



*Connecting with older LGBTIQ people
across Victoria*

Community Visitors Scheme

Out & About is a volunteer based visiting program for older people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI), and whose quality of life would be improved by friendship. Our Out & About volunteers visit people in their homes on a regular basis to talk, play card games, watch a movie, go out for a walk or any other enjoyable social activity.

Why is there a need for a LGBTI specific Community Visitor Scheme?

Older LGBTI individuals may have limited supportive family networks, significant fear of discrimination while accessing aged care and may not be able to access their community. Our volunteers can help to make older LGBTI people feel accepted, less isolated and safe in their environment.

Who may receive a visit from an Out & About Volunteer?

To be eligible to receive an Out & About volunteer visitor, a person must identify as LGBTI and:

- **be receiving a Home Care Package; or**
- **be a living in government funded residential aged care**

Eligibility for Home Care Packages and residential care is by the Aged Care Assessment Service. This can be arranged by calling My Age Care 1800 200 422. If you are unsure whether you're eligible for a volunteer visitor, please call our Out & About Coordinator.

My aged care provider doesn't know that I'm LGBTI, can I receive a visitor?

Please contact our Out & About Coordinator to discuss your privacy concerns. In many cases you may still be able to receive a visitor.

I am in residential care, but I'm under 65, can I receive a visitor?

Yes! Although the program is aimed at older LGBTI people, our volunteers are happy to visit younger people who meet our eligibility criteria

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.

Who are your volunteers?

We have 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.

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 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.

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.

Can visitors help me with my household chores?

No. Our volunteers are there for social activities and friendship only. If you need additional help at home, please contact your aged care provider.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Our volunteer visitors must respect the rights of the person they visit including privacy, confidentiality and dignity. As well, those receiving visits will also be required to respect the rights of the volunteer visitors. Contact the Coordinator if you wish to discuss further or for a copy of Switchboard's Privacy Policy.

Free Service

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 will need to pay their own costs.

Looking for a visitor for yourself or someone you know?

We suggest that you chat to our Out & About coordinator, she is happy to discuss eligibility, any privacy concerns and answer any questions you may have.

Please call or email Switchboard's Out & About Coordinator Maeve McNelis:
Phone: 0466 218 921 Email: outandabout@switchboard.org.au



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Out & About is one of Switchboard Victoria's peer based services.
switchboard.org.au