

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 September 2020 to 14 October 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 one audiovisual visit for the reporting period, comprised as follows. The CVS has resumed in-person visits to Disability Services accommodation and mental health facilities where possible.

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*

Method of visit	Date of visit	Time of visit	Name and Location of premises
Video	13 October 2020	2.30pm	Riverland Hospital Integrated Mental Health Inpatient Unit (IMHIU)

(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.

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

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

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 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.

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

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

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. It was not possible to visit the following mental health facility in person or by audiovisual means during the reporting period:

Name and Location of premises
Whyalla Hospital - ED & IMHIU

An audiovisual visit was scheduled for Whyalla Hospital but was unable to proceed due to the unavailability of suitable technology and staff for the scheduled visit time. This visit has been rescheduled.

Anne Gale

Acting Principal Community Visitor

22 October 2020