

AVS works!

Social isolation and loneliness can contribute to serious health and social issues for older people such as cardiovascular disease, dementia, depression, suicide, elder abuse and neglect, and problems with ageing in place.

Having a visitor can make a real difference to the health and happiness of an older person.

Here are some things visitors have told us about the benefits of their AVS work:

"I encouraged John to join our weekly exercise group at the local gym; I think it is a big plus for him."

"On arriving, I found her without heating. I rang her grandson and he brought her two heaters that afternoon."

And here are some clients' experiences:

"I would not be able to remain in my home if it wasn't for my visitor."

"My husband's visitor has been a friend to us both, and given me the opportunity to have some time for myself."



To refer an older person to Age Concern's Accredited Visiting Service contact us at:

visit www.ageconcern.org.nz for your local service.

Our thanks to the AVS participants and other staff who agreed to feature in this brochure.

Do you know an older person who needs company?

Ko te aroha te mea nui

Contact Age Concern



Age Concern's Accredited Visiting Service

AVS aims to:

Reduce loneliness and social isolation, and increase social participation for older people living in our communities.

AVS Coordinators

- Screen and train volunteer visitors
- Carefully match clients with visitors
- Identify clients' social goal/s and work with them to develop an action plan to meet these
- Support visitors' regular visits (1 hour per week on average)
- Monitor and review each relationship on a regular basis
- Provide ongoing visitor training
- Link the client to other Age Concern services as required
- Refer to and work with other service providers where appropriate.

AVS Visitors

Provide regular caring contact, share interests and activities with clients, and – where possible and desired by clients – support them to renew or expand other community contacts.



AVS visitors: A valuable resource

AVS visitors come from widely different backgrounds, can be male or female, 19 or 90 (44% are over 65). They have in common warmth, friendliness, and a desire to make a difference in the life of an older person.

98% of visitors tell us that they benefit from being part of the service. One visitor wrote:

I have learnt things through my visits and talks which I may not have learned otherwise. Knowing I am helping make someone's day is wonderful, as is seeing their eyes light up when I arrive.

Facing loneliness and social isolation

Chronic loneliness is an increasing problem for older New Zealanders. Factors increasing an older person's risk of loneliness and social isolation include:

- Low income
- Living alone
- Depression
- Poor health
- Bereavement
- No private transport.

Who is AVS for?

AVS is for people over 65 who live in the community, are at risk of social isolation due to having no or few regular visitors, and are able to contribute to a mutually beneficial relationship.

AVS 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.

