

*The Community Visitor Scheme plays an important role in ensuring that care within facilities across South Australia meets specific standards.*

## REPORTING AFTER A VISIT

Following each visit and inspection, a formal written report for the Principal Community Visitor (PCV) is prepared.

Facilities are expected to make every effort to promptly address any issues raised. If an issue cannot be resolved at the facility level, the PCV may escalate the matter to senior management of the service or an appropriate body for resolution.

If the PCV has reason to believe that an offence has been, or is being committed at a facility, the PCV must inform the appropriate authorities immediately.

## OBJECTIVES

The core objectives of the Community Visitor Scheme are to:

- » advocate for the rights of clients within mental health and state-run disability facilities, as well as clients of the Public Advocate who are NDIS participants
- » improve client experiences
- » identify possible gaps in service provision for clients
- » increase accountability and transparency within mental health and disability service provision
- » assist with the resolution of complaints filed by clients
- » provide a vital link between frontline service delivery, policy and service development
- » ensure the consistent delivery of best practice services, and
- » improve overall health and well-being outcomes for clients.

# THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME

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Government  
of South Australia



## WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME?

The Community Visitor Scheme is an independent statutory service, reporting to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing on matters related to the Scheme's functions under the *Mental Health Act 2009* and to the Minister for Human Services on matters related to the Scheme's functions under the *Disability Services (Community Visitor Scheme) Regulations 2013*.

The purpose of the Community Visitor Scheme is to further protect the rights of people with a mental illness who are receiving care in a mental health treatment centre or attending a community mental health facility, people with a disability who live in state-run disability accommodation and clients of the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) who are National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants.

The independence of the Community Visitor Scheme is integral to the service, enabling clients, their family members or supporters to speak with individuals who are not associated with the provision of support.

## WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME DO?

The Community Visitor Scheme recruits volunteers to become independent Community Visitors who are appointed by the Governor and undertake visits and inspections of facilities to ensure that:

- » clients are being treated with dignity and respect
- » services are responsive and appropriate to client needs, and
- » clients have been provided with information about their care and support.

If issues are raised by clients, their family members or supporters, the Community Visitor Scheme can provide advocacy and attempt to resolve these issues with staff or management. Where necessary, the Community Visitor Scheme can refer any matters of concern to other external bodies for resolution.

## WHERE DOES THE COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME VISIT?

The Community Visitor Scheme visits and inspects:

- » mental health treatment centres
- » community mental health facilities
- » emergency departments of hospitals
- » state-run disability accommodation services, and
- » clients of the Public Advocate who are NDIS participants

Regular visits are conducted to facilities, and clients, family members or carers can contact the Community Visitor Scheme to request a visit or for advocacy support.

## WHO IS THE PRINCIPAL COMMUNITY VISITOR?

The Principal Community Visitor (PCV) is a statutory officer, appointed by the Governor of South Australia and reports directly to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing on matters relating to mental health service provision and to the Minister for Human Services on matters relating to disability service provision.

The PCV is responsible for:

- » overseeing, advising and assisting Community Visitors in their role
- » reporting on matters of concern regarding the care and treatment of clients
- » assisting with the resolution of issues relating to the care, safety and wellbeing of clients
- » conducting visits and inspections of facilities, and
- » annual reporting to Parliament.

