

INFOSHEET

VISIT PROGRAM

Visit Program is Sisters of Charity Outreach's no-cost, fortnightly visit service for socially isolated people living in both east and south west Sydney.

The Visit Program service, which originally began in 1996, is part of Sisters of Charity Outreach's strategic focus on reducing the impact of social isolation within the community, by providing home visits, companionship and social support.

Visit Program offers one-to-one, fortnightly home visits and local outings, where appropriate, for those living in the community who are experiencing social isolation. The program currently operates within two, separate, major population areas of Sydney.

Visit Program, East – covering Sydney's Eastern and Inner-city suburbs;

Visit Program, South West – including both Liverpool and the local surrounding area, and the Campbelltown, Camden and Narellan areas, in south west Sydney.

Visit Program is operated by a friendly team of fully-trained Sisters of Charity Outreach staff and volunteers, who are called visitors. The service matches clients with suitable visitors, who provide companionship and social support through both home visits and local outings, dependent upon the client's wishes and capabilities.

Visit Program activities often include conversation, listening to music, reading, reminiscing, card and board games or other activities contingent on the capacity and preferences of the client. If appropriate, Visit Program staff and volunteer visitors may take the client for a walk or a drive during the visit. However, the service does not provide shopping or transport services, respite care or personal care services.

In 2016, Sisters of Charity Outreach's Visit Program undertook 2684 visits to 128 clients across the east and south west Sydney. A total of 77% of Visit Program clients were over-65, and 22% of clients had mental health issues.

The Community Impact of Social Isolation

Social isolation is an ever-increasing issue within the community, from both a health perspective and a societal cost.

Research has demonstrated associations between social isolation and poor mental health, physical health and premature death (Aged & Community Services Australia, 2015).

Having a supportive social network and feeling a connection to the community provides many benefits including better health outcomes, increased personal confidence and dignity and an increased ability to seek help from appropriate health or community services.

Social support - such as that offered by Sisters of Charity Outreach's Visit Program, can buffer the effect of an adverse event or stressful life circumstance (Stansfeld S, 2006; cited in VicHealth 2012).

Visit Program Client Eligibility

Visit Program client eligibility includes people over 18 years of age who have limited or no community interaction and who identify as being socially isolated. Additionally, clients may have limited physical ability, be frail, aged or disabled or may have a medical or mental health condition that prevents them from participating in social opportunities.

Visit Program Client Referrals

Do you know someone in need of our Visit Program? Would you like to make a referral? For a confidential discussion and to book:

Visit Program, East - call (02) 8382 2883 (Eastern and Inner-city Suburbs)

Visit Program, South West - call (02) 9720 8841 (Liverpool and the local surrounding area; and the Campbelltown, Camden and Narellan areas).

Or email visitprogram@outreach.net.au

Visit Program Volunteers

Visit Program volunteers come from all walks of life and are friendly, dedicated and compassionate people willing to give their time to visit socially-isolated people on a regular basis.

Visit Program volunteers must meet the following requirements: Be 18 years of age or over; be a resident of Australia; pass a NSW Police Check; and, apply for and pass a Working With Children Check.

Volunteer applications can be made online, via Sisters of Charity Outreach's Volunteer Program, at: <http://www.sistersofcharityoutreach.com.au/volunteer-now/interested-how-to-apply/>. Or call (02) 8382 6430 or email info@outreach.net.au with a CV/Resume.

Our Supporters

Sisters of Charity Outreach is grateful to all our generous supporters. For Visit Program, East these include South Sydney Junior Rugby League Club, Randwick Labor Club (via Randwick Council) and St Vincent's College. Visit Program South West supporters include Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Catholic Club, Liverpool Volunteer Resource Centre, and The Australian Antagonish Cooperative Movement Limited.

Visit Program Client and Volunteer Privacy

Sisters of Charity Outreach is committed to protecting the information and privacy of all our clients, volunteers, donors, supporters, guests and staff, as per our Privacy Policy, which complies with the Australian Privacy Principles under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, and other privacy laws (including the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*) which govern the way in which we hold, use and disclose personal information (including sensitive information).