

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT  
CARER CARD  
INFORMATION FOR  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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## Why is the Carer Card being introduced?

The State Government recognises the vital role that families, friends and other carers play in supporting people with disabilities, those with chronic illness or mental illness, children needing foster care and the increasing numbers of frail aged needing care.

The Carer Card is considered to be a way in which carers can be recognised for the significant level of care and commitment they provide supporting family members and friends who are frail, aged or have disabilities or to children who require foster placements.

The Victorian Government understands that the responsibilities of carers often prevent them from participating in the paid workforce and makes them more vulnerable to social isolation and reduced social activity. Recent research into the impact of caring on carers has identified a range of physical, emotional and relational impacts as well as broader effects on income and employment.

Most people who require care are cared for in their own home by someone they know and trust. Carers can be parents, partners, brothers, sisters, friends or children. In addition to these carers, foster carers are also an important component of the carer population that will be recognised by the Carer Card. Foster carers are vital to the child protection system by providing a safe, nurturing and secure family environment for children and young people requiring care.

## What is the Carer Card?



The Carer Card is a plastic credit card-sized card that will be issued to eligible primary and foster carers in Victoria.

The Card contains the cardholder's name and signature and a registration number.

To obtain discounted products, services or venue entry, the cardholder must present their card.

## What will the Carer Card provide?

Over 1,400 businesses, local government and community services have signed up to give discounts and benefits to carers who have a Carer Card.

The Carer Card also entitles the holder to free Sunday travel on metropolitan trains, trams and buses in Zones 1 and 2. It is also valid for travel on bus services within the Ballarat Transit system; Bendigo transit system; Geelong transit system; and town bus services of Mildura, Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Warrnambool. Two free return rail vouchers are also provided for off-peak train travel anywhere within Victoria.

To obtain discounts or offers listed in the Carer Card directory, the cardholder must present their card at point of purchase or booking. The discounts can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. A directory of all participating businesses, venues and agencies is distributed to all recipients of the Carer Card.

## Who will a Carer Card be issued to?

The Carer Card is for primary, kinship and foster carers in Victoria. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria developed by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS). Each application must be supported by relevant information or documentation that provides verification that the individual applying is a primary or foster carer.

Applications are sent to the Carer Card program within DHS for verification. Applicants must agree to the Carer Card Terms and Conditions which outline entitlements, obligations and appropriate use of the card.

In summary, to be eligible for a Carer Card an applicant must be:

- A resident of Victoria and a primary<sup>1</sup>, unpaid carer of a person with a disability, a severe medical condition, or a mental illness, or who is frail aged or who is in need of palliative care. This care must be provided in the home of the person requiring care; or
- A foster, respite, kinship or permanent carer in receipt of a DHS reimbursement payment; or
- A kinship carer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A primary carer is the main provider of care and support and provides assistance, in terms of help or supervision, and assists with at least one of the following core activities:

- Self Care (e.g. dressing, feeding, bathing)
- Communication
- Mobility
- Transport
- Monitoring/Supervision
- Emotional support

<sup>2</sup> Kinship carers are a relative or member of a child or young person's social network who care for a child/young person who cannot live with his/her parents. The carer is responsible for the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child/young person. A kinship carer can be either a statutory kinship carer or non-statutory kinship carers. Statutory kinship carers provide care when a Child Protection intervention has occurred and a decision has been made to place a child with relatives or a significant friend, and may also involve an order made by the Children's Court or Family Court. Non-statutory or "informal" kinship carers provide care without any Child Protection intervention.

## How do carers prove they are primary carers?

Eligibility for the Carer Card can be confirmed in several ways. If the carer receives a *Carer Allowance or Carer Payment from Centrelink*, their individual Customer Reference number can be provided and their eligibility will be confirmed directly with Centrelink by DHS. These carers can submit their forms directly to DHS for assessment without the involvement of a health professional in the application process.

*DHS foster, permanent, respite and kinship carers* who are in receipt of reimbursement directly from DHS will be confirmed as eligible through the DHS carer reimbursement database. These carers also do not need the involvement of a health professional.

All *other primary carers*, including *kinship carers* will be required to have their eligibility confirmed by a registered medical practitioner, allied health professional or mental health carer consultant. These carers will be asking relevant health professionals to sign their application for a Carer Card. In signing this form, health professionals are verifying that the applicant is considered to be a primary carer. Kinship carers, who are in receipt of either a Statutory Declaration from the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner or relevant court order can produce these documents to a medical practitioner/health professional in order to verify their status as primary carers of children.

## When should a medical practitioner or health professional sign an application form for a Carer Card?

A medical practitioner or health professional should sign an application for a Carer Card if they are satisfied that the applicant is the primary, unpaid carer of a person with a disability, a severe medical condition, or a mental illness\*, or who is frail aged or who is in need of palliative care or who is kinship carer\*\*. To be a primary carer, the carer must be providing substantial support and assistance on a frequent\*\*\* basis with activities such as:

- Personal care (dressing, feeding, bathing)
- Everyday household tasks
- Transport (public or private)
- Mobility
- Making and attending appointments for care recipient
- Monitoring medication
- Communication (eg. Making telephone calls on the care recipients behalf)
- Monitoring/Supervision
- Emotional support

\*For mental health carers, the mental illness of the care recipient may be episodic rather than ongoing. It is understood and acknowledged that the caring duties of these carers, do not necessarily stop during periods of stable mental health.

\*\* Kinship carers can provide evidence of their role as primary carers of children by producing their statutory declaration issued by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner or a relevant court order (i.e. either from the Family or Children's Courts)

\*\*\* It is expected that some form of support, care or assistance is provided by the primary carer on a daily basis, or several times per week as a minimum.

## Health Professionals authorised to sign the Carer Card application form

The Carer Card application form can be signed by one of the following health professionals involved in the treatment/care of either the carer or care recipient:

- A legally qualified medical practitioner
- A registered nurse
- A physiotherapist
- A registered psychologist
- A registered social worker
- An occupational therapist, or
- An aboriginal health worker (in a geographically remote area)
- A mental health carer consultant

## Not sure whether to sign an application form?

The Carer Card policy framework was developed by the Concessions Policy Unit within DHS. If you have any questions about how you should interpret these eligibility guidelines, a DHS officer can assist you. Enquiries should be made on 1800 901 958 during business hours.

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## Getting more information about the Carer Card

*The Carer Card website*

[www.carercard.vic.gov.au](http://www.carercard.vic.gov.au)

This website provides a range of information about the Carer Card program, answers to frequently asked questions and links to other useful web sites.

Copies of this information booklet, the business registration form and Carer Card application form can also be downloaded from this website.

*The Carer Card information line*

**1800 901 958**

The Carer Card Information line is available during business hours to respond to queries about the Carer Card program and can also assist with any questions regarding the application form.