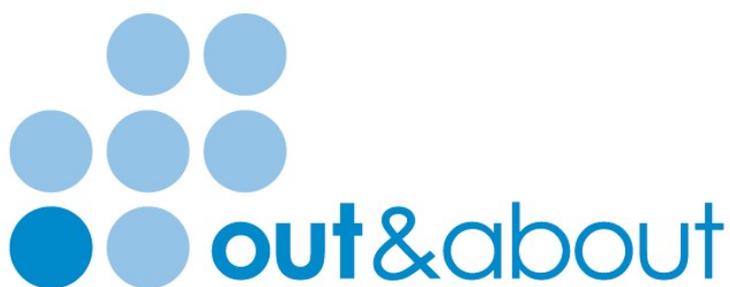


Out & About Community Visitor Scheme Information pack for individuals



Community Visitors Scheme



Switchboard (Victoria) 2018

Switchboard (Victoria)

Since 1991, Switchboard has provided peer based telephone counselling service to Victoria & Tasmania's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. This service was founded, run & staffed by volunteers and was previously known as "Gay and Lesbian Switchboard".

Twenty-seven years on, Switchboard remains a volunteer organisation providing a range of services for LGBTI communities, and their friends and families.

Out & About Community Visiting Scheme

Out & About is part of the national Community Visitor Scheme (CVS) program funded by the Federal Government. The program provides companionship to socially or culturally isolated people living in Government-subsidised aged care homes or receiving a home care package in their own home. The service is provided by several community organisations or 'auspices', each receiving government funding.

In 2014 Switchboard Victoria secured funding to provide an LGBTI specific CVS program. Switchboard is the only program in Victoria which provides CVS visitors specifically for LGBTI people. Throughout Australia, similar LGBTI programs are provided by ACON (NSW), QuAC (QLD) and Umbrella (WA).

Privacy and confidentiality

Many people who receive visits through Out & About keep their sexuality / and or transgender status private from others, including their aged care provider and / or family. In most cases you can still receive an Out & About community visitor. Our trained volunteers and professional staff listen to your needs and ensure your privacy and confidentiality is maintained at all times. Visits can occur inside or outside of the house.

Is this a free Service?

Yes! There are no fees for this service and all of our Out & About community visitors are volunteers. However, if the visit includes a movie or lunch at a cafe, both parties may need to pay their own costs.

Eligibility

Am I eligible?

You are eligible for our service if you:

1. Identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning (LGBTI), AND
2. Live anywhere in Victoria, AND
3. Have been assessed for / are currently receiving a Home Care Package

(OR)

are currently living in a Government funded aged care home (also known as a nursing home or residential care).

Age limitations

There are no age limitations for receiving a visitor, or volunteering as a community visitor.

I am receiving council HACC services, can I receive a visitor?

Unfortunately no. At this stage we're not funded to provide visitors for those on HACC services. However, you're welcome to contact our Out & About Coordinator who may be able to refer you to other programs for older LGBTI people.

I live in rural or regional Victoria, can I receive a visitor?

Yes! Out & About operates across Victoria. We work with existing local volunteer services to find a community visitor near you.

The visits

What happens during Out & About visits?

Your visits are what you make them. The primary aim is to build community connections and reduce isolation through social activities that are mutually enjoyable. You might like to sit and chat about current affairs, walk to the local café,

watch a movie together, tell each other stories from your life, or participate in a hobby, game or other activity.

Volunteer visitors are there for social activities only and should not engage in any other care activities such as shopping, cleaning or personal care. Similarly, the volunteer and recipient cannot be involved in romantic or physical relationships. Government guidelines do not allow gifts to be given or received above \$10 in value.

How do I request a visitor?

Eligible people can be referred to our program via their Home Care Package or residential aged care provider. Alternatively we can accept self-referrals, or referrals from family members. If you would like to make a referral, please contact our Out & About Coordinator.

What happens after a visitor request (referral) is made?

Our Out & About coordinator will contact the referring party as well as the aged care provider for further information. Next, the Coordinator will organise a time to meet the older person and discuss the program and their needs. A suitable volunteer will be selected from our volunteer pool based on location, any preferences expressed by the person, and common interests. The Out & About coordinator will arrange and attend the first meeting and if all parties are happy with the match visits will continue on a regular basis. The entire process usually takes between 4 – 6 weeks.

How often are the visits?

Our Out & About volunteers usually visit weekly for an hour, or fortnightly for two hours. Volunteers are asked to commit for a period of at least one year.

Benefits of participating in Out & About

For visit recipients:

- Regular social engagement
- Developing friendships across generations
- Building or maintaining connection with the LGBTI community
- Passing on your story and experience as an LGBTI person
- Reduction in isolation & loneliness

For volunteers

- Developing cross-generational friendships
- Listening to an individual's story and history, or learning about what being LGBTI was like in times before the present
- Regular social connections

Our volunteers

Who are Out & About community visitor volunteers?

Switchboard has a dedicated group of volunteers who are 18 to 80 years old and have a variety of backgrounds and interests. They receive training on their role, responsibilities and issues that may affect older people. We're a peer based service, so most of our volunteers identify as LGBTI. If no appropriate LGBTI volunteer can be found, we may occasionally accept volunteers who do not identify as LGBTI but have a good knowledge and understanding of LGBTI people.

What training do volunteers receive?

Before meeting with you all of our volunteers are individually interviewed, undergo reference checks, a police check and thorough training.

Get in contact

For questions, more information or to request a visitor

Please contact the Out & About Coordinator (Monday to Thursday)

Phone: 03 9663 2474 / 0466 218 921

Email: outandabout@switchboard.org.au

Mail: PO Box 21291, Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC 8011