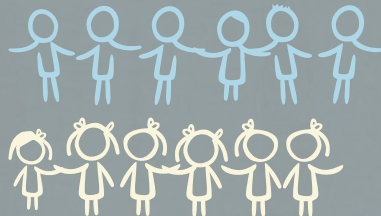
If PGT Property Guardian Clients were imagined as a village of 100 children, then:

53 males
47 females

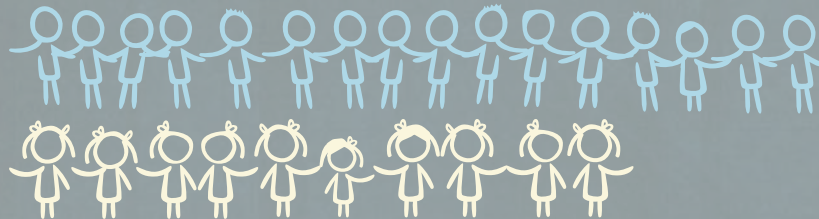
9 children over 19*



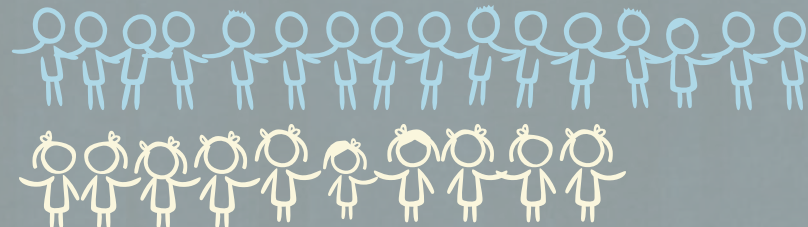
12 children under age 4



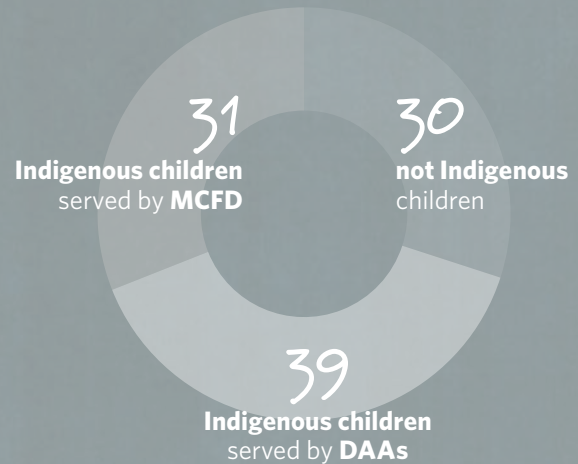
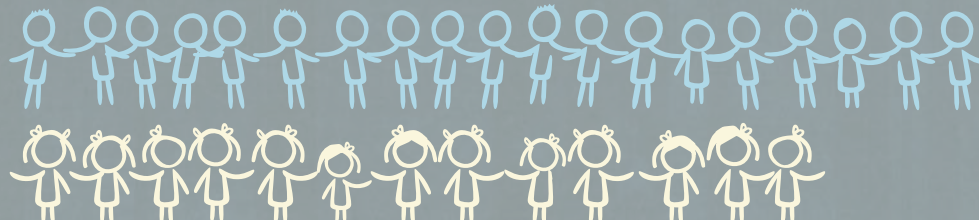
21 children ages 5-9



26 children ages 10-14



32 children ages 15-18



Note: All data in this report is derived from PGT sources, except for information regarding Indigenous identity, which is provided by MCFD. Data at March 31, 2018. All numbers in this report rounded.

*This represents the number of former property guardian clients that the PGT is working with to transition legal and financial matters.

Financial Services

The PGT pursues financial benefits and entitlements for property guardian clients. These efforts have resulted in growing financial assets for the children and youth served by the PGT as property guardian. At March 31, 2018, the PGT held approximately \$43.4 million in assets on behalf of these children and youth from a variety of sources.

A key area of focus for the PGT is to establish Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) for children and youth who have received a Disability Tax Credit designation from the federal government. A RDSP is a tax deferred savings plan intended to provide significant long term financial benefits to adults and children or youth with disabilities. The PGT is committed to advancing the interests of its property guardian clients by collecting the federal funds associated with the RDSP program which take the form of matching grants, with a lifetime limit of \$70,000, and annual bonds, with a lifetime limit of \$20,000.

The PGT has made extensive efforts to open RDSPs for its eligible property guardian clients, resulting in 618 RDSPs worth approximately \$7.0 million at March 31, 2018. The value of the established RDSPs continue to grow as the PGT secures the annual \$1,000 bond for each eligible child or youth.

With support from the Vancouver Foundation, the Plan Institute administers the Endowment 150 (E150) Program to assist individuals and families with low incomes to save for their future by providing one time gifts of \$150 to help their RDSPs grow. The PGT applies for the E150 and contributes the \$150 gift to each child's RDSP. This attracts an additional \$450 in matching grants from the federal government, resulting in a further growth to RDSPs for children in continuing care.

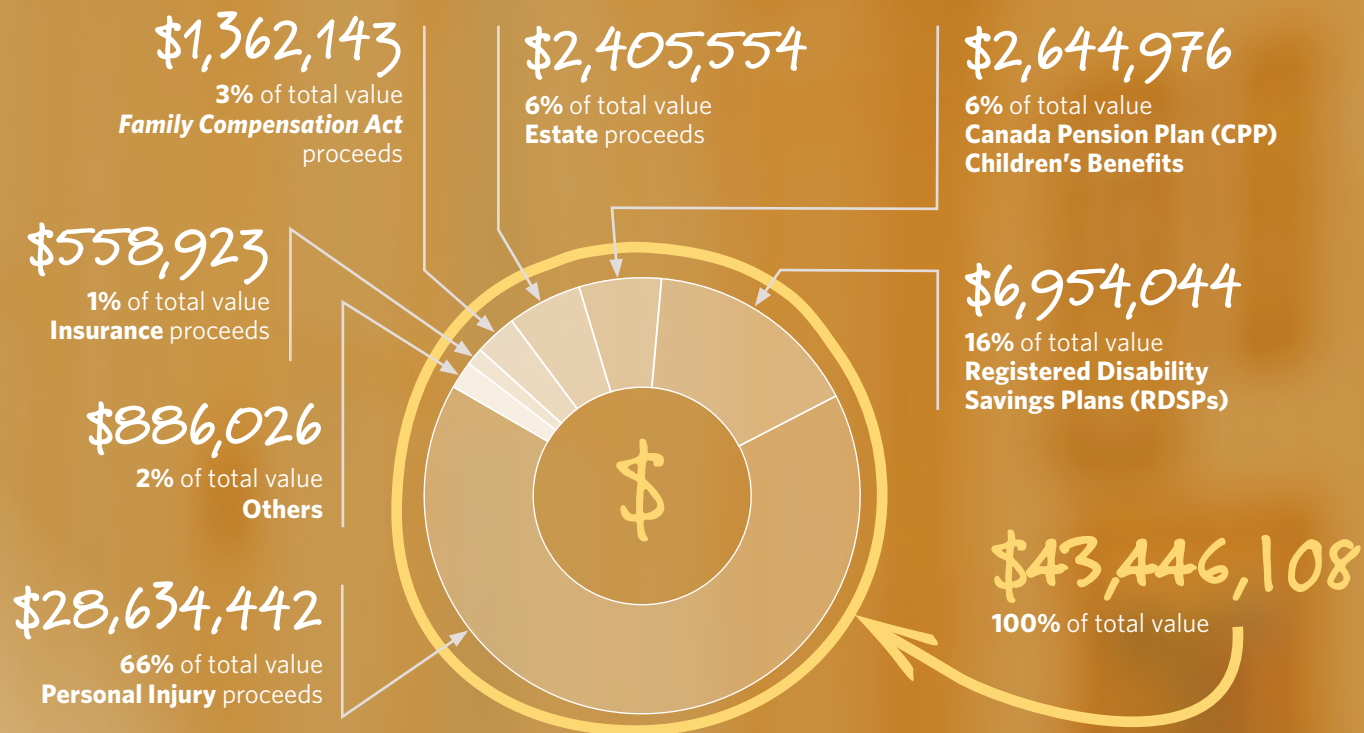
Major Categories of Assets at March 31, 2018

Number of clients	Asset type	Total value of asset type
618	Registered Disability Savings Plans	\$6,954,044
938	Trust Accounts with Cash Balances	\$14,861,704
19	Holdings in Investment accounts	\$21,630,360

Note: These represent the three major categories of assets held by PGT for children and youth for whom the PGT acts as property guardian.

Financial Services

Types of Funds Held by the PGT at March 31, 2018



Note: This represents the types of funds and values of all funds held in trust by the PGT for children and youth for whom the PGT acts as property guardian.



