



## COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

## INFORMATION PACKAGE



Community Visitors Scheme – an Australian Government initiative  
*Friends for Older People*

## Contact Details

### CVS Coordinator : Linda Anderson

Working Days: Monday to Friday  
Address: 7 Aberdeen Street  
Perth WA 6000  
Phone: 9261 4402 (Linda - CVS Office)  
Phone: 9261 4444 (Lifeline Switchboard)  
Email: [lindaanderson@lifelinewa.org.au](mailto:lindaanderson@lifelinewa.org.au)  
[cvs@lifelinewa.org.au](mailto:cvs@lifelinewa.org.au)

### Crisis Support Services Manager

Working Days: Monday to Friday  
Address: 7 Aberdeen Street  
Perth WA 6000  
Phone: 9261 4444 (Lifeline Switchboard)  
Email: [reception@lifelinewa.org.au](mailto:reception@lifelinewa.org.au)  
[cvs@lifelinewa.org.au](mailto:cvs@lifelinewa.org.au)

Welcome and thank you for joining the Community Visitors Scheme.  
You are a valuable member of our team

[www.lifelinewa.org.au](http://www.lifelinewa.org.au)

Sincere thanks to the team at Lifeline Tasmania for your guidance with launching Lifeline WA's CVS Program

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**Our vision** is working towards creating communities free of suicide

**Our mission** is to prevent suicide, support people in crisis and create opportunities for emotional wellbeing.

## About the Community Visitors Scheme

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) funds organisations to coordinate volunteers to visit recipients of Australian Government subsidised aged care services (residential and home care) who are socially isolated and whose quality of life would be improved by friendship and companionship.

### History

The CVS was established in 1992-93, following a successful pilot in 27 nursing homes (high care) in South Australia and Queensland during 1990-91. In 1991-92 the Department of Health and Ageing sought submissions from organisations in all States and Territories interested in becoming auspices for the CVS. The original allocation of aged care homes to CVS auspices was undertaken on a state by state basis using a variety of methods of placement allocation.

This will help meet unmet demand and will expand the role of the CVS from one on one visits to socially and culturally isolated recipients of Commonwealth subsidised aged care services to include visits to people receiving assistance through Home Care packages and group visits in residential aged care. Home Care packages came into effect from July 2013.



## How the CVS works

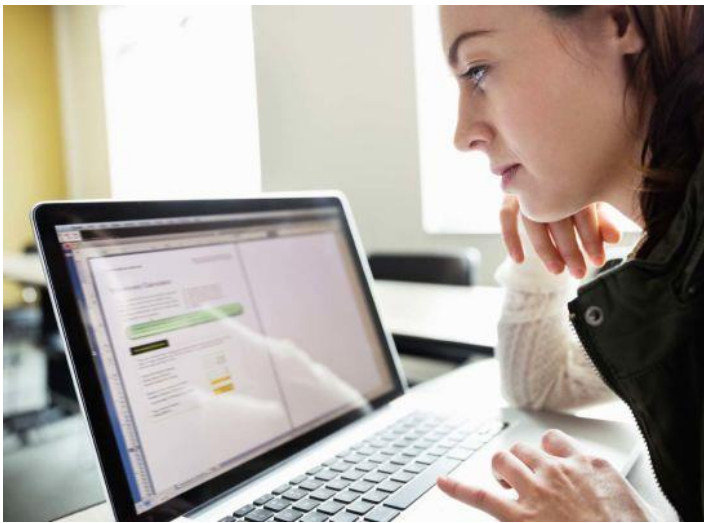
### Referral to the Program

To be eligible to have a volunteer visitor the client must be the recipient of an Australian Government aged care service (residential or home care).

Referrals are received from service providers or agencies.

In the case of a Home Care Package recipient, the CVS Coordinator will undertake an interview and seeks to establish:

- The needs of the client
- The eligibility of the client to receive a volunteer
- The Client understanding of the purposes and limitations of the program



### Matching

After determining the eligibility of the client and ensuring all appropriate information has been provided, the CVS Coordinator will seek to match the client with a Visitor. Factors which influence the matching process include priority of client need, availability and suitability of the visitor and the expressed preferences of both client and visitor.

