

Independent Visitors

Information and Application Form



Independent Visitor's (IV) role

- Visit and befriend the child.
- Contribute towards the child's emotional, social and educational development.
- Be aware of the child's ethnicity, cultural and religious needs.
- Encourage a child to exercise their rights and to participate in decisions affecting them.
- Attend the child's statutory reviews where possible.
- Support the care plan for the child.
- How the Independent Visitor pursues their role in terms of a plan and timetable of more specific activities will vary depending on the circumstances:
 - o They will need to form their own judgments about how best to proceed.
 - o Taking into account the local authority's view of the child's needs, the child's wishes and their relationship with the child, the Independent Visitor must reach their own conclusions as to how their activities might be best focused.
 - o Whatever they do should be directed at contributing to the welfare of the child, and this includes promoting the child's developmental, social, emotional, educational, religious and cultural needs.
 - o It may also require them to encourage the child to exercise their rights and to participate in decisions which will affect them.
 - o It will also include (unless they feel that there is clear evidence to act differently) supporting the care plan for the child and their carers who have day-to-day care for the child.
- The Independent Visitor's role and functions can also be described in terms of what they are not intended to do:
 - o They are not to be anything other than child-focused; however, sympathetic they may be to other points of view.
 - o Their functions are not that of a substitute parent or carer but they should aim, as far as possible, to compliment their activities.
 - o In bringing the lay perspective, they must not allow their personal prejudices to determine their actions. They are not expected to accept unquestioningly what those responsible for the child tell them is in the child's interest, but should remain open-minded and even skeptical.

Child's criteria

- That the child, aged 5-17 years, is accommodated by the local authority.
- The need for an Independent Visitor has been discussed and agreed by the social worker and care team.
- The child agrees to an Independent Visitor being appointed.

Contact with the child

- Face-to-face contact with the child is an important aspect of the Independent Visitor's role. The Independent Visitor, child and carers will agree upon the frequency and length of such visits. Contact is usually weekly for the first six-months. It is recognised, however, that the contact may change in the course of the relationship between the child and Independent Visitor. The Independent Visitor will make arrangements in advance about visiting with the child's carers as well as the child.
- Contact will probably involve an outing so as to ease communication, afford privacy and develop the relationship between Independent Visitor and child through a shared activity.
- In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate, if the relationship with the child has developed, for the Independent Visitor to invite the child to their own home. This must be agreed upon by the care team and then approved by the Safeguarding Operations manager. There must be a justifiable reason for this home contact and it should not take place before a risk assessment is carried out.

Length of relationship

- Inevitably there will be variations in the length of time the relationship between the Independent Visitor and the child will last. Some relationships will draw to a natural conclusion in a relatively short period, others will last for a few years and in some cases a lifetime friendship could develop.
- The child expressing the view that they no longer wishes to have the Independent Visitor brings the relationship to an end.
- The relationship also comes to an end by the Independent Visitor for whatever reason, being unable or unwilling to continue to act in this capacity.
- The local authority can bring the relationship to an end by considering that to maintain the relationship is no longer in the best interests of the child,

Independent Visitor commitment, training, support and supervision

- Independent Visitors will be expected to make a minimum two-year commitment to the scheme.
- Independent Visitors are expected to attend regular supervision, and send in brief written notes after visits with the child.
- Independent Visitor support and supervision is offered up until the child turns 18 years of age.
- The Independent Visitor must have successfully achieved an induction programme. All Independent Visitors are referenced and police checked.
- Further training opportunities will be offered.
- Independent Visitors will receive £7 per session activity expenses and a mileage rate of 42p per mile.

Independent Visitor Application Form

Title: Name:

Date of birth: Date of application:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone (Day):

(Mobile):

(Evening):

E-mail address:

What are your reasons for wanting to become an Independent Visitor?

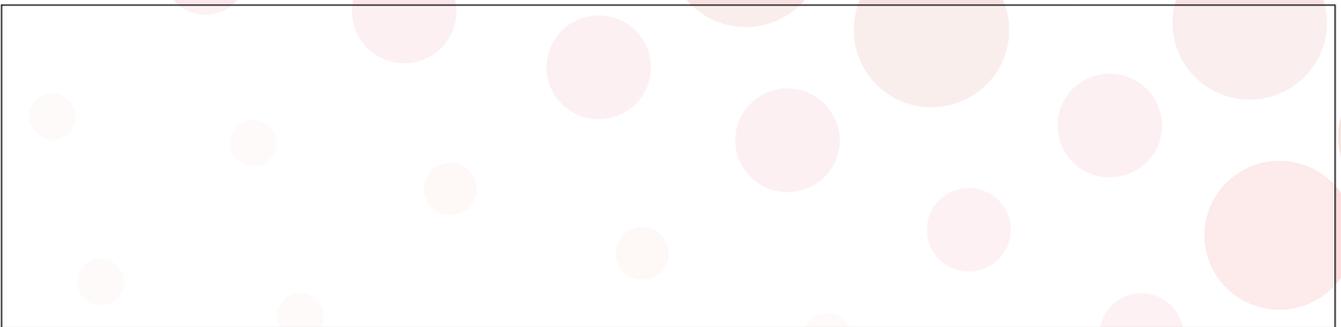
What experience/skills/education/training will you bring to your role as an Independent Visitor?



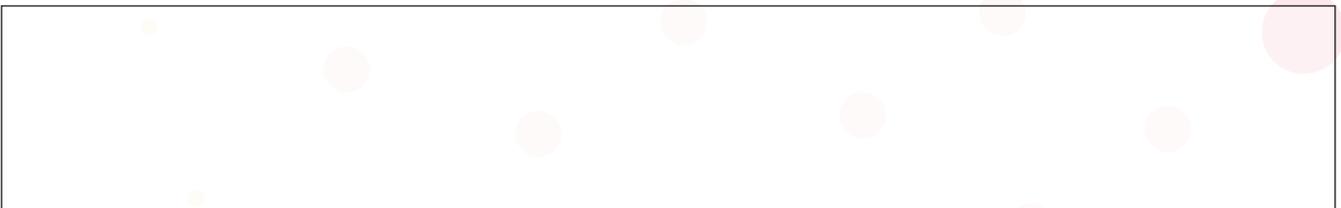
What are you currently doing?



What do you like doing in your free time?



Is there any other information you would like us to know to support your application?



Do you have any special learning needs? e.g. dyslexia, hearing impairment. Yes No

If yes please give details

Do you consider yourself to be in good physical health? Yes No

Do you consider yourself to be in good mental health? Yes No

If no please give details

References

Please nominate two referees in support of your application, one professional reference and one personal reference. (The personal one should not be from a family member).

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

E-mail address:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

E-mail address:

Do you have a full current driving license? Yes No

Do you have access to a car? Yes No

I declare that I have/I have not been convicted of any offences, had any cautions, reprimands or final warnings and that all the information I have provided is correct.

(Please delete the words that do not apply to you). Criminal convictions will not necessarily disqualify you, as long as they are not serious or recent.

Signature:

Date:

Please send this application form to: **Toni McMullan. Quadrant East, 16 Cobalt Business Park, The Silverlink North, NE27 0BY** or via email advocacy@northtyneside.gov.uk