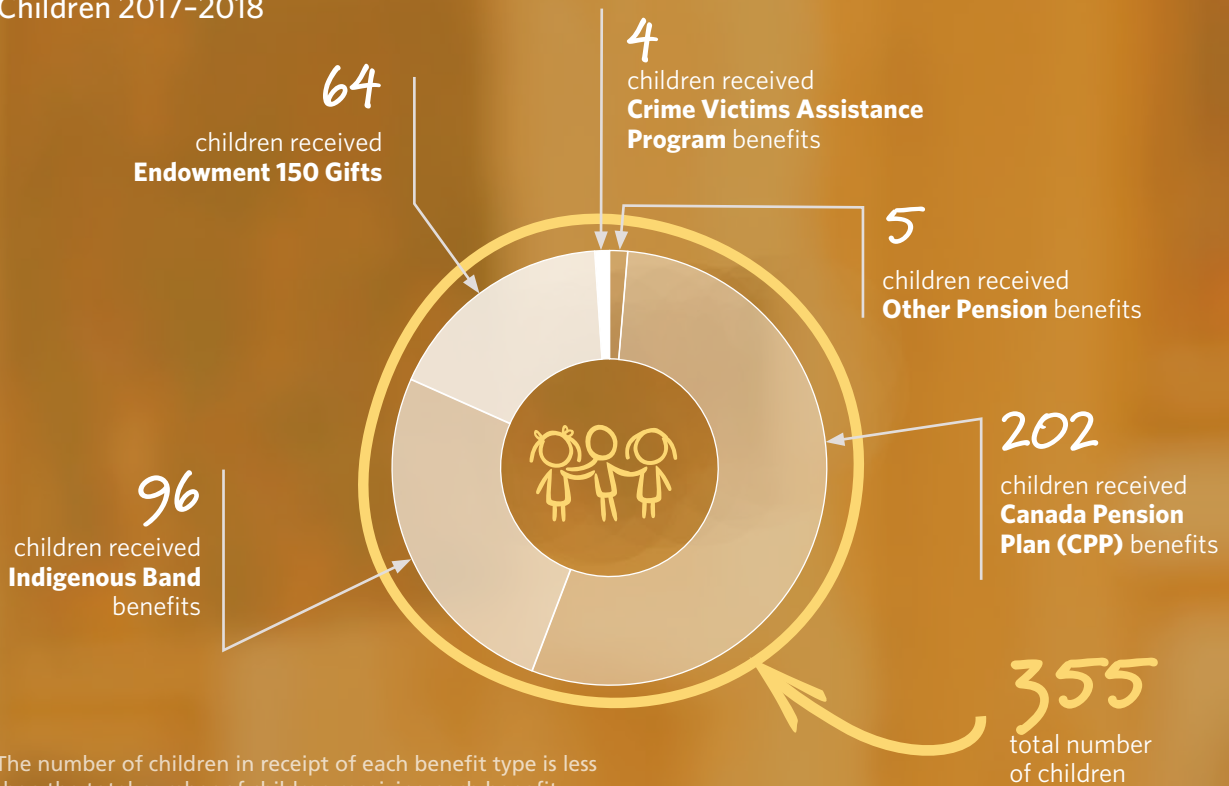
The PGT pursued and collected over \$680,000 in various financial entitlements and benefits on behalf of children and youth in 2017-2018. These can include death benefits, Indigenous band benefits and various federal and provincial government benefits. Additional amounts were collected on behalf of children and youth in 2017-2018 as a result of the work of the PGT's legal counsel, bringing legal actions on behalf of children and youth, such as personal injury claims.

As personal identification is a key element to securing financial benefits, the PGT applies for birth certificates and social insurance numbers for all children and youth in care. In 2017-2018, PGT staff applied for 387 birth certificates from the BC Vital Statistics Agency.

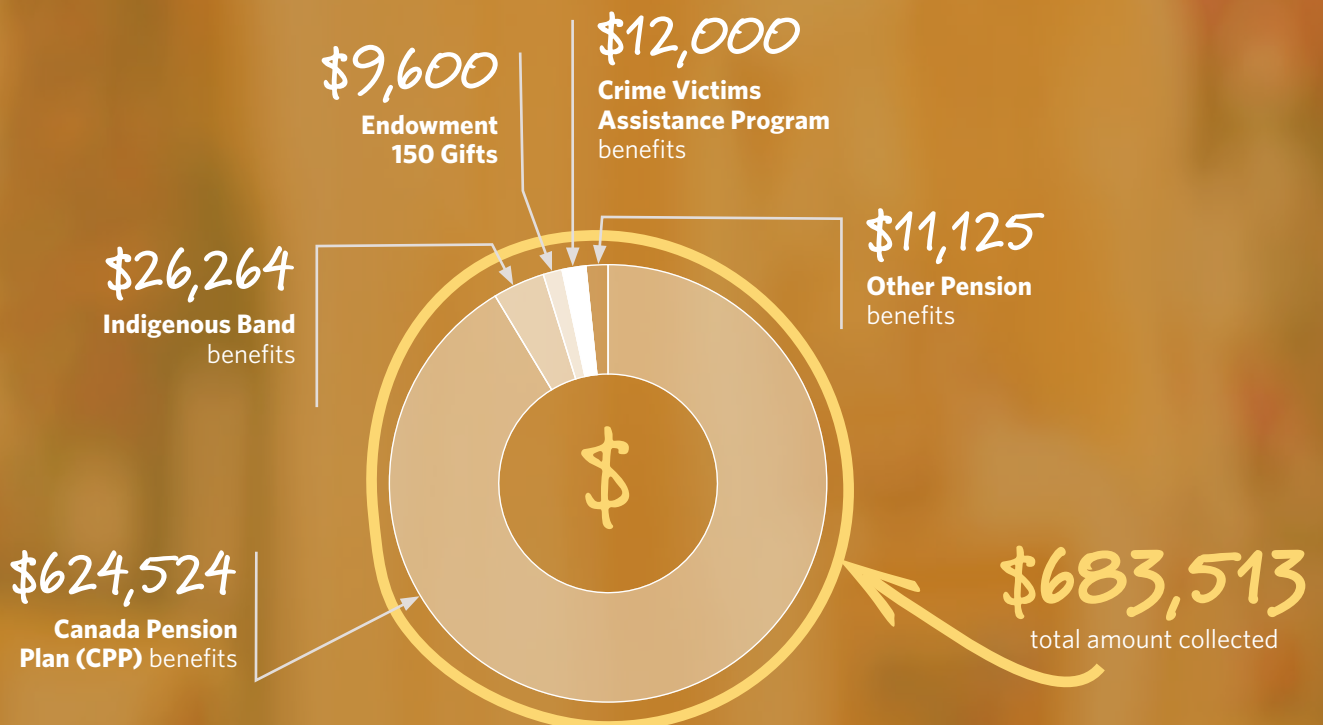
All funds collected by the PGT are held in trust accounts in the child's name until the child or youth reaches age 19. While the PGT has statutory discretion to consider the release of funds for special opportunities which directly benefit the child or youth, the primary responsibility for the child's day to day needs and financial support remains with their personal guardians, MCFD and DAAs. As such, the majority of funds collected on behalf of children and youth in care is preserved until age 19.

Financial Benefits Collected 2017-2018

Total Children 2017-2018



Total Amount Collected 2017-2018



Critical Incident Reports

The PGT receives notification from MCFD and DAAs of critical injuries and serious incidents involving children and youth in continuing care either through critical incident reports (CIRs) or the annual update reports. The nature of the incidents described within the reports is varied, ranging from a child or youth leaving a foster home without permission, to a child being involved in a motor vehicle accident, or abused or harmed. These reports are investigated and may lead to a legal claim being pursued on behalf of a child who has suffered a loss. In 2017-2018, 1,207 CIRs were received by the PGT involving 643 children and youth. There has been a significant increase in the number of CIRs over the last several fiscal years, likely due to MCFD's roll out of an updated Reportable Circumstance Policy and Guidelines and improved social worker compliance with the reporting policy. Some of the children and youth were the focus of more than one CIR during the year. PGT staff act quickly to review CIRs as immediate action may be required to preserve the right to advance a legal claim.

The PGT classifies the reported injury or harm according to categories adapted from the World Health Organization International Classification of Diseases. Where an injury was caused by a person who directly harmed a child or youth, the person is identified as an "alleged harmer," and is classified according to categories adapted from the International Classification of External Causes of Injuries (see PGT Classification of Critical Incident Reports at the end of this report).

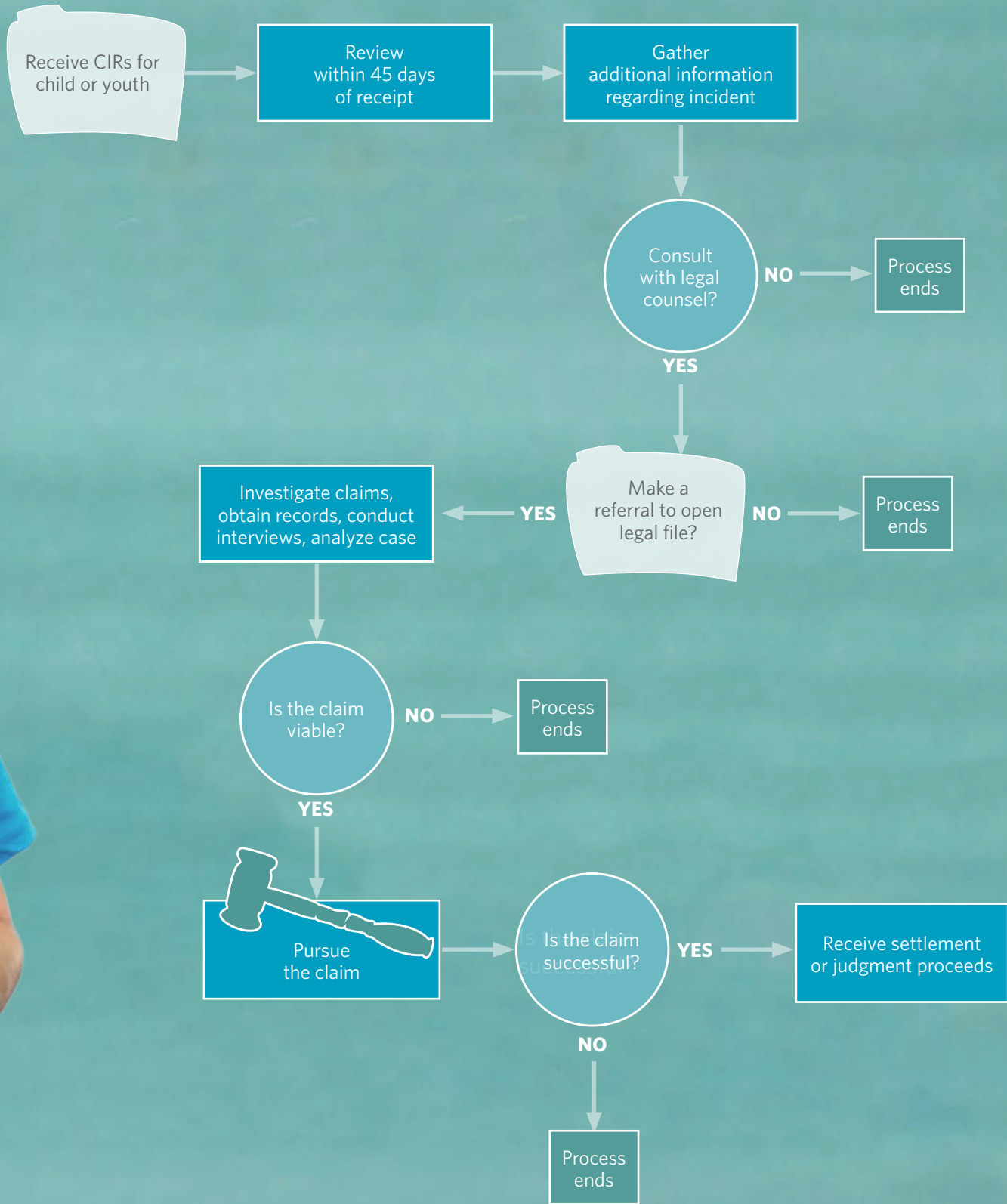
1,207
reports for
643
children

Number of Critical Incident Reports 2017-2018

Number of CIRs received	Number of Children	Percent of Children
1	408	63%
2	114	18%
3	58	9%
4	26	4%
5	8	1%
6	10	2%
7	8	1%
8	3	1%
9	2	<1%
12	2	<1%
13	1	<1%
17	1	<1%
20	1	<1%
21	1	<1%
Total	643	100%

