



commission for
children and young people
and child guardian

Community Visitor Program

Information Sheet

Who are Community Visitors?

Community Visitors (CVs) are employed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian on a part-time basis to visit children and young people in alternative care.

CVs check that children are provided with appropriate standards of care and advocate on their behalf.

Who do they visit?

Since 2001, Community Visitors have been visiting children and young people in government-funded residential facilities, including Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP), disability agencies, Youth Detention Centres and authorised mental health services.

From October 2004, Community Visitors started visiting children in the care of someone other than their parents, including children in foster care.

How are Community Visitors different from Child Safety Officers?

Community Visitors are not employees of the Department of Child Safety.

They are employed by the Commission and are expected to develop trusting and supportive relationships with the children and young people they visit to ensure they are safe and have access to support services.

They also provide advice and report to the Commissioner.

How often do visits occur?

Community Visitors aim to visit children and young people every month. They can make extra visits if asked by a child or young person.

How much notice do carers get of a visit by a Community Visitor?

Visits are arranged at a time when the child or young person is going to be present, and at a convenient time for the carer. This is usually in the afternoon after school, early evening or on weekends. Visits are normally arranged well ahead of time, with the next one often arranged at the end of each visit.

What is the process for visiting children and young people?

The law requires Community Visitors to meet and speak to children or young people face-to-face. Community Visitors will liaise with carers about arrangements for visiting children in their homes.

If carers require any information about visits, they are encouraged to speak directly with the Community Visitor or the Director of the CV Program (contact information is overleaf).

What is Community Visitors' role?

Community Visitors' responsibilities relating to children living at visitable sites and homes include:

- helping to resolve children and young people's concerns and grievances
- seeking information about, and helping children access support services provided by relevant agencies which are appropriate to their needs
- assessing the adequacy of information given to children about their rights, and
- assessing the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.

What happens during a visit?

The first time Community Visitors visit, they will introduce themselves and talk about what they do. They also like to get to know the carers and their family. When they first arrive for a visit, Community Visitors will talk to carers to get permission to come in, and to see how things are going. They then talk to the children or young people they are there to see. They will listen to issues, and may discuss how they can be resolved.

Can a child or young person ask Community Visitors to visit?

Yes. Children can request a visit by Community Visitors at any reasonable time if they want help. They can do this in person, or ask a carer to call for them.

Do Community Visitors write reports on their visits?

Yes. Community Visitors are required to report to the Commissioner on each visit as soon as practical after the visit. If the carer is caring for more than one child, a report is provided about each child.

Is the information in Community Visitor reports confidential?

Yes. Both Community Visitors and the Commission are very careful to ensure that all information in reports is kept strictly confidential.

How do Community Visitors follow up on issues raised?

Community Visitors first try to resolve issues raised by children or young people at the local

level where appropriate by informing carers, service organisations or departmental workers who can take any necessary action.

Any issues which can't be resolved this way are taken up by the Commissioner and directed to the appropriate agency with recommendations for action.

Do Community Visitors respect the privacy of individuals?

Yes. Community Visitors must preserve, as far as possible, the privacy of children, young people and anyone living in the home and not cause unnecessary inconvenience.

How can I get more information about the Community Visitor Program or the Commission?

For more information, please contact the Director, Community Visitor Program at the Commission:

Phone: (07) 3247 5525

or freecall: 1800 688 275

Address: Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian
T&G Building - Level 22
141 Queen Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Postal: PO Box 12671
Brisbane
George Street Qld 4003

Email: wmaster@ccypcg.qld.gov.au

