

Chairman's Announcements

Subject:	Wiltshire Independent Visitor Scheme
Web contact:	Email: Sheila.lupton@wiltshire.gov.uk IVScheme@wiltshire.gov.uk https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-independent-visitor-scheme

Wiltshire Independent Visitor Scheme provides independent befriending support to children in the care of Wiltshire Council. These are children who are fostered or living in other care settings, usually in Wiltshire but sometimes outside the county borders. It is a requirement that the council to provide an Independent Visitor service, but young people chose whether or not they wish to take up this offer. This means they are really motivated to take part!

Our volunteer Independent Visitors (IVs) play a really important role, visiting the young person they are "matched" with regularly, listening to them and taking an interest in their lives. They offer consistency, and quality, fun, one to one time. IVs make a long-term commitment to support a young person until they leave the care system, and often beyond this time.

We already have a fantastic team of almost 60 volunteer IVs, who are out supporting young people in the community. The scheme is very popular with young people and currently we have a waiting list of those waiting to be linked up with an IV.

These are some comments from young people in our scheme, talking about what having an IV means to them:

"She's very funny, very caring, if I am ever sad, she is someone to talk to".

"She's brilliant, bubbly and nice to be around."

"It's lovely to have somebody 'normal' to talk to outside of the system."

"You get to do things you never knew about."

We are sharing our message with each Area Board, with the hope you can promote our volunteering opportunity and highlight the importance of this scheme. We don't want our young people to be kept waiting for a "match" and so we are keen to find the right volunteers in the places where they are needed. At present, we are particularly short of male volunteers, those who have experience of supporting children with more complex needs, and also volunteers who might be willing to travel further afield if needed (e.g. the south coast and Gloucester area). We want to find volunteers from Wiltshire if possible, in case young people move back in-county when they are older.

All volunteers will require an enhanced DBS disclosure. They should be over 18 and able to make a long-term commitment to meet with a young person for a couple of hours every three to four weeks. There is a requirement that all volunteers should be car drivers and be independent from Wiltshire Council (not a teacher, foster or residential carer or member of children's social care staff).

Volunteers are reimbursed for their travel and any visit expenses. The scheme also offers volunteers regular training and support.

How to register an interest

If you would like to know more about the IV Scheme, please visit

Email: IVScheme@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: Shelley Barnes on 01225 713897 or Deborah Welling on 01225 713980