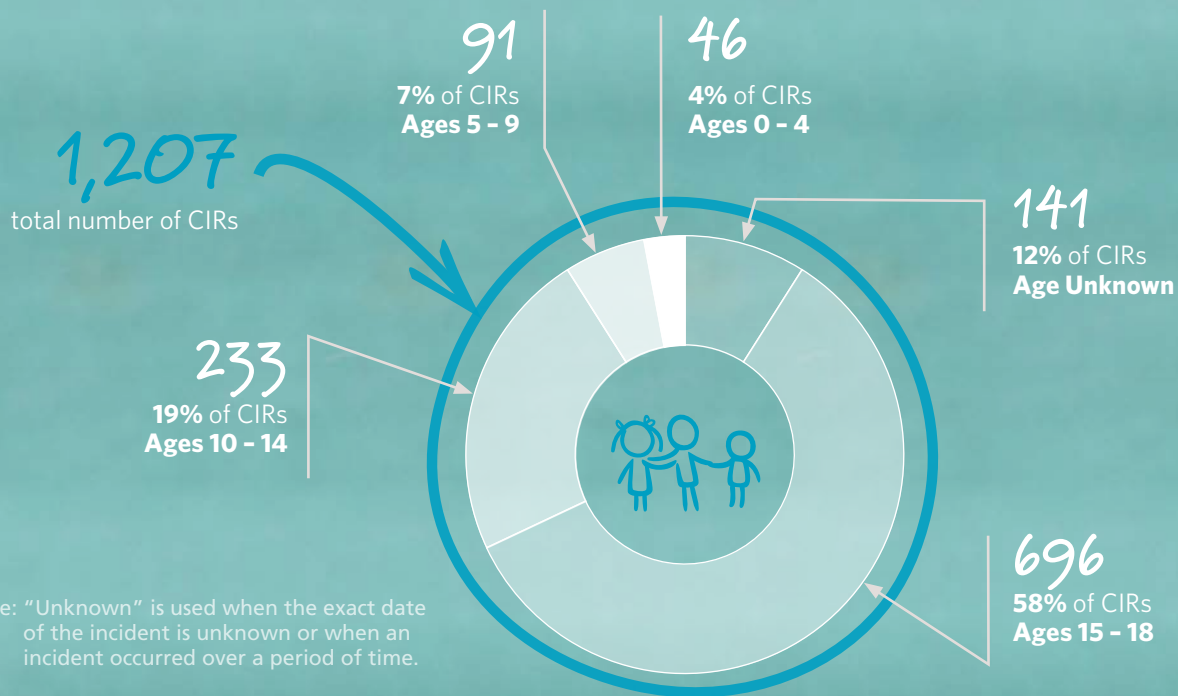


PGT Response to Critical Incident Reports 2017-2018

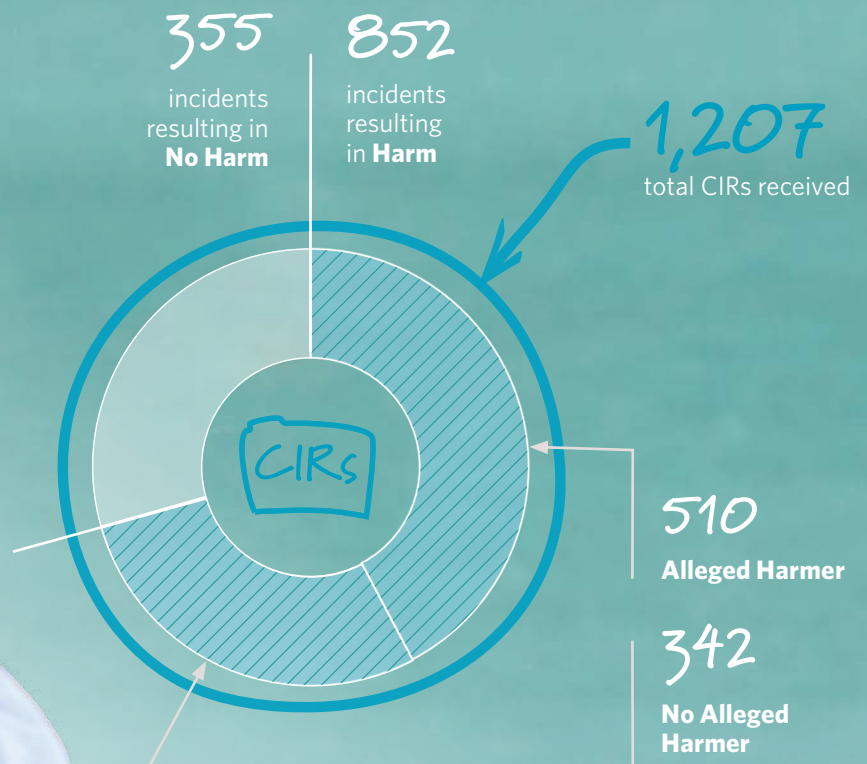


Critical Incident Reports

Age of Child or Youth on Date of Incident 2017-2018

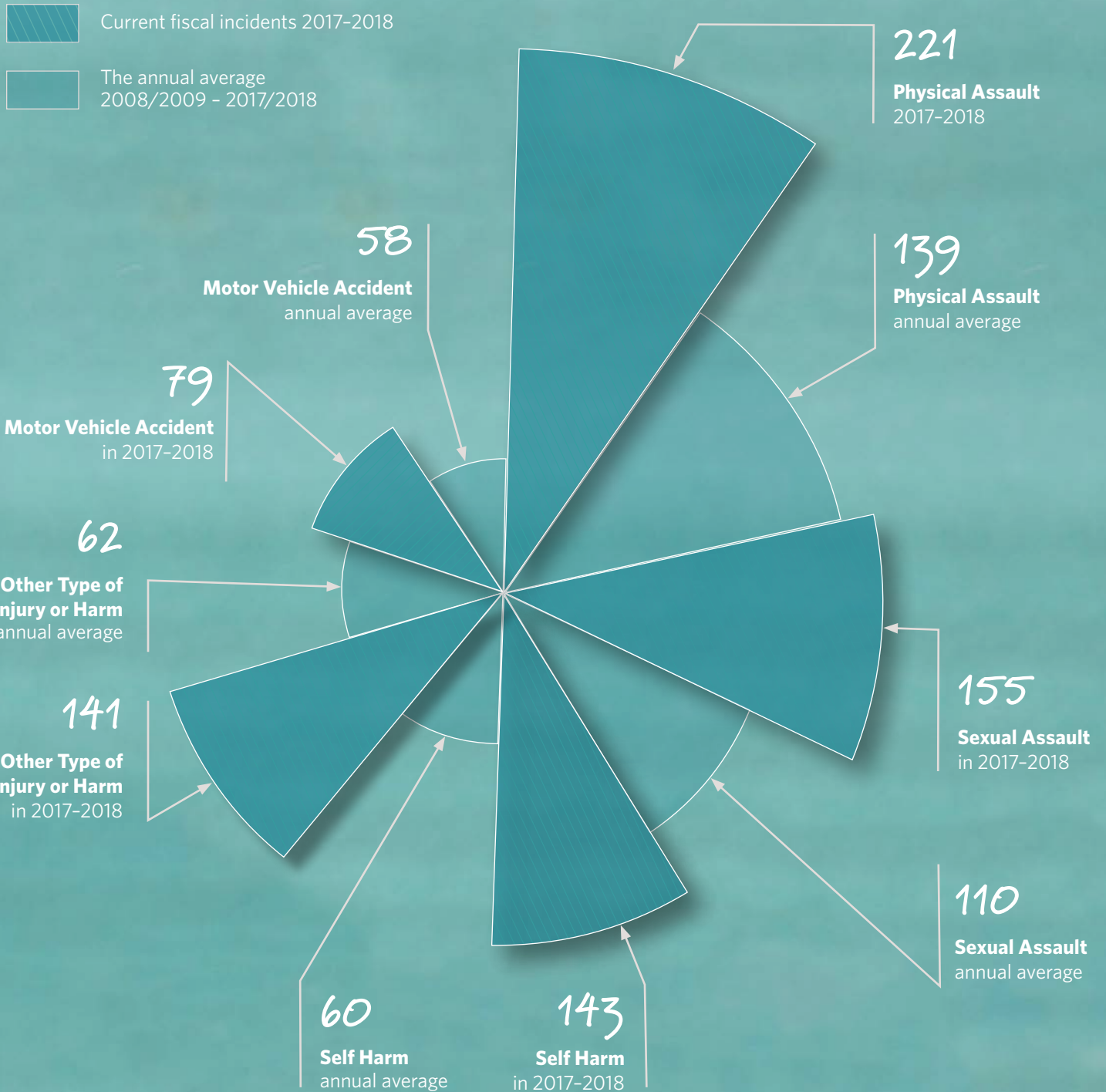


Number of CIRs That Reported Harm or No Harm to a Child or Youth 2017-2018



Note: 99% of CIRs were reviewed within 45 days of receipt in 2017-2018.

