

## What is an Independent Visitor?

An **Independent Visitor (IV)** is a volunteer who works independently of social services that provides a long-term supportive relationship to a young person (aged between 5 and 18 years) who is looked after by the Local Authority.

The IV service is a befriending service that will match a trained IV with a young person in care. They will meet on a 1-2-1 basis once or twice a month depending on availability to do fun activities out in the community.

The IV service hopes to provide young people in care with a long term and consistent adult who can be a stable mentor, role model and friend. IVs will get to know them, take them out on monthly activities and provide a listening ear if they seek advice or require support during their time together.

'The Children Act' (1989) requires the appointment of an IV if deemed to be in the child's best interests.

## Why are IVs important?

IVs endeavour to be consistent and reliable, positive role models that children can build a trusting relationship with over time. Commitment is crucial as IVs often remain a consistent adult in the child's life even when placements or social workers change.

A Recommendation from The Care Review - May 2022 states- 'Local authorities should redesign their existing Independent Visitors scheme for children in care and care leavers to allow for long term relationships to be built'. This is in response to the vision that - 'No young person should leave care without at least two loving relationships, by 2027'. IVs can and have proven to be these lasting, loving relationships for young people.

## How do we do it?

The IV Service is run by an IV Coordinator who will help to recruit, train and manage volunteers. The coordinator will gain the young person's views on what they would like from their IV and what activities they would like to do. Profiles obtained from both young people and volunteers enables suitable matches to be identified. The young person's views are sought throughout the matching process, and they are empowered with deciding whether they want to go forward with a match. Once matched, IVs will arrange activities directly with Foster Carers.

A referral for an IV can be made by a Social Worker or IRO with referral forms available from [independentvisitors@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:independentvisitors@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

## For more information:

Visit [Independent visitor service - Portsmouth City Council](#) Or Email [independentvisitors@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:independentvisitors@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

Or Visit the National IV Network [Home - National Independent Visitor Network \(ivnetwork.org.uk\)](http://Home - National Independent Visitor Network (ivnetwork.org.uk))