

What young people think about their Independent Visitors...

- “She’s very funny, very caring, if I am ever sad she is someone to talk to.”
- “He’s funny, cool, understanding and listens very well.”
- “She’s brilliant, bubbly and nice to be around!”
- “She’s nice and friendly. She’s the best!”
- “She’s funny, interesting, very clever and pretty.”
- “She’s funny and bubbly, very easy to talk to. We get on really well – it’s like having a great friend.”
- “It’s lovely to have somebody ‘normal’ talk to you outside of the system.”
- “I really like her.”
- “You get to do things you never knew about!”
- “Having an IV gives you time to relax.”

Interested in joining our volunteer team?

If you would like to know more about the IV scheme, please contact:

Wiltshire Independent Visitor Scheme,
Wiltshire Council Conference and Reviewing
Service, County Hall, Bythesea Road,
Trowbridge BA14 8JN

Phone: 01225 713934 or 01225 713961
Email: IVScheme@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Independent Visitor (IV) Scheme

Information for volunteers

Background to the scheme

Wiltshire Independent Visitor (IV) Scheme was first established in 2000. Based within the conference and reviewing service, it is funded by Wiltshire Council, but run at 'arms length' from other council services.

The 1989 Children Act and 2008 Children and Young Person's Act state that all local authorities have a duty to offer IVs to those young people who are in care where this is considered to be in the young person's best interests.

What is an IV?

Young people who are in care often experience a lot of disruption in their lives; there may be many adults involved in their care, but these may change over time as social workers or carers come and go, or as the young people themselves move from one placement to another. An IV is someone who can be a consistent figure in their lives, when there may be no one in their family who is able to take this role. An IV is there to befriend a young person, offering them consistency, support, advice and encouragement throughout the time they are in care and often beyond this time.

Aims of the IV scheme

The IV scheme aims to contribute to the welfare of looked after young people by 'visiting, advising and befriending' them and in doing so:

- promoting their individual needs
- encouraging them to participate in decisions taken about them
- supporting their care plan, unless there is clear evidence to act differently.

Who will I be supporting?

Young people may be referred to the scheme up to the age of 18, and all have different personalities, interests, needs and backgrounds. Most will be living in foster or residential care within Wiltshire, although a few young people may be placed 'out of county.' We always pay careful attention to any wishes expressed by both young people and volunteers about the sort of person with whom they would feel most comfortable being matched, as well as to any other practical considerations.

What happens on a visit?

There is no 'right' thing to do with a young person; this will vary according to their age, personality, interests and where they live. What is done at each visit is decided on by the volunteer and the young person, but there is an emphasis on spending time together to build a relationship, rather than just having expensive treats.

What qualifications do I need to be an IV?

Volunteers should be over 18 years of age, and be able to make a long-term commitment to meet with a young person for a couple of hours every three to four weeks. No formal qualifications are required, although potential volunteers should:

- be able to listen to, communicate with and enjoy the company of young people
- be open minded and non-judgemental, with a mature approach to dealing with difficulties
- have patience, common sense, flexibility and a sense of humour
- be committed, reliable and able to work within the scheme guidelines
- be independent from Wiltshire Council and not a teacher, carer or member of children's social care staff.

What we offer our volunteers:

- The satisfaction of making a significant contribution to the lives of young people living in care
- The opportunity to develop new skills and experiences
 - Involvement in a committed volunteer team, with the opportunity to meet up at social and other events
 - Training and ongoing regular support
 - Mileage and out of pocket expenses

