Volunteer to become an Independent Visitor and play a crucial role in the life of a child in care.

Could you be there for a child in care?

West Sussex Independent Visitor Scheme

What do Independent Visitors say about their role?

“I always enjoy my time spent with him, it’s very rewarding”

“Watching her mature into a more confident young lady is great”

How do children and young people view the role?

“My independent visitor is someone to talk to not involved with anyone else... it’s private”

“We have a chat about how things are, then we go bowling or to the cinema...”

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Independent Visitor or would like further information please contact the Independent Visitor Team.

Web: www.westsussex.gov.uk/independentvisitor
Email: independent.visitors@westsussex.gov.uk

Who can become an Independent Visitor?

We need male and female volunteers (over 21 years old), from different backgrounds who:

- Relate to children and young people
- Focus on their individual needs
- Support them to voice their views
- Are willing to take part in activities with them
- Listen without prejudice
- Can commit to the role
- Are consistent, reliable and trustworthy
- Respect confidentiality

How can I become an Independent Visitor?

The recruitment and selection process includes:

- Completing an application form
- Attending an initial interview
- Participating in an assessment at your home
- Attending the training and induction programme (8 sessions)
- Satisfactory references and checks being received
- Recommendation to approval panel

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The Independent Visitor Scheme matches volunteer Independent Visitors with children and young people who often have little or no contact with their birth families, or where it is considered in the child’s best interest for them to have an adult outside of the professional network working with them to provide a supportive relationship.

What is the role of an Independent Visitor?

- To regularly visit a child who is looked after by West Sussex County Council.
- To develop a positive, consistent and supportive befriending relationship with them.
- To listen and provide sound advice from a lay perspective and ensure the child’s voice is heard; representing them during meetings if they ask for your support.
- To encourage the child to exercise their rights and to participate in decision making.
- To contribute to the care plan for the child and to work in co-operation with others who have a responsibility for the child, including their carer(s) and social worker.

Why become an Independent Visitor?

You will:

- Have a chance to play a crucial and enduring role in a child’s life.
- Receive comprehensive initial training and induction with on-going training and support.
- Benefit from regular supervision and support in your volunteering role.
- Be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses connected to your visits.
- Have the opportunity to share your skills and experience in your role.
- Meet fellow volunteers through group activities and social events.

What commitment is involved?

We ask that you:

- Can commit time and energy to the role
- Visit a child regularly and maintain contact throughout the match.
- Commit to visiting the child you are matched with for at least two years.
- Participate in initial and on-going training and regular one-to-one supervision.
- Agree to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, reference checks, a health questionnaire and a West Sussex local authority check.