Five Major Categories of Harm Experienced by Children and Youth



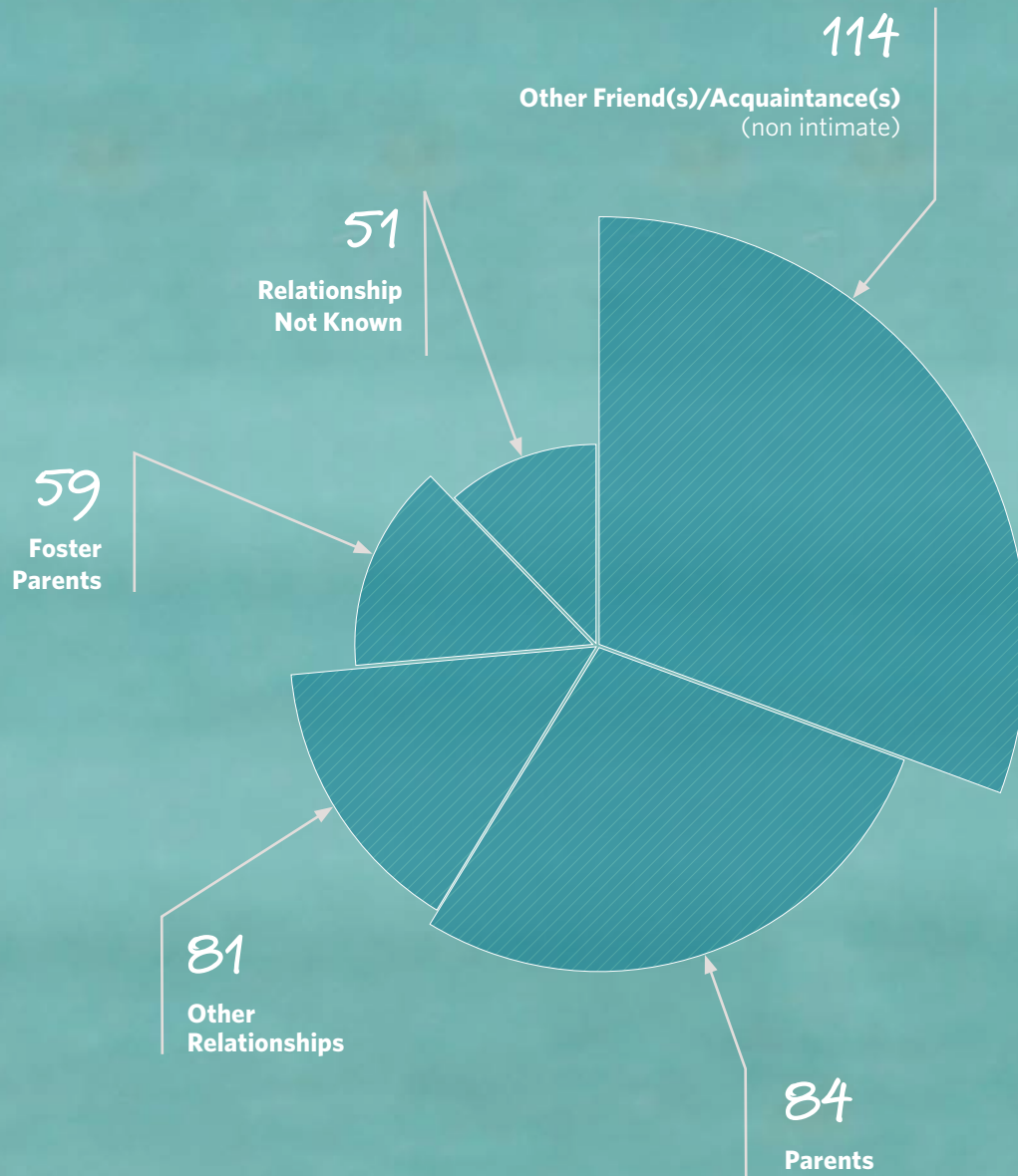
As the graph above demonstrates, “physical assault” and “sexual assault” are the most common types of harm reported to the PGT. The majority of injuries resulting from physical assault or sexual assault were suffered by youth who were aged 15 to 18 years at the time of the incident. The broad scope of the category “other type of injury or harm” allows for the inclusion of incidents where a child or youth was hospitalized due to severe intoxication by drugs or alcohol. The category “self harm” describes incidents where the child or youth intentionally caused self inflicted injury.

Critical Incident Reports

Five Major Categories of Alleged Harmers



Current fiscal incidents 2017-2018



The category of alleged harmers varies according to the type of injury or incident at issue. The category “other relationship” to define an alleged harmer is applied to incidents in which there could be more than one harmer or where the alleged harmers did not fall into any other defined category. For example, the category “other relationship” applies to alleged harmers where the incident at issue is a motor vehicle accident. This is due to the fact that when the PGT is provided with the CIR, it is not possible to determine who may be responsible for any injuries sustained by the child or youth.

The annual average
2008/2009 - 2017/2018



69
Other Friend(s)/Acquaintance(s)
(non intimate)

34
Relationship
Not known

44
Foster
Parents

48
Parents

67
Other
Relationships



Legal Services

The PGT provides a wide range of legal services for children in care. These services include:

- responding to applications to cancel a continuing custody order;
- reviewing applications for grants of probate or administration where a child in care may be entitled to a share of the estate and ensuring that share is protected;
- investigating whether a child or youth has a viable claim under the *Family Compensation Act* in relation to the wrongful death of a parent; and
- investigating incidents of injury or harm to a child for which a third party may be liable and pursuing legal claims where appropriate.

If PGT Property Guardian Clients were imagined as a village of 100 children, then:



NOTE: Data at March 31, 2018.

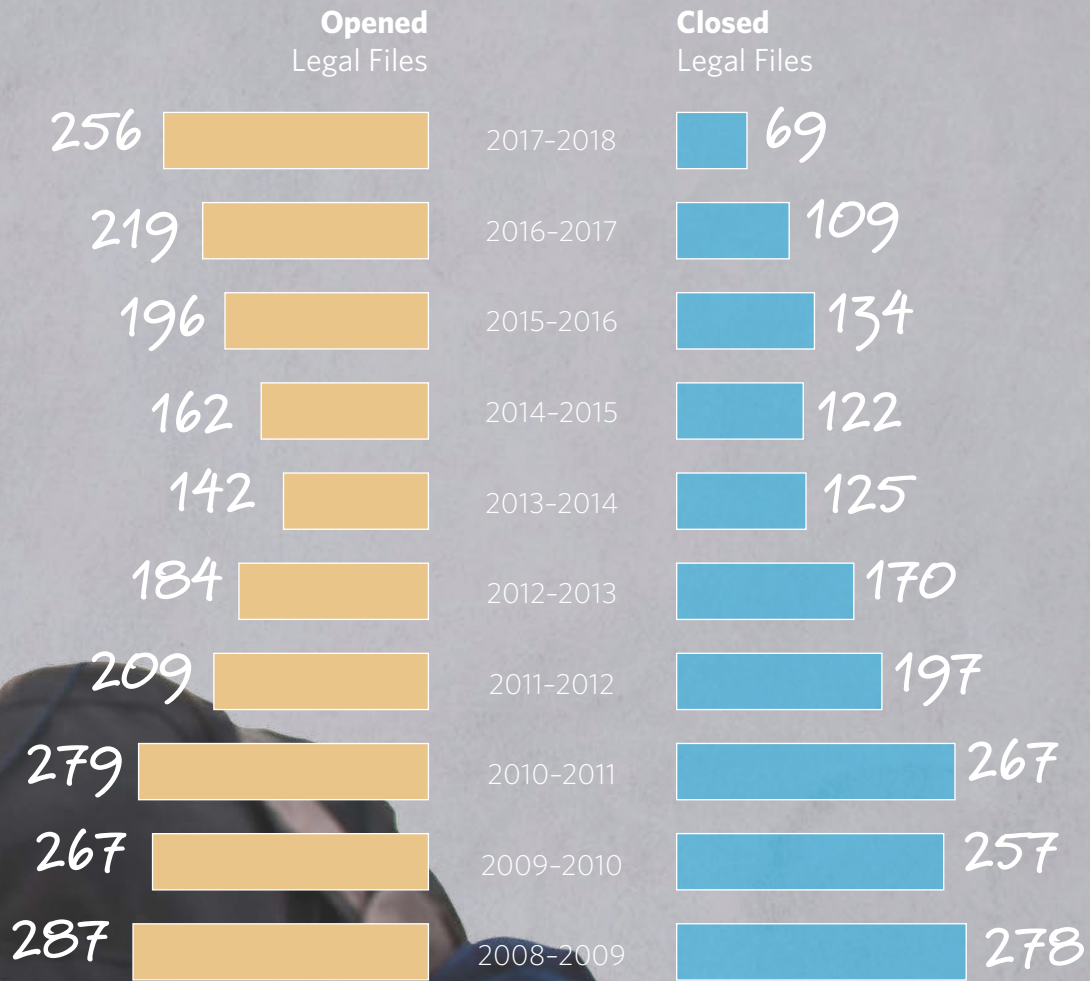
Legal referrals related to personal injury arising from sexual assault are consistently the largest category of potential civil claims, comprising 29% of legal referrals over the year. Of the legal files concluded over this period of time, the average amount of time to conclude the matter was 2.2 years.

There are several outcomes to legal referrals. If a legal action has been commenced and is still ongoing when the youth reaches the age of majority, the action is transferred to the young adult to continue. If no legal action has been commenced, the young adult may be provided with a letter advising of their legal rights. Legal actions may be resolved by judgment or settlement of the claim prior to the child or youth reaching age 19. In other instances, matters are resolved by legal counsel and funds are obtained for the child or youth and civil litigation is not required. Between 2008–2009 and 2017–2018, the PGT collected approximately \$56.5 million from legal services carried out on behalf of children and youth in continuing care, including approximately \$15.8 million in 2017–2018.

NOTE: Gross values, before deductions for legal fees and PGT fees.

