

In-Home Support — Visit & Incident Procedure

How our volunteers carry out in-home pet care visits, what to record, and how to raise a concern or report an incident.

Policy owner	CEO	Version	1.0
Signed off by	CEO	Effective	March 2025
Applies to	All In-Home Support volunteers	Review by	March 2027

Key contacts — keep these with you on every visit

Who	Contact
Emergency (life, safety, fire, crime)	000
Volunteer Coordinator	Volunteer Coordinator — volunteer@dontforgetmypet.org.au
After-hours / on-call	Alysha (CEO) — [mobile]
Non-emergency police	131 444

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1. Purpose

Don't Forget My Pet helps vulnerable people stay well at home without being separated from the animal they love. Our In-Home Support visits keep a person's companion fed, walked and cared for during a time when the person is unwell, recovering or finding things hard — so the bond that keeps them going stays intact.

This procedure sets out how volunteers carry out a visit, what to record, and how to raise a concern or report an incident so that the person, their pet and the volunteer are all kept safe.

2. Our approach

- We centre the dignity of the person. We are guests in their home and we treat them, their household and their pet with warmth and respect.
- We work alongside, not instead of, the person's care team. We do the pet care; their care team looks after the person.
- We keep it simple and reliable — same kind face, same routine, every visit.
- We observe and we report. If something doesn't feel right, we pass it on rather than trying to fix it ourselves.

3. Roles & responsibilities

Volunteer

- Carry out the agreed pet care tasks safely and as set out in the care plan.
- Check in warmly with the person and note how they seem.
- Complete a visit log every visit and return it promptly.
- Raise concerns and report incidents straight away, following Section 8.
- Stay within the boundaries in Section 6 and keep all information confidential.

Volunteer Coordinator

- Confirms each visit, shares the care plan and access details, and is the volunteer's first point of contact.
- Receives visit logs and incident reports, records them, and decides the right response.
- Liaises with the person's care team, family or relevant services where needed, and escalates serious matters to the Director / Board.

The person & their care team

- Provide the care plan, access arrangements and any specific instructions for the pet.

4. Before the visit

1. Confirm the visit, the address and the access arrangements with the Coordinator.
2. Read the care plan: what the pet needs, any routine, medication, and anything to watch.
3. Save the Key Contacts above to your phone, and a blank visit log.
4. Let your agreed check-in contact know your visit time, and message them again when you finish (lone-worker safety).
5. If anything about the visit feels unsafe before you arrive, speak to the Coordinator first — do not attend alone.

5. During the visit

- Greet the person, explain what you're there to do, and respect their home and privacy.
- Carry out the pet care tasks in the care plan — feeding, fresh water, walking, toileting/litter, and any other agreed care.
- **Medication:** only ever give medication to the pet exactly as written in the care plan. If you are unsure, do not guess — contact the Coordinator.
- Take a moment for a wellbeing check-in: how is the person today? Listen, and note anything they mention or ask for.
- If you notice the person seems unwell, distressed, or that something at home isn't right, note it and pass it to the Coordinator. If you believe their health or safety is at immediate risk, call 000.
- Complete the visit log before you leave, while it's fresh.

6. What volunteers do not do

To keep everyone safe and within our role, volunteers do not:

- Provide personal or medical care to the person — that is for their care team.
- Give medical, financial or legal advice.
- Handle the person's money, banking, medication or valuables.

- Make decisions about veterinary treatment without the owner's and Coordinator's agreement — except to seek emergency vet help if the animal's life is at immediate risk, then tell the Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Transport the person or pet unless this has been specifically arranged and approved.
- Enter or stay in the home if they feel unsafe.
- Share any information about the person or their household with anyone outside their DFMP role.

7. Completing the visit log

- Complete one log for every visit, even a short one.
- Stick to what you saw and did — be factual, specific and respectful. Avoid opinions or labels.
- Return the log to the Coordinator within **24 hours** of the visit, by email to volunteer@dontforgetmypet.org.au.
- Logs contain personal information — keep them secure and don't leave them where others can read them (see Section 10).

8. Raising a concern & reporting incidents

An incident is anything that caused — or could have caused — harm, distress or risk to the person, their pet, you or anyone else. It also includes any concern about the person's wellbeing or safety, any near-miss, complaint, property damage, or a situation that felt unsafe. When in doubt, report it. You will never be in trouble for raising something in good faith.

Always: if someone is in immediate danger, call 000 first. Make the situation safe, then report.

Three levels of response

Level	Examples	What to do
1 — Note it	Minor, easily resolved, no harm — pet was a bit anxious, ran low on food, small change to routine.	Record it in the visit log. No separate report needed.
2 — Report soon	Pet injured or unwell; a near-miss; property damage; a complaint; the person seemed notably lower than usual or asked for help; you felt uncomfortable.	Note it in the log and tell the Coordinator within 24 hours. Complete the Incident Report (Appendix A).
3 — Report now	Risk to a person, pet or volunteer; injury; aggression; a safeguarding concern — e.g. a fall, a medical emergency, signs of self-neglect or that the person isn't coping or is at risk.	Make it safe — call 000 if life-threatening. Contact the Coordinator / on-call the same day. Complete the Incident Report as soon as you can.

If you have a concern about the person's safety

You are not expected to diagnose or investigate anything — just to notice and pass it on. Report what you actually saw or heard to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will decide the right next step, which may include contacting the person's nominated care team, family, or relevant services. If you believe the person is in immediate danger, call 000 before anything else.

How to report (Levels 2 and 3)

1. Make the situation safe and call 000 if needed.

2. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator (or on-call after hours) using the Key Contacts above.
3. Complete the Incident Report form (Appendix A) with the facts — what happened, when, who was involved, what you did.
4. Send it to the Coordinator within 24 hours (sooner for Level 3).

9. After an incident is reported

- The Coordinator records the incident in the incident register and checks the immediate situation is safe.
- They review it within [X] business days and follow up with you — you'll never be left wondering what happened.
- Where appropriate, they notify the person's care team, family or relevant services, and put any changes in place to prevent it happening again.
- Serious incidents are escalated to the Director / Board, and reported to external authorities or our insurer where this is required.

10. Confidentiality & privacy

- Visit logs and incident reports contain personal information about vulnerable people — treat them as confidential.
- Only share information with those who need it for the person's care or safety.
- Store and send records securely, and return them promptly. Don't keep copies you don't need.
- Never post about a visit, a person or their home on social media, or discuss them outside your DFMP role.

11. Looking after our volunteers

Some visits can be confronting. If a visit leaves you worried or upset, you can debrief with the Coordinator at any time — it's always okay to say you're not okay. Your safety and wellbeing matter just as much as the people and pets we support.

Appendix A — Incident Report

Complete for a Level 2 or Level 3 incident and send to the Volunteer Coordinator. Stick to the facts: what you saw, heard and did.

Person reporting		Date of report	DD/MM/YYYY
Client name / reference		Visit date	
Date & time of incident		Location	client home / outside / other

Level of incident

☐	Level 2 — report within 24 hours
☐	Level 3 — serious / urgent, reported same day
☐	Emergency services were called (000)

What happened

Describe the facts in order — what led up to it, what happened, who was involved.

What you did at the time

Action taken, who you contacted, and when.

Anyone hurt or affected

The person	
The pet	
Volunteer / others	

Reported to & sign-off

Reported to		Date & time	
Volunteer signature		Date	

Office use only

Logged in register	Y / N — ref:	Reviewed by	
Action taken / outcome			
Escalated to Director / Board	Y / N	Closed (date)	