

Frequently asked Questions about Independent Visitors (IVs)

What is an Independent Visitor? (IV)

An Independent Visitor is an adult who has volunteered to spend time with a young person who is in care or leaving care. An independent visitor is there just for the young person, they are independent of the local authority, and care providers.

Independent visitors have been chosen because they are trustworthy, friendly, committed to the child or young person's best interests and have things in common with the young person.

What does an Independent Visitor do?

The IV will meet with the same child or young person and take them out on visits away from the care setting. You and your young person can choose a fun activity, working within a set budget. Enjoying positive activities together helps to build trust, confidence and boost self-esteem for the young person. You may be asked to attend a young person's review (a meeting to see how they are doing with lots of professionals) if your young person would like you to support them.

How often will I visit my child or young person?

The IV will meet with the same child or young person about twice a month. This may vary depending upon what is going on in a young person's life. If the young person lives further away then the frequency of the visits may be reduced. Visits take place after school/college or at weekends.

How do we match young people to an IV?

We spend some time trying to match a young person and an IV based on what the young person has told us they like to do and what type of person they would be best suited to. We also ask you to tell us a little bit about yourself, for example, what hobbies and interests you have to help us make a suitable match.

How long is the match for?

We ask for at least an 18 month commitment from you. Many children in care have experienced lots of rejection and we do not want our volunteers to add to this list. You will need to commit to a long term involvement with your young person.

Who can be an IV?

We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds, particularly male volunteers, aged 21 and above. You don't need any specific qualifications or experience, but you will need to be able to relate well to children and know how to have fun.

Key skills and qualities children and young people want from an IV

This information is taken from, *'Independent visitors Children and young people's views' Reported by the Children's Rights Director for England.*

Young people want a good listener, a good communicator, someone who is helpful, friendly and kind, doesn't judge you and able to give advice when needed.

Will I have my out of pocket expenses reimbursed?

Expenses will be reimbursed within the agreed budget.

What do I do next?

You need to complete an application form and you will be asked to meet for an informal chat. If suitable for the role you will be asked to complete a DBS check and undertake our induction training to help prepare you for this rewarding role.