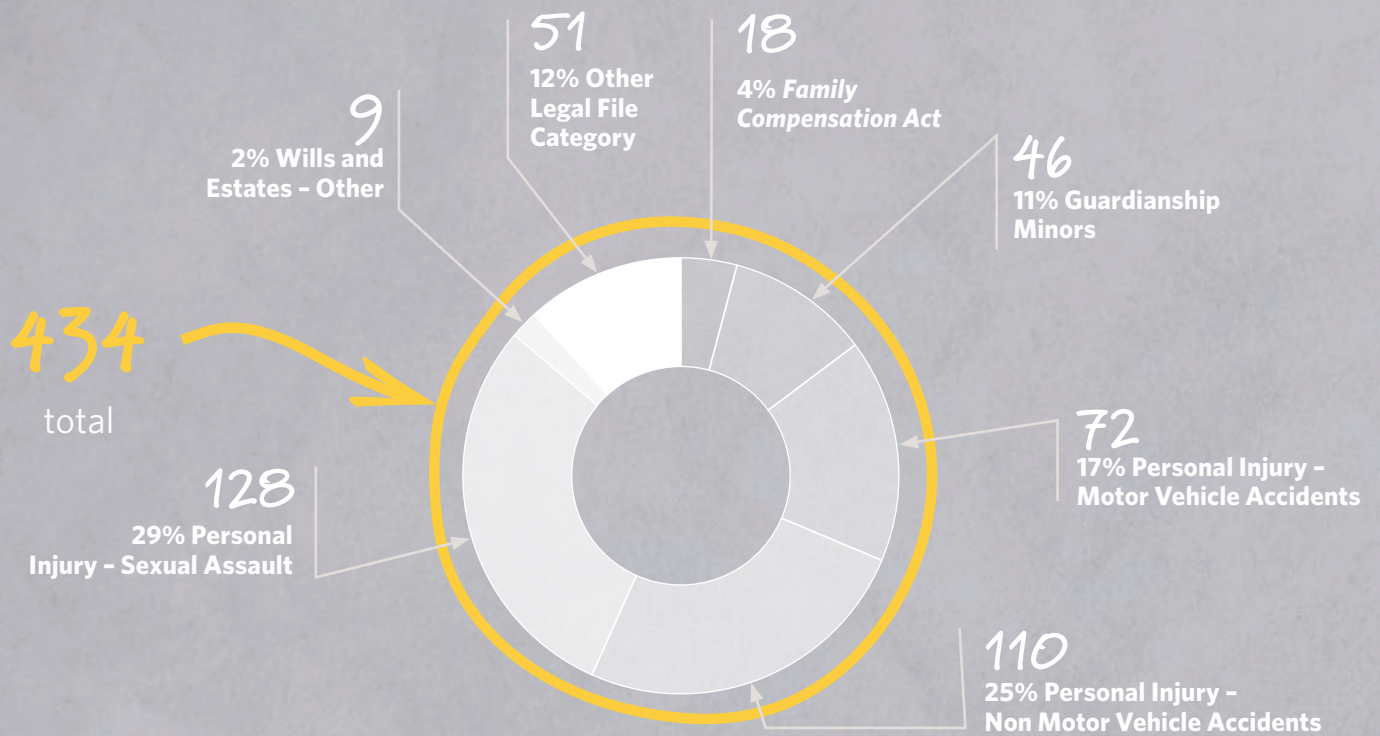


Opened and Closed Legal Work by Year

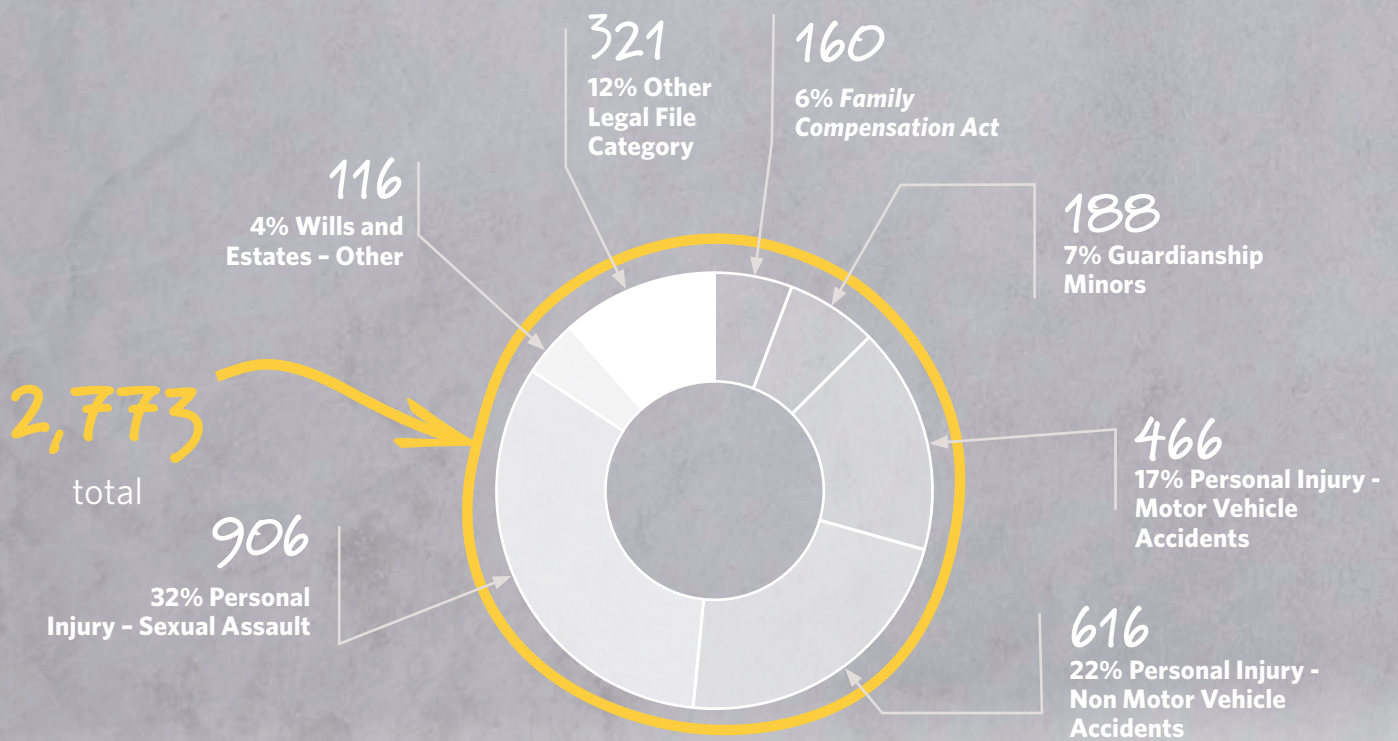


Legal Services

Type of Legal Work 2017-2018



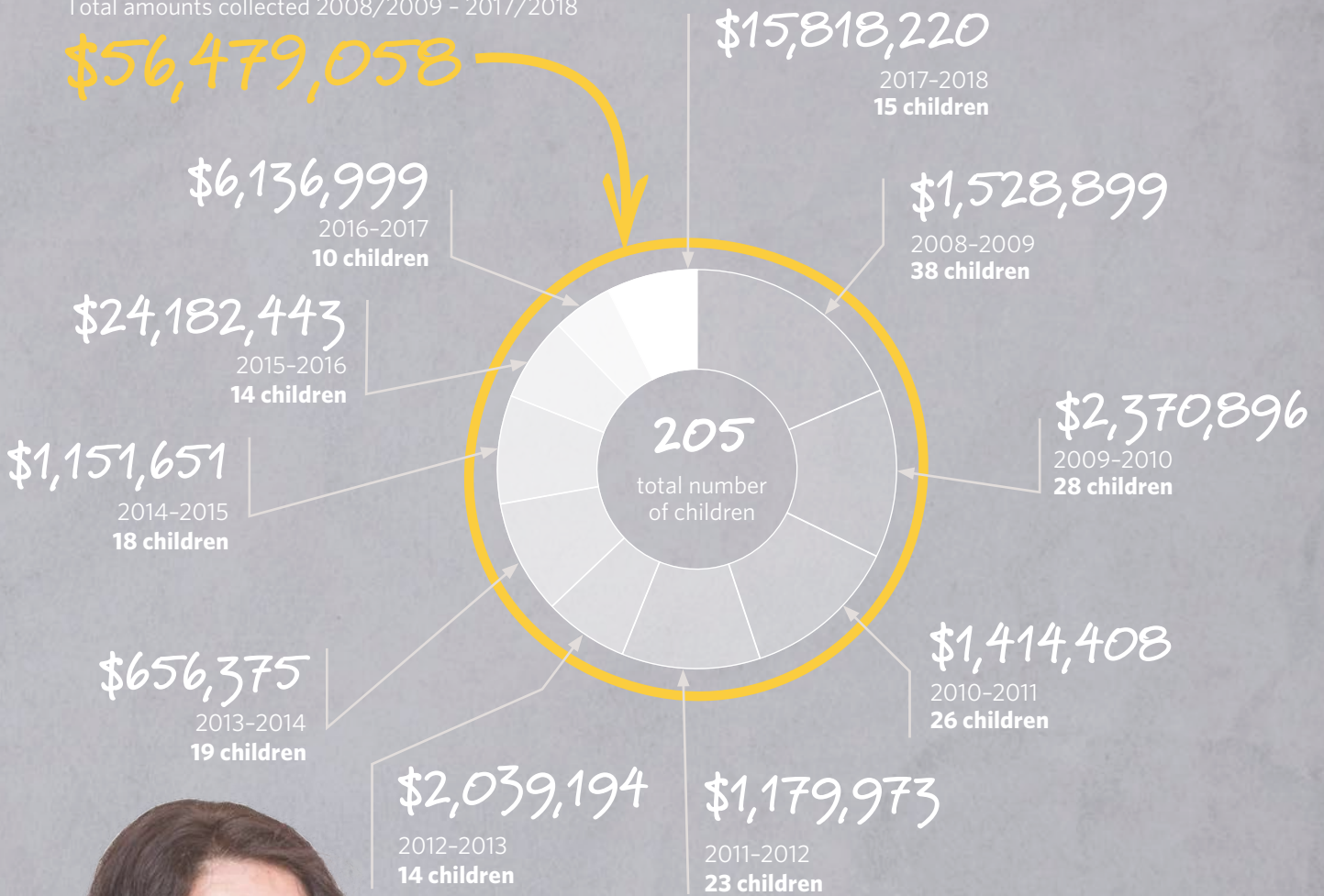
Type of Legal Work 2008/2009 - 2017/2018



