



Residential aged care homes and ACVVS

November 2025

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) commenced on 1 July 2023, replacing the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS), a Commonwealth-funded program which ran for more than 30 years.

Overview

The ACVVS is a free program which matches eligible aged care recipients who are lonely or socially isolated with volunteer visitors to provide companionship or friendship.

Visits are available to anyone receiving government-subsidised residential aged care or accessing the Support at Home program, who are socially isolated or lonely. This includes care recipients approved or on the Support at Home Priority System and excludes those accessing the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

Under the *Aged Care Act 2024*, ACVVS is recognised as a grant that supports and upholds the rights and entitlements of aged care recipients. Registered providers **must** allow and facilitate access for ACVVS aged care volunteer visitors to aged care recipients.

The program focuses on the needs of older people from particular linguistic, cultural and complex vulnerability backgrounds who may be at greater risk of social isolation.

The department funds over 130 community organisations nationally to recruit, train and match aged care volunteer visitors to aged care recipients. Roles and responsibilities are detailed in the ACVVS National Guidelines.

The program requires aged care volunteer visitors to make a minimum of 20 visits per year to their matched aged care recipient, for approximately an hour a fortnight. Visits can include anything the aged care volunteer visitor and older person feel like doing such as:

- sharing stories over a cup of tea
- working on a joint hobby
- taking a walk.

ACVVS accepts referrals from aged care service providers, health professionals, family members and friends, with consent from the older person. Older people can also refer themselves.

The preference is that all ACVVS visits are conducted in person, but a virtual visit may occur in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness or recipient choice). Most visits are one to one, so the recipient and aged care volunteer visitor can get to know each other over time.

Having an aged care volunteer visitor able to visit an aged care ACVVS recipient is essential in reducing the impacts of social isolation on older people. The ACVVS is also an activity which supports registered providers to meet their requirements under the Strengthened Quality Standards to ensure the older person is at the centre of their aged care. This includes meeting the older person's daily living needs and valuing their identity, culture and diversity.

If an ACVVS organisation is also a Support at Home or residential care provider, they are required to provide 25% or more of their total ACVVS placements to aged care clients outside of their organisation.

Aged care providers role

- Facilitate and allow access for aged care volunteer visitors to visit an aged care ACVVS recipient to whom the provider delivers funded aged care services.
- Must not impose their own volunteer training or workers screening on the aged care volunteer visitor.
- Identify and refer eligible care recipients to ACVVS, including creating awareness and consideration for people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Recognise and respect the role of aged care volunteer visitors as a significant person to provide companionship, social connection and friendship.
- Ensure the care recipient's right to stay connected with the aged care volunteer visitor are upheld, consistent with the Statement of Rights.
- Provide a short site induction for aged care volunteer visitors for orientation purposes.
- Visits to recipients by the aged care volunteer visitor can occur any day of the week, including weekends and after 5pm on a weekday, just like visits from family and friends.
- Liaise with the ACVVS Volunteer Coordinator and advise them when the recipient is unable to receive visits (e.g. in hospital). It is essential to advise the aged care volunteer visitor when their recipient passes away, preferably through the Volunteer Coordinator.
- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) or Service Agreement between the ACVVS organisation and the aged care provider is not required.

Where an older person chooses to receive aged care volunteer visits and the registered provider refuses to allow and facilitate access, the registered provider is in breach of their legislated responsibilities.

ACVVS aged care volunteer visitor role

- Must complete a mandatory National Police Check. The aged care volunteer visitor's organisation will provide confirmation of the check (reference number and expiry date) to the aged care provider prior to commencement of visits.
- Are not required to complete a NDIS check, unless matched to a recipient who is a NDIS participant.
- Must adhere to the aged care home conditions of entry requirements and site induction for visitors (as required for family and friends).
- Are not required to undertake aged care home specific training. Aged care volunteer visitors are required to undertake training provided through ACVVS community organisations to ensure they can confidently take on their role and are aware of their obligations, responsibilities and surroundings.
- Are not required to register as a volunteer with the aged care home or enter personnel details into their employee database. The aged care volunteer visitor is registered with their ACVVS community organisation.
- Are matched and visit with the same recipient to build a genuine friendship.
- The aged care volunteer visitor must be matched with and visit the same recipients each time to ensure genuine friendships and companionship.
- Are instructed to NOT attend the aged care home for visits when unwell.
- Are required to work within their ACVVS organisation's policies, procedures and role description.
- Must not access a recipient's personal or care records. They must not be involved in any aspect of the recipient's financial affairs, perform duties of a paid worker or provide nursing and personal care to the care recipient.
- Must not advocate for any change of aged care services.

The ACVVS Aged Care Volunteer Visitor role description is available in the ACVVS National Guidelines (section 5.1).

ACVVS Volunteer Coordinator role

- Actively recruit, train and support aged care volunteer visitors to ensure compliance with legislation and procedures.
- Conduct legislated screening, orientation and other relevant training requirements.
- Promote and raise awareness of all aspects of the ACVVS to residential aged care homes, aged care providers and the broader community.
- Actively seek referrals and match aged care volunteer visitors with a like-minded older person.
- Maintain a high level of communication and positive relationships with residential aged care homes, aged care providers and recipients.
- Ensure the aged care volunteer visitor's actions are consistent with the Statement of Rights.
- Address any issues or concerns raised by the aged care volunteer visitor or the aged care provider regarding the relationship or the recipient's needs.

The ACVVS Volunteer Coordinator role description is available in the ACVVS National Guidelines (section 5.3).

ACVVS Network Members

ACVVS Network Members represent and support ACVVS community organisations and volunteer coordinator in each state and territory. The Network Member's role description is available in the ACVVS National Guidelines (section 5.2).

Contacts and links

- The department's website provides detailed information including the National Guidelines, volunteer visitor stories and referral pathways at [**health.gov.au/acvvs**](https://health.gov.au/acvvs)
- Contact the department's ACVVS team at [**acvvs@health.gov.au**](mailto:acvvs@health.gov.au)
- Request an aged care volunteer visitor for an aged care recipient in your aged care home at [**health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/request**](https://health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/request)
- Find the COTA Sector Code for Visiting at
- [**cota.org.au/policy/aged-care-reform/agedcarevisitors**](https://cota.org.au/policy/aged-care-reform/agedcarevisitors)

Residential aged care home staff can speak directly to ACVVS Network Members to discover their local community organisation by visiting [**health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/contacts**](https://health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/contacts)

