****

# Visiting Service – Guidelines for Referring Agencies

The Age Concern Visiting Service helps reduce loneliness and social isolation and encourages social participation for older people through regular social contact with a volunteer visitor.

**Who is the Visiting Service for?**

The Visiting Service is for people over 65, who no longer drive, who are at risk of social isolation due to having no or few regular visitors and who are able to contribute to a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Visiting Service is also for couples where one person is the carer of a partner who has high needs.

Health professionals, family or friends can refer an older person or couple. Just be sure to ask their permission first.

***Clients with complex needs such as dementia and / or other mental health issues, or extreme frailty may not be suitable for this service and will be considered on a case by case basis taking into consideration the above criteria and visitor safety. Please contact the coordinator directly, prior to sending through the referral form, so we can obtain a full picture of the client’s status.***

***Please be aware when making a referral that volunteers do not receive specialised training in such areas as mental health, substance addiction or Alzheimer's and dementia etc. In these circumstances, for the benefit of your client, you may wish to refer to other agencies.***

**The Volunteer Visitor role does not involve:**

Managing the older person’s financial affairs or handling money

Organising recreational pursuits or outings for clients unless for mutual pleasure or by mutual agreement

Domestic housework, grocery shopping, taking clients to appointments

Taking over the role of family, formal or informal carer, housekeeper, nurse, social worker or other visitors

*The Visiting Service manages a waiting list* and some clients may have to wait for a suitable volunteer, whilst others may be ‘matched’ immediately. Clients who are mobile and would enjoy social contact in the community may be suitable for our ***Social Outings Service*** – see our website for details.

Please call Rebecca or Peter if you have any queries with a referral. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Rebecca Hopgood** Phone: 331 7816 or email **rhopgood@ageconcerncan.org.nz**

**Peter McGrath**  Phone:331 7815 or email **pmcgrath@ageconcerncan.org.nz**

**Referral form available on our website – www.ageconcerncan.org.nz**

[**http://ageconcerncan.org.nz/forms/avs-client-referral-form/**](http://ageconcerncan.org.nz/forms/avs-client-referral-form/)