Amounts Collected from Legal Work

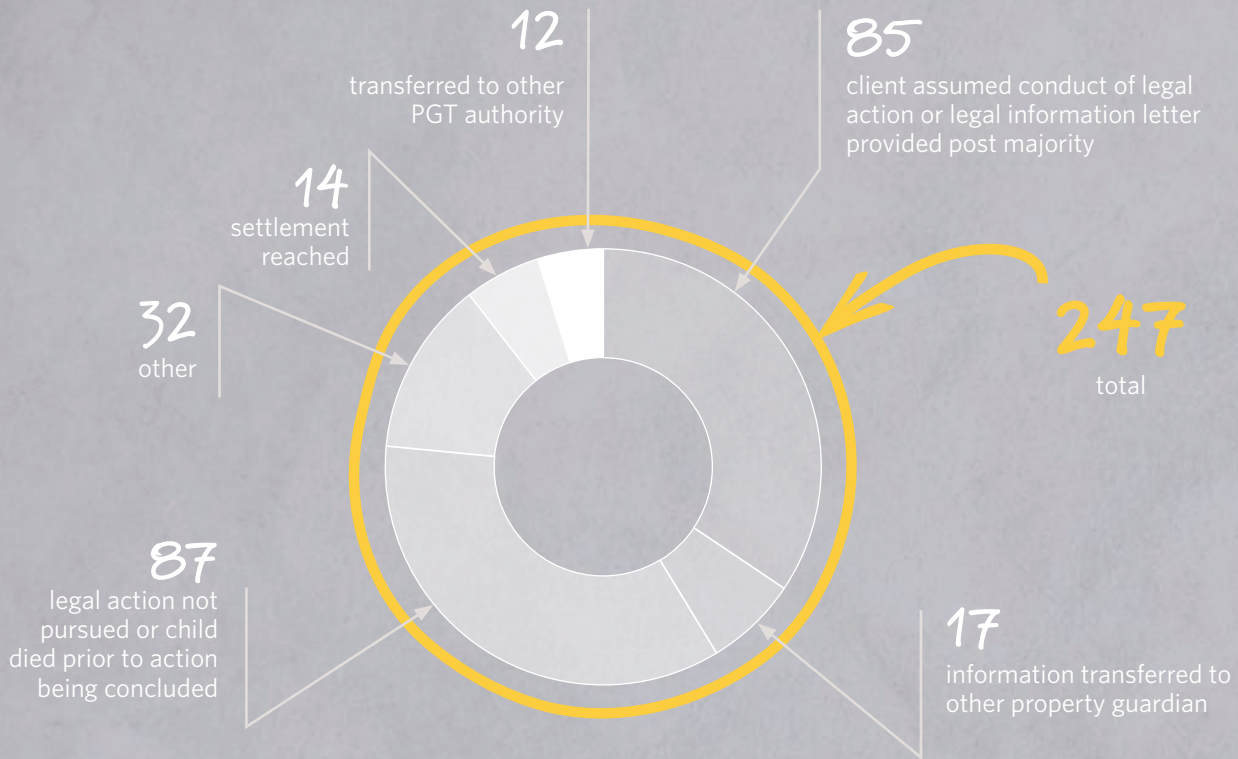
Total amounts collected 2008/2009 - 2017/2018

\$56,479,058

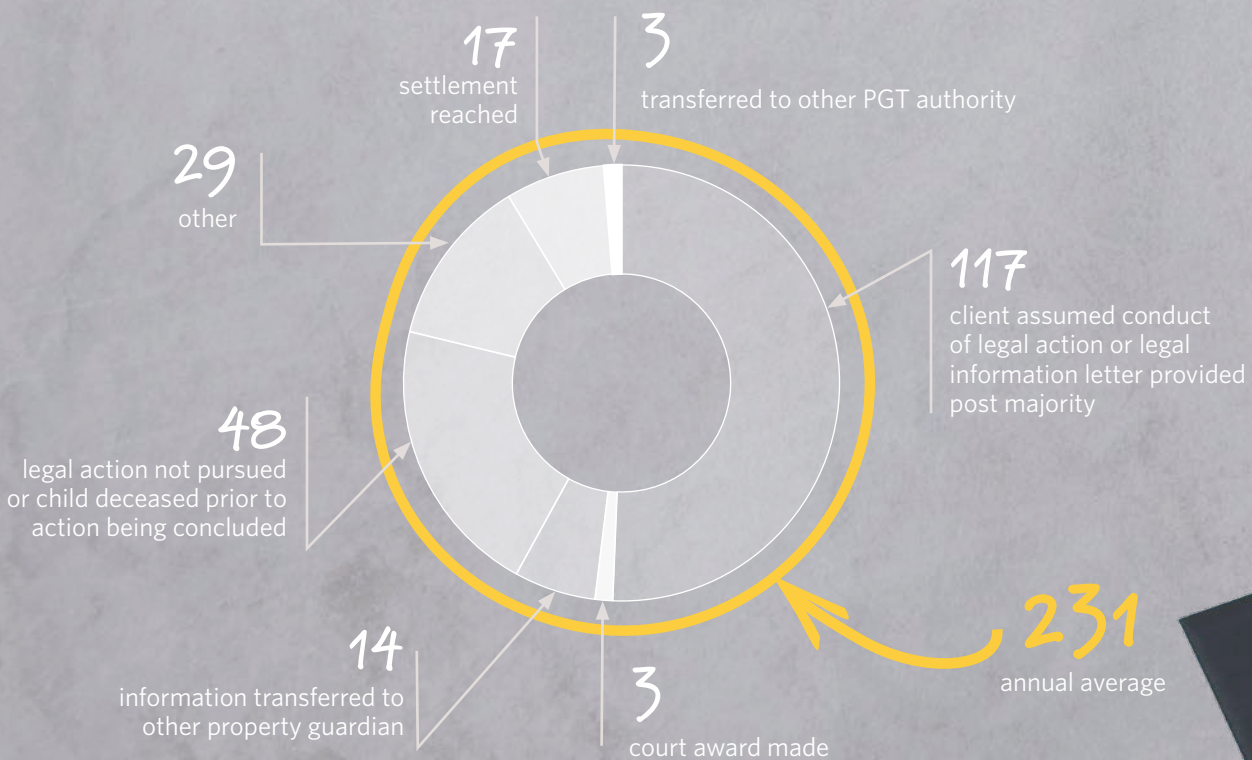


Legal Services

Outcomes of Legal Work 2017-2018 Total Numbers



Outcomes of Legal Work 2008/2009 - 2017/2018 Annual Average



Transition Services

The PGT role as property guardian typically ends when a youth reaches 19 years of age, the age of majority in BC. Other events may end PGT authority prior to age 19 including adoption, a transfer of guardianship, the cancelling of a continuing custody order or the death of the child. On average, 63 children and youth transition out of care each month.

When a youth reaches 17 years of age and has assets and/or complicated and ongoing legal issues, the PGT commences transition planning with the social worker and youth, if appropriate. The PGT also liaises with the youth's support network and relevant service providers, such as Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), to best support the youth's transition to adulthood. Through these discussions, the PGT seeks information on the youth's ability to manage their financial assets or legal issues and what supports are required to assist the youth. Both formal and informal supports are explored when the PGT collaborates with involved parties to determine the most effective, least intrusive means of assisting the youth with their financial assets or legal issues. Financial literacy information is also provided to help prepare youth to independently manage trust funds held for them by the PGT.

Where there is information which suggests that a youth may be incapable of managing their ongoing financial and legal affairs as an adult, and there is no support network willing and able to assist, ongoing services from the PGT Services to Adults Division may be required. In 2017–2018, the PGT was appointed to act as committee of estate under the *Patients Property Act* for three former children in continuing care.

Transfer of guardianship, or “transfer of custody” under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, is a permanency option for children in the permanent or temporary care of MCFD or DAAs. Where the PGT is the child's property guardian, the PGT is involved in the transfer of guardianship permanency planning process and must provide consent in order for the application to proceed to the Supreme Court of BC. Once a Court Order transferring custody of a child has been made, a new guardian is in place and is responsible for protecting the personal, health care, legal and financial rights of the child. Between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018 the PGT reviewed and consented to 41 applications to transfer guardianship from MCFD or a DAA and the PGT to a prospective guardian. Most of the children who achieved permanency through transfer of custody are Indigenous.

PGT Educational Assistance Fund

The Public Guardian and Trustee Educational Assistance Fund was first established in 1989 from the generous donations of three private benefactors who wished to help former youth in care to reach their educational and vocational goals. The fund provides bursaries to eligible individuals over age 19, who were formerly in the continuing care of the Province of BC. The bursary is meant to help recipients with the costs for fees, books, living expenses or any other financial need standing in the way of being able to achieve their educational goals. Bursaries are awarded annually.

In 2017–2018, 11 individuals ranging in age from 18 to 35 received bursaries ranging from \$880 to \$1,900. The total amount awarded was \$15,320. Fields of study included social work, child and youth care, nursing, coaching, accounting, collision repair and engineering.



Community Engagement and Outreach

Broadway Youth Resource Centre

The Broadway Youth Resource Centre (BYRC) is a one stop youth centre in Vancouver that provides a wide range of social, health, education, employment, and life skills services to youth all under one roof. The PGT has maintained a close relationship with BYRC for more than ten years, offering ongoing financial literacy workshops to youth in care and engaging them about the financial and legal services that the PGT provides as their property guardian.

Power Pages Magazine

Power Pages is a provincial magazine connecting youth in and from care, service providers and caregivers across BC to give youth a platform to express their experiences and concerns and share their voices in the form of stories, poems, interviews, photos and artwork. The PGT is an ongoing contributor to Power Pages, published semi annually by the Federation of BC Child and Youth in Care Networks, a provincial non profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of young people ages 14 to 24 who have experienced being in care. Recent articles introduced youth to the PGT Educational Assistance Fund and shared some stories that illustrate the PGT's legal and financial services to youth in care clients. Through this magazine the PGT is able to reach more than 5,000 young people and the agencies and people who provide services to them.

