

Role and Duties of Committee

A Committee in wardship means one or more persons to whom the welfare or affairs of a Ward are “committed”. The persons appointed by the Court as Committees are usually *but not necessarily* family members. The Committee can only do what the Court authorises him/her to do; a Committee has no inherent authority or power. It is generally the case that the Committee is appointed to -

- oversee the personal care of the Ward (i.e. Committee of the Person); and / or
- assist the Wards of Court Office in managing the financial affairs of the Ward (i.e. Committee of the Estate).

A case officer in the Office of Wards of Court will be appointed when a new ward is declared. The Committee (and solicitor) can then liaise with that case officer in relation to relevant matters.

Generally, a Committee is required to attend on a regular basis to the day to day affairs of the Ward which often includes the following –

- ensuring the Ward’s personal needs are met;
- administering pensions and other income on behalf of a Ward;
- operation of a Committee bank account;
- discharging nursing home fees and other expenses on behalf of a Ward;
- managing a Ward's property including payment of utility bills, property insurance etc.;
- providing instructions to the solicitor acting in the wardship so as to enable the solicitor submit proposals to the Wards of Court Office in relation to matters relevant to the Ward (e.g. the sale or letting of a Ward's property etc.).

A Committee is accountable to the Wards of Court Office for all monies received and payments made on a Ward's behalf.

While a Committee is not paid a fee or salary, s/he is entitled to be reimbursed in respect of out of pocket expenses. Requests for payment can be addressed to the relevant Case Officer together with supporting documentation.

At any stage a Committee may apply in writing to be permitted to retire as Committee. If you wish, you or your solicitor may make a recommendation for the appointment of another suitable person to act as the substituted Committee. Your recommendation should be accompanied with a letter from that person stating that he/she is willing to be appointed.

The Court may decide to replace the Committee in certain circumstances where the Court deems the appointed Committee to be no longer suitable to act in the best interest of the Ward.