Matching is not always a straight forward process. Sometimes people who seem to suit each other don't hit it off while other matches which seem less promising turn out to be very successful. Both client and visitor should feel free to express any dissatisfaction with the matching.

## What's expected?

Due to our funding requirements, ***you need to visit at least once per fortnight***, which is the minimum. Some community visitors visit more frequently. Some people find that it works well to visit consistently on the same day of the week and at the same time of day. This will be discussed with your recipient and the Aged Care Provider. It is very likely that a set day and time will be required, particularly if you are visiting someone who receives other support.

### First Visit

The CVS Coordinator will discuss some background information about the recipient with a visitor and check that they are willing and able to meet with that person.

An introductory meeting time will then be arranged, whether at an Aged Care Facility or in a recipient's home.

The initial visit may be fairly short – but this does vary. The visitor will be able to find out from the recipient what might be the most convenient time(s) to visit.

The CVS Coordinator may or may not remain present for the duration of the first visit. If there isn't the chance to debrief at the end of this visit, contact the Coordinator to discuss how it went, their feelings about the match and future arrangements made.

### Ongoing Visiting

Ongoing visits are basically arranged between the recipient and yourself. There is an expectation that you will visit your person each week or fortnight.

## Lifeline WA's commitment to you

### Safety

Lifeline WA is committed to providing a safe environment and observes Work Health and Safety legislations and requirements

### Support

Orientation into the CVS with clear instructions and expectations  
You're covered by insurance

### Personal / Professional Development

There will be opportunities to attend volunteer in service workshops which cover topics like nutrition, PTSD, Sexual and Gender Diversity and Mental Health and Aged Care related topics.

### Communication

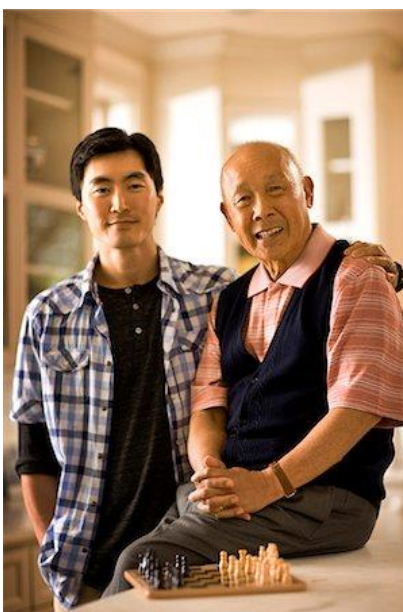
At the start you can expect to be contacted after all your visits just to make sure you're settling in OK and everything's running smoothly.  
Receive a newsletter and be a member of our FB Page.

## What's in it for you?

Lifeline WA's dedicated volunteers are the backbone of Lifeline WA and work tirelessly to help connect people with care.

The following benefits of working for Lifeline WA as a volunteer CVS Visitor are:

- Personal and professional growth and development
- Giving back to your community
- Belonging to the Lifeline WA community
- Ongoing support in your work with Lifeline WA learning new skills and/or enhancing existing skills
- For guidance through grief and loss in the event of a bereavement, Lifeline WA offers free counselling to families and individuals, including children, before, during and after times of loss and grief
- Meeting new people
- New experiences



## How you improve a person's social connectedness

The CVS aims to improve the quality of life of the care recipient. This can include an increase in the self-esteem and wellbeing of the care recipient; diminished feelings of anxiety, isolation and loneliness; a sense of connection to the community; and an increase in feelings of independence.

Some care recipients don't have regular contact with relatives or friends. In some cases, the care recipient may be visited but receive little benefit from these visits. The care recipient may be isolated because of cultural reasons and would benefit from spending time with someone they can relate to, or who can speak with them in their first language.

Volunteer Visitors add to the quality of life of the care recipient by being a companion, confidante and friend. They can help the care recipient feel more involved with their community.



## Lifeline WA Community Visitors Scheme

*Friends for Older People*

### Community Visitor Role

Lifeline WA's purpose is to respond with care and compassion to the needs of all people who are facing a personal problem or crisis. Employees of Lifeline WA have a belief in the ethos of Lifeline WA, support the Vision, Mission and Core Values and have an ability to work as part of a service team to achieve that mission.