BC Child and Youth in Care Week

Proclaimed by the Province of British Columbia in 2011, BC Child and Youth in Care Week (BCCYICW) is a time for everyone in communities across the province to stand in support and celebration of our province's incredible, diverse young people in government care. BCCYICW is organized by a working group of youth, service providers and youth allies dedicated to raising awareness about the barriers that children and youth in care face, and to celebrating and acknowledging the resiliency, diversity, talents and accomplishments of young people in and from government care. June 2017 marked the seventh year of celebrating BCCYICW, and the PGT is pleased to continue to be a partner on the planning committee. Each year, the PGT celebrates BCCYICW by hosting a bake sale to raise funds for community based organizations serving children and youth. In June 2017, over \$900 was raised for the Powell River Child, Youth and Family Services Society.

Information Sessions for Social Workers

PGT Guardianship and Trust Officers provide workshops on a variety of aspects of property guardianship to MCFD and DAA offices throughout the province. Between April 2017 and March 2018, staff conducted 12 sessions for MCFD and DAA social workers. These may be delivered in person or through teleconferences or webinars, and cover topics like: the PGT's role as a coguardian; the importance and value of establishing RDSPs; how legal claims related to reportable circumstance reports are investigated; transition planning for youth leaving care; and children's legal and financial rights and entitlements. Guardianship and Trust Officers travel to the Indigenous Perspectives Society in Victoria several times each year where social workers in attendance learn about the role of the PGT, property guardianship, and the importance of interagency collaboration vital to providing services to Indigenous children in care.



Collective Impact

The PGT remains an ongoing participant in the Transition in Resources, Relationships and Understanding Support Together (TRRUST) Collective Impact for Youth Leaving Care (Collective Impact) initiative. Collective Impact is a joint partnership between the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Foundation, McCreary Centre Society and the Federation of Community Social Services of BC along with a coalition of grass roots community groups and service providers in the Lower Mainland who are interested in cooperating to improve outcomes for youth leaving care. Youth in and from care also share a voice in this important initiative through the support of the Vancouver Foundation Youth Advisory Council. Working together under the Collective Impact umbrella, these partners seek to identify common solutions and implement systemic changes needed to improve outcomes for youth in care.

In May 2017, the first TRRUST / Collective Impact “Connect2Thrive” community marketplace was held at a local community centre. Specifically aimed at youth aging out of care in the greater Vancouver area in 2017, the marketplace brought together service providers from housing, school, employment, health and education so that youth could connect with the services that can help them as young adults, and to directly meet the people providing these services. The PGT was pleased to be a participant in the youth marketplace, now an annual event.

The PGT seeks out and welcomes opportunities to build and strengthen working relationships and community connections with clients, stakeholders and partners and to find meaningful ways to work together in support of children and youth in care.



Indigenous Partnerships and Outreach

The PGT is honoured to be an annual participant in the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations, hosting an information booth at the day long festivities by Trout Lake in John Hendry Park in East Vancouver. This community based celebration is hosted by the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society and hosts a full day of events to showcase and celebrate the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

The PGT is also an annual presence at “Gathering Our Voices”, a conference for Indigenous youth held in various locations throughout BC. March 2018’s conference was held in Richmond, where Guardianship and Trust Officers hosted a booth to offer information on services the PGT provides to Indigenous children in BC.

It is a privilege for the PGT to be a regular guest at Indigenous Perspectives Society, a not for profit social enterprise organization that strengthens the voice of Indigenous communities through education and professional development. PGT staff are invited to provide training on the role of the PGT and property guardianship to social worker participants in the Aboriginal Social Work training program, which combines best practices in Aboriginal/Indigenous child welfare with BC provincial legislation and standards.



**The PGT welcomes opportunities to connect and partner
with Indigenous organizations throughout
British Columbia in support of
children and youth in care.**



Financial Literacy

The PGT considers financial literacy to be an essential life skill needed by all young people to successfully transition to adulthood and manage independently as young adults. Over the past year, PGT staff have provided 41 financial literacy workshops, offering basic money management and budgeting strategies to youth in and from care at a wide range of agencies and venues around the province.

Financial Literacy Workshops

Financial literacy can be defined as the “ABCs of money.” The financial literacy workshops delivered by the PGT cover a wide variety of topics, including the effect that personal values can have on how money is spent and how to set goals for the future. Other topics include learning how to read a pay stub, why it’s important to file income tax returns, and the risks associated with loans and credit cards contracts and big purchases. Money related activities are incorporated into the sessions, videos on money related topics such as goal setting and how to track spending are shown, and the impact of advertising on spending habits is discussed and explored. Together, the PGT and youth participants share tips on saving money, where to shop economically and how to entertain on a tight budget. Workshop venues and host agencies have included shelters for homeless youth, a wide range of alternative educational programs, a youth custody centre, life skills programs and youth groups.

AGEDOUT.COM

AgedOut.com is an interactive website launched in early 2017 which has become a popular information and planning tool among the youth who access it. Designed to reach youth transitioning out of care across the province, the website covers life skills topics like education, health and wellness, housing, identification, personal issues, and money and income through a variety of different “quests.” Quests are the interactive components of this website which lead youth through decision making exercises using characters who are experiencing different life events. The PGT’s financial literacy “quest,” Money Sense, was designed in partnership between the PGT and the Adoptive Families Association of BC as part of the “money and income” section of AgedOut.com. Through a narrative journey, the quest helps youth to explore concepts such as values, money goals and the importance of budgeting. Money Sense is now one of the top three most visited quests on the site. The PGT is pleased that Money Sense is generating so much interest and is encouraged to continue presenting and promoting financial literacy workshops and training for youth in care to help develop this essential life skill.



Future Challenges and Opportunities

In order to provide the most effective and meaningful property guardianship services possible, the PGT continuously attempts to address ongoing and emerging challenges.

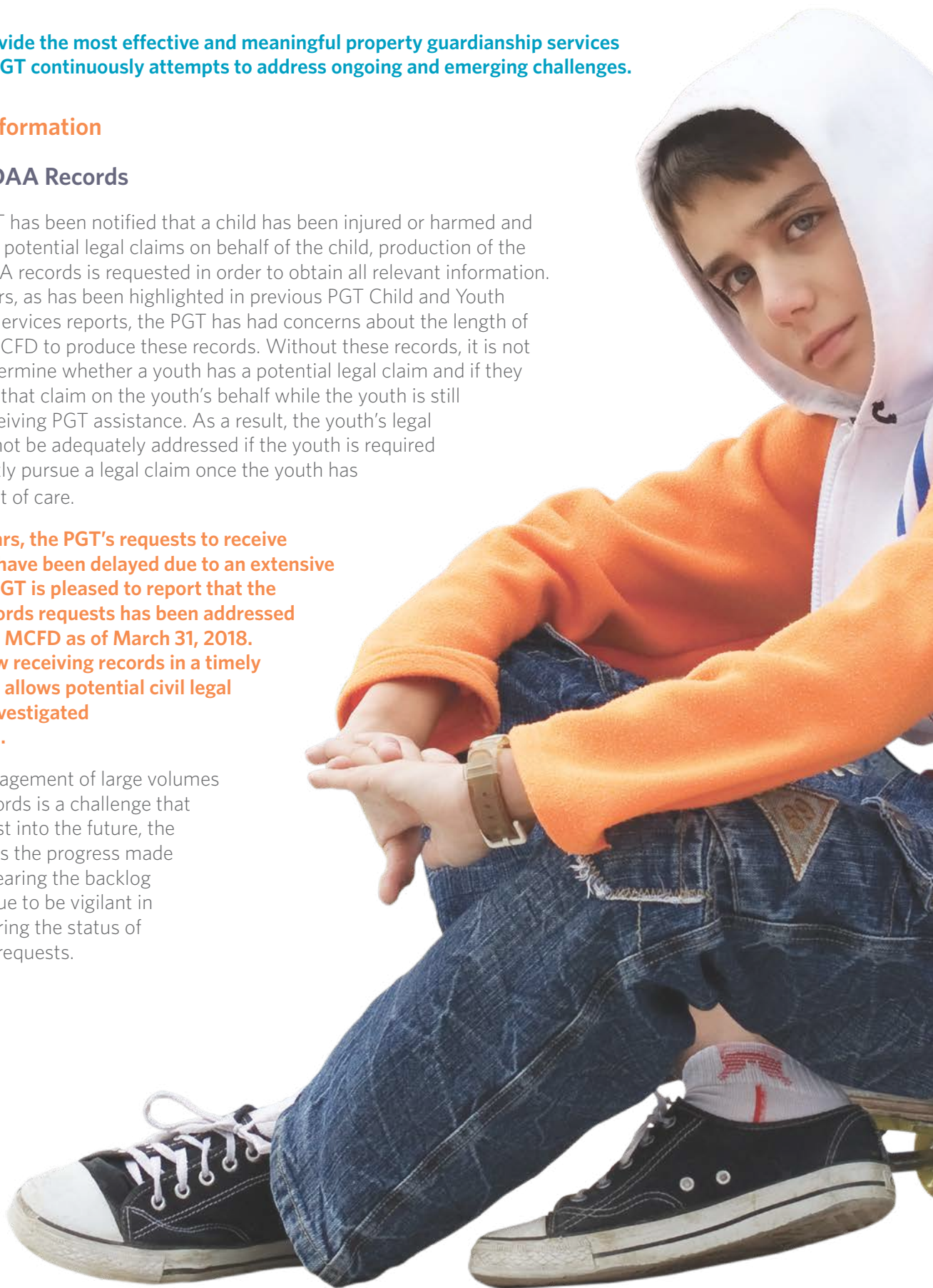
Access to Information

MCFD and DAA Records

Where the PGT has been notified that a child has been injured or harmed and is investigating potential legal claims on behalf of the child, production of the MCFD and DAA records is requested in order to obtain all relevant information. For several years, as has been highlighted in previous PGT Child and Youth Guardianship Services reports, the PGT has had concerns about the length of time it takes MCFD to produce these records. Without these records, it is not possible to determine whether a youth has a potential legal claim and if they do, to advance that claim on the youth's behalf while the youth is still in care and receiving PGT assistance. As a result, the youth's legal interests may not be adequately addressed if the youth is required to independently pursue a legal claim once the youth has transitioned out of care.

