

COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME

Report under section 10A(5) of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*

I publish the following report as required under section 10A(5) of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020* for the reporting period of 15 August 2020 to 14 September 2020.

This report may be accessed at www.communityvisitorscheme.sa.gov.au.

1. Visits by the Community Visitor Scheme that have occurred by audiovisual or other electronic means ¹

(a) Volunteers of the Community Visitor Scheme have undertaken Nil visits for the reporting period. The CVS has resumed in-person visits to Disability Services accommodation and mental health facilities.

a. Visits under the *Disability Services (Community Visitor Scheme) Regulations 2013*

Nil. There were no visits undertaken by audiovisual or other electronic means during this reporting period

b. Visits under the *Mental Health Act 2009*

Nil. There were no visits undertaken by audiovisual or other electronic means during this reporting period.

(b) Visits under the *COVID-19 Emergency Response (Schedule 1) Regulations 2020*

Nil. No detention orders in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic were made under these regulations during the reporting period.

(c) Reasons why each such visit or inspection occurred by audiovisual or other electronic means ²

¹ Section 10A(5)(a)-(c) of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*

² Section 10A(5)(d) of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*

The CVS is required to visit and inspect mental health treatment centres and authorised community mental health facilities. The CVS also undertakes annual visits and inspections of state funded disability services accommodation, and at other times as requested. Visits must be conducted by myself or by volunteer Community Visitors in-person.

Following the declaration of a Public Health Emergency on 15 March 2020 and associated public health advice about the COVID-19 pandemic, I cancelled all CVS visits from 18 March 2020.

Section 10A of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020* came into effect on 15 May 2020, authorising the CVS to undertake visits and inspections by audiovisual means, where practical.

Based on the public health guidance regarding social distancing requirements, CVS visits have been conducted by audiovisual means to protect volunteers and clients of the CVS from the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Some facilities have also restricted access to residents and patients to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The CVS has scheduled audiovisual visits and inspections based on the availability of volunteer Community Visitors and the mental health and disability accommodation facilities. Priority has been given to those mental health sites that were not visited in March 2020.

Visits are undertaken using audio-visual technology. If this is not available, a visit is undertaken by telephone.

The risk of exposure to COVID-19 in South Australia has significantly reduced over recent months and the CVS has reinstated in-person visits where appropriate. Both the Department of Human Services and Local Health Networks have advised that Community Visitors can now resume visits to their services. The CVS will prioritise in-person visits for mental health facilities in the short term, to satisfy the legislative obligation to complete bi-monthly visits to those facilities.

All visits are being conducted in a COVID safe manner and in compliance with the policies and procedures of the local sites. CVS will continue to undertake a mix of in-person and audiovisual visits, tailored to the individual circumstances of the client and facility or residence.

Visits under the *Mental Health Act 2009*³

The CVS is required to visit and inspect mental health treatment centres and authorised community mental health facilities bi-monthly.

The CVS has recommenced in-person visits to mental health facilities since 17 July 2020, and has returned to its previous bi-monthly visitation schedule. The visitation schedule is completed over two calendar months and as such, in-person visits to the remaining facilities listed below in

³ Section 10A(5)(e) of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020*

Table 2, have been scheduled to be completed during September 2020. It is anticipated that visits to all mental health facilities will be up to date by the end of September 2020.

Visits to the following mental health facilities listed below are outstanding in this reporting period and will be completed by the end of September 2020.

Name and Location of premises
Ashton House, Oakden
Berri Hospital - ED & Integrated Mental Health Inpatient Unit (IMHIU)
Eastern Community Mental Health Centre, Tranmere
Lyell McEwin - ED, Short Stay Unit, Ward 1G & Ward 1H
Marion Community Mental Health Service
Mt Gambier Hospital - ED & IMHIU
North East Community Mental Health Centre
Northern Community Mental Health Centre, Salisbury
Royal Adelaide Hospital - ED, SSU & Ward 2G
Whyalla Hospital - ED & IMHIU
Women's and Children's - ED, Adolescent Ward & Boylan Ward
Wondakka Community Rehabilitation Centre

Anne Gale

Acting Principal Community Visitor

29 September 2020