Lifeline WA personnel embrace quality as our focus and accept responsibility for continuous improvement in all our services and activities.

#### **Function:**

Establish and maintain friendship and an ongoing relationship with an elderly person living alone.

#### **Primary Tasks:**

- Be a companion, confidant and friend to the elderly person
- Visit at least once per fortnight
- Increasing elderly person's involvement in social activities and community affairs
- Provide assistance with small tasks that might be done by a friend or neighbour such as posting a letter.
- May take the elderly person on excursions
- Share interests that you both have
- Undergo CVS Online training prior to visiting
- Provide a record of the dates of visits to the Coordinator
- Respect the rights of the elderly person including confidentiality and privacy
- Exercise a duty of care at all times
- Inform the Coordinator of any accident or incident that occurs whilst visiting
- Notify the Coordinator if there is an intention to cease visiting on a temporary or permanent basis
- Inform the Coordinator if you wish to stop visiting

#### **Level of Responsibility:**

Community Visitors have a duty of care to take reasonable care to avoid injury to another person or damage to property as a result of action or inaction. A Community Visitor's duty of care includes using common sense and exercising reasonable caution in any activities undertaken with the older person.

#### **Direction/Supervision Received:**

Work under the direction of the Lifeline WA, CVS Coordinator and within the guidelines of the Department of Health, Ageing and Aged Care.

## **A Community Visitor may not:**

- Be involved in investigating or following up complaints
- Displace relationships between the client and their family, or other relationships
- Have access to client's care or personal records or become involved in the financial affairs of the client.
- Provide nursing or personal care to the client e.g. intimate procedures, shaving, assisted transfers, wound dressing, or medication

## **Community Visitors Rights:**

- Be provided with information about the CVS
- Receive a job description
- Know to whom they are accountable
- Receive clear and concise written instructions
- Receive information on a client to enable duty of care requirements to be met
- Be respected and supported
- Say no to unacceptable tasks
- Be linked to others undertaking similar roles and valued as a team member
- Be offered the opportunity to attend information sessions
- Not to be exploited
- Be informed of any change of circumstances re the person they are visiting
- Have their complaints and concerns addressed
- Work in a safe and healthy environment
- Be covered by insurance

## **Qualifications / Experience:**

Interest in older people and completion of the Community Visitors Scheme orientation programme.

## **Knowledge and Skills:**

The following skills are highly desirable in a volunteer Visitor:

- a genuine empathy and understanding of older people;
- good communication and listening skills;
- the ability to work independently;
- a commitment to developing a strong and ongoing relationship with an older person and to the CVS program
- the ability to be flexible
- openness to feedback
- ability to act within the Lifeline WA's CVS guidelines



## Other Requirements:

Must be 18 years or over

Volunteer expenses haven't been allowed for in this program. However, Lifeline WA do provide support by way of counselling through loss or bereavement, education opportunities and volunteer events that we'd love you to be involved in.

## Support

Times when a Visitor may require special support is at the beginning of a friendship or if your client passes away. In the early stages of, the coordinator will provide support by contacting you after your visits to ensure that progress is satisfactory. When a client passes away the coordinator is there to provide support to the Visitor.

In addition, newsletters are provided to volunteers giving details of Lifeline WA CVS forthcoming events and relevant information.

Visitors are encouraged to contact their CVS Coordinator if they have any concerns – no matter how small. If the coordinator is not available, please leave a message so you can be contacted as soon as possible.

## Application Process

Applicants wishing to join Lifeline WA's CVS volunteer Visitor pool need to:

- Complete the Volunteer Profile Form
- Provide a written reference
- Undergo National Criminal History Record Check (organised by the coordinator at no expense to you)

Successful applicants complete online training, attend the Lifeline WA induction session to receive their CVS Volunteer Manual.

Contact the CVS Coordinator for your application pack : [cvs@lifelinewa.org.au](mailto:cvs@lifelinewa.org.au) or call (08) 9261 4402 for more information.