For several years, the PGT's requests to receive these records have been delayed due to an extensive backlog. The PGT is pleased to report that the backlog of records requests has been addressed and cleared by MCFD as of March 31, 2018. The PGT is now receiving records in a timely manner, which allows potential civil legal issues to be investigated and addressed.

While the management of large volumes of physical records is a challenge that will likely persist into the future, the PGT commends the progress made by MCFD in clearing the backlog and will continue to be vigilant in closely monitoring the status of future records requests.



Law Reform

Legislative Changes to Support Youth Beyond Age 19

On December 3, 2018, legislative amendments to the *Infants Act* and the *Public Guardian and Trustee Act* came into force to expand Public Guardian and Trustee services to youth transitioning out of care. The legislative amendments allow the PGT to continue to act as trustee for existing property guardian clients, if the youth consents, beyond the age of majority up until 27 years of age. The PGT is pleased that the new legislative amendments will provide an opportunity for a longer transition period for youth seeking additional supports from the PGT to manage their finances.

The PGT's work to secure financial benefits for children and youth in care has resulted in an increased number of property guardian clients who have financial assets when they leave care. Many youth leaving care are also entitled to receive funds from a variety of different sources once they turn 19. The PGT plans and assists with the transition of financial and legal matters for a child or youth, whether they are leaving care with a new guardian or turning 19.

Public awareness of the need to provide supports to youth leaving care at age 19 continues to grow. These young people are at a greater disadvantage than youth who continue to be supported by their families and social networks well into adulthood. The PGT has heard from MCFD and DAA social workers and youth directly that, without a plan, many youth who receive their trust funds spend their money quickly and may regret poor decision making related to their finances. Often when the PGT holds trust funds for a young person, those funds are meant to compensate a loss, usually of a parent or loved one, and can carry painful associations for the young person. This can at times negatively impact the ability to meaningfully plan for the best use of the funds. The PGT recognizes that some youth may not be prepared to receive their trust funds at age 19 and that youth in care often do not have the life experience or support in place to make effective long term financial plans at the time they age out of care.

The PGT has been consulting with current and former youth in care to understand what their needs are and to translate the new legislation into services that youth will find helpful to support them with financial management through a transition period. Through the consultations, the PGT has had positive encouragement from the youth. Youth want the PGT to be involved earlier and more often in their lives in order to create a meaningful relationship. Youth need information about money and basic financial literacy and they would like to receive positive messaging and hear about success stories regarding their peers' experiences managing their finances. They would like to see an increase in youth awareness of PGT services and resources. The new trust services the PGT can offer to youth transitioning out of care will be designed based on what the PGT has learned from the youth. The consultative process will continue in an effort to ensure the PGT's services remain flexible to best meet the needs of youth transitioning out of care.

Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

As property guardian for children in continuing care, the PGT must provide culturally competent and safe service to its Indigenous clients. A disproportionate number of Indigenous children are in care in BC, and make up the majority of the PGT's property guardian clients. The PGT is committed to enhancing Indigenous perspectives awareness and cultural safety training for staff throughout the organization, so that we can better serve our clients in a culturally appropriate and safe way.

PGT leadership and management recently undertook a day long immersive Indigenous cultural awareness exercise in which they explored the impact of residential schools and Canada's past policies of assimilation.

This experiential workshop has now been offered to PGT staff, and is an emotionally impactful way to learn, ask questions and become a part of the healing that is already happening.

Recognizing that this is only the start, the PGT is embracing its obligations as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action report and will continue to evolve practices to provide culturally safe and sensitive services to Indigenous clients and to work effectively with Indigenous communities within the broader reconciliation effort.

Improving Awareness and Uptake of Registered Disability Savings Plans

The PGT applies for and establishes Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) for eligible property guardian clients. For the PGT to open a RDSP, MCFD or a DAA must establish that a child in permanent care has a disability impacting their day to day life by making an application to the federal government for Disability Tax Credit status (DTC). If the child is found eligible for this tax credit, a Child Disability Benefit (CDB) is paid by the federal government to MCFD or the DAA and the PGT is able to begin the process of opening a RDSP. RDSPs are a long term financial savings plan that will significantly benefit these young people later on in life by providing them with an improved level of comfort and long term financial security in their adult years that they otherwise would not have.

A RDSP working group comprised of staff from MCFD and the PGT has been working collaboratively over the last fiscal year to begin developing online training information about the CDB, RDSPs, and transition planning for when children with RDSPs leave care. Intended for MCFD and DAAs, this online information will be hosted on a site accessible by both MCFD and DAA staff. The development of this collaborative training tool will increase accessibility to CDB and RDSP information for MCFD and DAA social workers. With increased awareness of both the CDB and RDSP the PGT is hopeful that more children with disabilities who are under MCFD or DAA care will have RDSPs established, which will make a measurable difference in their financial futures.

The PGT also regularly provided training sessions on the CDB and RDSPs to social workers and administrative staff at both MCFD and DAAs throughout the province. This training has enabled social workers to increase their understanding of RDSPs.

The PGT recognizes that the issue of RDSP awareness and uptake is not specific to children in care and has been contributing to the broader issue of increasing financial security for persons with disabilities and their families throughout BC as a member of the RDSP Action Group. The RDSP Action Group is an advisory committee to government working towards the province's Accessibility 2024 commitment to build and maintain BC's position as the province with the highest per capita uptake of RDSPs in Canada.

PGT Classification of Critical Incident Reports

A. Incident Types The PGT reviews critical incident reports from MCFD and DAAs upon receipt and categorizes the reported incident types according to classifications adapted from the extensive World Health Organization International Classification of Diseases. For more information see the complete classification system at who.int/classification/icd/en.

The PGT sorts CIRs according to all of the following categories. However, for clarity in reporting, these categories are grouped as below to reflect the five major groupings of types of incidents that are most frequently reported with all other incident types grouped as "other."

- 1. Physical assault** – Injuries inflicted by another person with intent to injure or kill, by any means. Includes corporal punishment, assault that does not result in an injury, and injuries inflicted by the police or other law enforcement agents on duty.
- 2. Sexual assault** – Sexual assault or abuse, including rape, sexual interference, sexual touching and invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation or similar actions.
- 3. Motor vehicle accidents** (includes the following incident types):
 - Motor vehicle accident – child cyclist** – Child was riding on a pedal cycle and involved in a collision or non collision injury associated with a motor vehicle.
 - Motor vehicle accident – child driver** – Motor vehicle accident where the child was the operator of the motor vehicle excluding motorized bicycle.
 - Motor vehicle accident – child passenger** – Motor vehicle accident where the child was a passenger in the motor vehicle.
 - Motor vehicle accident – child pedestrian** – Child was a pedestrian injured in any collision or non collision traffic incident involving a motor vehicle.
- 4. Other type of injury or harm to child** (includes the following incident types):
 - Other type of injury or harm to child** – The following are examples of incidents in this category: environmental; poisonings (accidental); foreign body; machinery in operation; overexertion; firearms; other and unspecified environmental exposures and unspecified accidental causes.

- 5. Self harm** (includes the following incident types):

Self inflicted injury – All intentionally self inflicted injuries except those resulting from suicide attempts or suicide.

Suicide attempts – Suicide attempts where child survived.

- 6. All other incident types** (includes the following incident types):

Cutting / piercing – Injury caused by cutting or piercing instrument or object. Excludes assault with a sharp object and self inflicted injury with a sharp object.

Death – The reported incident was that the child's death was accidental, homicide, natural death, or suicide.

Dog bite – Injuries resulting from a dog bite.

Drowning / submersion – Accidental drowning or submersion involving watercraft, fall or activity in water resulting in resuscitation / medical attention excluding intent to self harm.

Fall – Falls due to accidental pushing or collision with other person, or diving or jumping into water.

Fire / flames / hot substances – Injuries caused by fire and flames; hot appliances, objects or liquids; steam; acid burns.

Medical condition – Illnesses or complications arising from surgery, medical care or medical treatment including hospitalizations due to medical illness.

Non motor vehicle cycle accident – Child was injured in a non motor vehicle incident involving a pedal cycle including falls from bicycle.

Physical and sexual assault – An incident where both physical and sexual assault are believed to have occurred.

Struck by object – Child was struck by falling object, striking against or struck by persons or objects, or caught unintentionally between objects excluding motor vehicle.

Suffocation – Inhalation and ingestion of food or objects causing obstruction of respiratory passage, or suffocation, unintentional mechanical suffocation, and smothering or choking.

B. Alleged Harmers This category identifies the relationship to the child of the person alleged to have harmed the child (intentionally or by accident). This category does not include agencies that may have a legal responsibility to care for the child (e.g. MCFD or DAA). It was adapted from the extensive International Classification of External Causes of Injuries. For more information, see the complete classification at: rivm.nl/who-fic/ICECI/ICECI_1-2_2004July.pdf.

The PGT sorts alleged harmers according to all of the following categories. However, for clarity in reporting, these categories are grouped as below to reflect the five major groupings of types of alleged harmers that are most frequently reported with remaining categories of alleged harmers grouped as “all other alleged harmers.”

The alleged harmer category of relationships includes:

- 1. Other relationship includes** incidents in which there could be more than one harmer or where the alleged harmers did not fall into any other defined group.
- 2. Other friend(s) / acquaintance(s)** (does not include intimate partners)
- 3. Foster parent(s)**
- 4. Relationship not known**
- 5. Parent(s)**
- 6. All other alleged harmers** (includes the following categories):
 - Another child(ren) in care
 - Boyfriend / girlfriend / spouse – includes intimate partner(s)
 - Other relative(s)
 - Person(s) in official or legal authority – includes: teachers, church ministers, sports coaches, police, guards, etc.
 - Stranger(s)
 - Unrelated caregiver(s) – includes child care provider(s)





PUBLIC GUARDIAN
AND TRUSTEE OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

General Inquiries



Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia
700 - 808 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6C 3L3



Phone 604.660.4444



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Toll free calling is available through Service BC. After dialing the appropriate number for your area (see below) request to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee.



Vancouver 604.660.2421



Victoria 250.387.6121



Other areas in BC 1.800.663.7867



PGT hours of operation Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.