

**Because Every International Pupil Matters – a view from the hot seat –
Gerry Holden, former head and QegUK Associate**



Gerry Holden

'It is 7pm on a Friday evening and I was driving with my wife for a much-needed break at the start of the half-term recess. I was head of a school in the south east of England with a significant number of international boarders, the youngest of whom was 8 years old.

My mobile phone rang and my wife answered it. "It's about Gregor? OK. Gerry is driving at the moment, Gareth", she replied, "but he'll pull over and ring you back'. Yes, you'll have guessed. Gregor is the youngest boarder who joined us earlier this term. Gareth is one of our housemasters. I 'phoned Gareth back immediately.

"Thanks, Gerry" he said. "You didn't need to 'phone me back as the situation is now resolved. The guardianship organisation has been in immediate contact with the homestay looking after Gregor and confirmed that he's fine now; he's been running a high temperature. The guardianship organisation was just letting us know, as a matter of courtesy, and has also been in contact with the parents."

This scenario illustrates why it is **vital** that schools, guardianship organisations and parents work effectively together. As an experienced head, it is my duty of care to ensure that my pupils are safe.



In much the same way schools are regularly inspected, I would expect guardianship organisations to undergo a similar process leading to validation.

Having the assurance of a level of service as defined by the criteria and standards of high-quality validation, delivered by experienced ISI and Ofsted trained inspectors, is what heads are looking for.

Anything less and we would be selling our international pupils short; a place where we would never want to go, if we genuinely believe that every international pupil matters.'

Gerry Holden, QegUK Associate has been head of three boarding schools. His most recent appointment was as head of a UK-based international college, which is exclusively boarding and recruits from over 95 nations. He has inspected for ISI for over 15 years.

About Quality Guardianship UK Ltd – Promoting the very best in Educational Guardianship – Quality, Care, Standards

Quality Guardianship UK Ltd operates as a membership body for UK-based schools, colleges, places of further and higher education and educational guardianship organisations. Through its QegUK methodology it provides a quality assurance scheme, which focuses on the safeguarding and well-being of international students. **For more information:** www.qeguk.co.uk