

Action for Children – London Independent Visitors Project

Role Description

At the Action for Children London Independent Visitors Project we match volunteer mentors to children in care aged between five and eighteen who are based across London and the South East. Our mentors are there to develop a long-term friendship with a young person, meeting once a month, to give them an opportunity to access hobbies and interests, gain independence skills and generally have a fun day out.

Title: Independent Visitor (IV)– Voluntary role

Purpose:

- To visit, advise and befriend a young person who is looked after by the care system.
- To enable a young person to have contact with someone who is independent of the social services department, education system, health department, etc.
- To provide an “adult friend” for a young person who may have little or no contact with members of his/her own family.

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator/Team Leader

Main Tasks

- To make a commitment to visit the child or young person on a regular monthly basis over a two-year period (minimum), developing a relationship as an adult friend.
- To encourage a young person to fulfil their potential by participating in activities as appropriate that help to promote their social, emotional and educational development.
- To ensure that the young person’s views and wishes are being heard and considered, recognising that, being young (and in care), they are more likely than adults to have their basic human rights forgotten or ignored.
- To encourage children and young people to exercise their rights and to participate in decisions that will affect them.
- To develop a positive and trusting relationship with the child or young person. Work towards specific outcomes for the young person.
- To be aware of and seek to promote any needs specifically related to the young person’s race, culture, language, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation and to challenge discrimination.
- To keep in touch with others who have a responsibility for the young person as necessary.
- To respect confidentiality, provided that in doing so, the young person’s welfare is not at risk.
- To keep basic records of visits and other significant events as appropriate in accordance with Action for Children policies and procedures.

Training and Support Plan:

- To attend the full 2-day Induction Training programme.
- Further training will be on-going and in accordance with the Independent Visitor's needs, to enable them to perform their tasks to the highest possible standard.
- Individual supervision will be provided on a regular quarterly basis and in accordance with individual circumstances.
- Independent Visitors will have their 'match' reviewed on a yearly basis.

Reporting:

- To keep basic records of visits and other significant events, as appropriate e.g. to complete a log sheet on a monthly basis recording all contact.
- The Independent Visitor may be asked to contribute from time to time in either writing or in person to a child/young person's Statutory Review or a Child Protection case conference.
- The Independent Visitor may also be involved in other meetings or consultations on the young person's welfare.

Benefits:

- Provided with adequate information, training, and assistance to be able to meet the responsibilities of the Independent Visitor role.
- Receive regular supervision and support.
- Be treated as an equal partner.
- Reimbursed out of pocket expenses incurred whilst undertaking the role (up to £75 over 3 visits plus all travel expenses).
- This is a potentially hugely rewarding role and Independent Visitors can take great satisfaction from the knowledge that they are contributing to the happiness and development of a young person in care.

Qualifications Needed:

No formal qualifications are required. It is however essential that you have the right personal attributes such as the ability to focus on the young person's needs and have a genuine and active interest in the welfare of children and young people over the long term.

If you would like to apply to become an Independent Visitor volunteer, please get in touch with the team either by phone or email to find out more about the application process:

0207 254 9408

LondonIndependent.Visitors@actionforchildren.org.uk

Thank you!

