

## Description of Volunteer Role

**Title:** Volunteer Independent Visitor / Mentor

**Hours:** Sessional – as and when required

### Purpose

- To advise, visit and befriend a child or young person in residential care, a foster placement or living in the community.
- To enable a child or young person who is 'looked after' by the local authority, to have contact with someone who is independent of the Social Services Department.
- To provide an adult friend for a child or young person who has little or no contact with members of their family.

### Main Tasks

- To visit a child/young person on a regular basis as agreed by the young person and their carers
- To give sound adult advice.
- To befriend and take an interest in the young person ensuring, at all times, their personal safety and welfare.
- To be aware of and seek to promote any needs the young person may have which relates to their ethnicity, religion, language, disability or other specific areas.
- To keep in contact with the Service Manager, Carers and Social Workers as necessary.
- To respect confidentiality except where the child may be at risk of significant harm.
- To contribute towards the child/young person's social, emotional and educational development.
- To support a young person in expressing their views and wishes.
- To support the care plan for the child.

### Additional Tasks

- To attend support groups and training courses.
- To attend the child's review meeting if the child wishes.

### Training and Support

- To attend a relevant series of initial induction and preparatory training support groups for Independent Visitors.
- Individual support from the Project Coordinator

### Reporting

- A record of all visits is to be kept by the Independent Visitor, which should be stored safely.

### Time Commitment

- Visits as agreed with the young person. (approx. 2 hours per week for the first month and 3 hours monthly thereafter as a minimum).
- Visitors are expected to make a minimum commitment of 18 months.

### Expenses

- Out of pocket expenses reimbursed, amount agreed with project coordinator
- £0.35 per mile travel allowance or agreed public transport costs

## Independent Visitor / Mentor Person Specification

Factor	Essential	Desirable
Skill/aptitudes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A genuine interest in the welfare of children.</li> <li>2. Ability to form a working relationship with people and professionals involved with young people 'looked after'.</li> <li>3. Self-awareness and sound common sense.</li> <li>4. Firmness, commitment and determination.</li> <li>5. Ability to exercise discretion and take a questioning approach.</li> <li>6. Flexibility</li> </ol>	
Abilities/Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of initiative, but able to recognise when to consult.</li> <li>2. Willing to seek and consider advice.</li> <li>3. Able to remain independent.</li> <li>4. Able to remain child-focused, concentrating on child's needs.</li> <li>5. Appreciate involvement of others and complement their roles.</li> <li>6. Able to understand young people and their difficulties.</li> <li>7. Willingness to attend information sharing and support meetings on an unpaid basis.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of issues relevant to children/young people being 'looked after'.</li> </ol>
Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact with children and young people.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Previous experience of working with children and young people.</li> <li>2. Experience of children 'in need'.</li> <li>3. Interest in sports/leisure activities.</li> </ol>
Equal Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commitment to treating each person with respect.</li> <li>2. Willingness to challenge discrimination.</li> </ol>	
Education/training	No formal qualifications.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training in child-related areas.</li> <li>2. Current driving licence &amp; use of a vehicle.</li> </ol>