

Area Board Briefing Note

Service:	<i>Voice and Participation</i>
Date prepared:	16/10/2023
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Independent visitors (IVs) are adult volunteers who provide independent, one-to-one befriending support to children in care. Their role is to "visit, advise and befriend" the young person with whom they are matched.

The 1989 Children Act made it a duty for Local Authorities to provide IVs for those young people living in care who have little or no contact from their parents or family. In 2008, the Children and Young Person's Act extended this duty so that any young person in care could be eligible to have an IV, if considered to be in their best interests.

Current Status:

As of the most recent update, we have successfully matched 72 young people with independent visitors.

In Progress:

Additionally, there are currently 17 matches in progress, all of which are proposed to become active before Christmas. This will bring our total matches to an impressive 89. This remarkable increase of 21 matched young people in this financial year marks the second consecutive year of the most significant growth in our numbers, with the previous year seeing an increase of 10 matches. It's worth noting that this achievement is even more impressive when considering the 8 matches that are scheduled to close soon.

National Context:

Nationally, our success is measured against similar schemes by the National IV Network. Specifically, we are assessed based on the percentage of young people in care who are matched with an IV across the county. With 89 matches, our matched population will stand at 17.3%. To put this in perspective, the national average, as reported in the last Freedom of Information (FOI) report by the National IV Network, was only 3.3%. The highest matching percentage in England and Wales was 16%.

Future Projections:

In the coming months, four of our young people will reach the age of 18, causing a slight decrease in our matched population to 16.4% by the end of the financial year. Nonetheless, this remains a significant achievement and showcases our dedication to making a difference in the lives of care-experienced individuals.

Impact on Waiting List:

An essential outcome of these matches is the reduction of our waiting list. As more young people are matched with independent visitors, our waiting list is projected to decrease to 22 individuals. This will mark the lowest number of individuals on the waiting list since we began keeping records.

Promotion of the IV Scheme:

We encourage the Area Boards to actively promote the IV Scheme by directing prospective volunteers to our website: [Independent visitor scheme - Wiltshire Council](#). This will help us continue our mission to provide meaningful support to young people in care and achieve our goals of positive social change.

Conclusion:

Our remarkable increase in matched young people, high matching percentage, and the decrease in our waiting list demonstrate our commitment to making a difference in the lives of care-experienced individuals. We look forward to your continued support and engagement in promoting the IV Scheme.