

“It is heart-warming to be recognised by long-term residents as we visit each month and to be greeted warmly as a confidante.”

Gail Stubberfield (CV)

Recruitment Process

Community Visitors are recruited through a formalised volunteer recruitment program. Persons wishing to apply for the position of Community Visitor must be at least 18 years of age and are required to demonstrate their suitability for the role in relation to a variety of essential skills, abilities and characteristics.

Suitable applicants will be required to undertake comprehensive training and observation visits prior to being appointed to the role.

Community Visitors are required to have a current Vulnerable Person-Related Employment Screening. This can be arranged through the recruitment process at no personal cost.

Length of Appointment

Community Visitors are appointed by the Governor for a 3 year term, after which time they will be eligible for reappointment. A Community Visitor is able to hold the position for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms.

Valuing Volunteers

The Community Visitor Scheme volunteer program values the contribution of volunteers and operates on the following volunteer engagement strategies:

Acknowledgement of the individual needs of volunteers to encourage sustainable appointment.

- > Provision of gratifying work and working conditions.
- > Recognition of the expertise that volunteers bring to their role.
- > Facilitation of a reciprocal, mutually rewarding relationship between the organisation and the volunteer.
- > Valuing diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, education and skill sets of volunteers.
- > Creating an accessible, welcoming and inclusive working environment.
- > Providing high-quality, comprehensive and relevant training for volunteers.
- > Involving volunteers in decision-making.
- > Implementing comprehensive evaluation strategies to ensure continuous improvement.
- > Maximising the overall contribution of volunteers.
- > Ensuring effective volunteer support infrastructure and resources.
- > Striving for excellence in volunteer management.

To apply or for more information:

T 1800 606 302
E cvs@sa.gov.au
W www.sa.gov.au/CVS

Community Visitors

The South Australian
Community Visitor Scheme



Government
of South Australia

Who are Community Visitors?

Community Visitors are volunteers appointed by the Governor to be independent statutory officers who have legislative responsibility for further protecting the rights of people who are admitted to mental health units, or who live in disability accommodation or Supported Residential Facilities (SRFs).

What do Community Visitors do?

Community Visitors perform visits and inspections to acute mental health units, emergency departments of hospitals, limited treatment centres, disability accommodation facilities and SRFs.

They can advocate for patients/residents to promote the proper resolution of issues and can refer matters of concern relating to the delivery of services, through the Principal Community Visitor to the Minister, or any other appropriate body/person.

Community Visitors can undertake independent inspections and report on:

- > the appropriateness and standard of the premises for the accommodation of patients/residents;
- > the adequacy of information provided to patients/residents and their guardian or family members regarding the treatment, care, and rights of each patient/resident in the setting;
- > the adequacy and effectiveness of complaints processes;
- > the attitude of staff towards patients/residents and their guardians/families; and
- > the quality of communication between staff members, patients/residents and their guardian or family members.
- >

Where do Community Visitors visit and inspect?

Community Visitors are required to visit and inspect:

- > acute mental health units and limited treatment centres;
- > Emergency departments;
- > Disability accommodation services;
- > Supported Residential Facilities.

Who can a Community Visitor talk to?

A Community Visitor may visit and talk to any patient/resident at the facility. Additionally, a Community Visitor may talk to staff and management involved in the provision of treatment, care and support.

Who can request to meet with a Community Visitor?

Any patient, resident or their family members or supporters, including staff, can contact the Community Visitor Scheme office and request a visit and/or advocate for an individual.

What happens after a visit?

Following a visit and inspection, where possible, the Community Visitors will provide the senior staff at the centre/facility with informal verbal feedback about any issues or matters of concern raised during the visit. Community Visitors are required to provide a written report on the visit to the Principal Community Visitor.

Acute mental health units, limited treatment centres and disability accommodation facilities are expected to make every effort to address any issues raised in the Community Visitors Report promptly. If an issue cannot be resolved at the centre/facility level, the Principal Community Visitor may refer the matter to senior management of the service and/or an appropriate person or body for escalation and resolution.

Who is the Principal Community Visitor?

The Principal Community Visitor (PCV) is appointed by the Governor of South Australia. He reports directly to the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse on matters relating to mental health service provision under the *Mental Health Act 2009*. The PCV also reports to the Minister for Disability on matters relating to the disability scheme's responsibilities under the *Disability Services (Community Visitor Scheme) Regulations 2013*.

The Principal Community Visitor:

- > oversees, advises and assists Community Visitors in their role;
- > reports on matters of concern regarding the care and treatment of patients/residents;
- > assists with the resolution of issues relating to the care, safety and wellbeing of patients/residents; and
- > is also responsible for conducting visits and inspections of acute mental health units, limited treatment centres, disability accommodation facilities and SRFs.

“ I find it an incredible privilege through CVS, to be able to interact and hopefully assist people, who are at a very vulnerable point in their lives. ”

Joan Cunningham (CV)