

## Appendix 1

### CASE STUDY - Independent Visitor Project – Increasing confidence

Independent Visitors are matched with a child or young person, taking into account such things as gender, ethnic background, location and, of course, personality. They build a rewarding friendship based on trust, mutual respect and shared interests.

Independent Visitors support the young person they are matched with, helping them when they are facing difficulties in their lives, or new challenges. Volunteers tell us that listening to young people, finding out what they want and helping them to achieve it by encouraging them to speak for themselves is an extremely rewarding experience.

A female aged 13 years at the time of her referral, lives in a foster home in Derby.

She struggles to deal with the issues that led to her being brought into the care of the local authority. She is a lovely girl, however she is extremely anxious and struggles to make and maintain quality friendships.

On her referral form, the social worker identified that **'x struggles in social settings and maintaining relationships. She will need support to control anxious feelings and build on her self confidence. The volunteer should encourage her to have fun and build on a trusting relationship. Hopefully, the volunteer will encourage the young person to try new activities and in return build the young persons confidence and self esteem. The volunteer should aim to speak to the young person about keeping safe.'**

A possible volunteer is identified from the pool available; a female in her early 50's. The volunteer is extremely friendly, but also slightly nervous as volunteering with young people is something entirely different to what she has done previously and by her own admission she is not sure that she is interesting enough and that she is too old.

We recommend that the match start slowly as both the young person and volunteer are wary.

Over the coming months, the relationship steadily grows and grows. The volunteer is patient and through gentle persuasion encourages the young person to try lots of new activities. Together they visit Staunton Harold Sailing club, many National Trust venues and the cinema. Other activities that they both enjoy over their time together are visiting horses, stargazing and eating out.

**The young person:**

The young person has since told us that she really values the time that she spends with her independent visitor. She can't believe that the volunteer is doing this because she wants to and not because she is getting paid. She also identifies that she can also really talk to the volunteer about things that are bothering her and that the activities are just a bonus.

### **The volunteer:**

#### **Why I wanted to volunteer**

I've always been interested in the wellbeing of children, and young people in particular. I have been a youth support worker in the past. I initially volunteered to work with young people in the transition from care to independent living because it seems to me that this is a particularly challenging time for a young person. As there wasn't funding for this work when I applied in January 2013, I signed up for the Independent Visitor role, which was also of interest.

I had (and continue to have) a lot of involvement with my nieces and nephews. I don't have my own children and feel I would like to contribute in a way that I can towards improving the lives of young people where I can.

The Independent Visitor role allows me to do this and is flexible in terms of when we meet, so I can fit the visits around my own varying commitments.

#### **What do I get out of my match with Young Person?**

I feel that I am making a positive contribution to the young person's life, which makes me feel that I'm making good use of my time. Sometimes I do things that I wouldn't ordinarily do and have really enjoyed.

#### **In what way do I think this has had a positive impact?**

- The young person has time to do what she chooses to do
- The young person has time with an independent person who is not paid to be with her.
- The young person has confidential time to talk about whatever might be on her mind without repercussions
- The young person gains self-confidence doing things for herself, trying new activities, going to places she might not otherwise have gone to. She gets a sense of achievement when she does something new, e.g. sailing; assault course; willow sculpture making;
- She has one-to-one time - she doesn't have to share with anyone else

- The young person makes choices about where we go, what we do, how she spends her budget
- She develops social skills through her relationship with me and with others she comes into contact with when on the outings, e.g. sailing tutor; willow-making group; or simply asking for something in a shop.