

Independent Visitor Service

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Role of the Independent Visitor

Improved social skills, friendships and mental health

- Developing relationship with a trusted adult/peer
- Making positive friendships
- Developing social skills
- Improved self esteem
- Improving confidence and feeling accepted

Raising Aspirations and improving practical life skills

- Increased opportunity to a variety of cultural, leisure and sporting activities
- Exploring education and training
- Becoming more independent
- Making choices
- Using different transports
- Budgeting and planning

Current Position (to October 2024)

Volunteers

- Since October 2023, 42 new IVs recruited (currently 79 active)
- This is the same as last year (164 recruited since Sept 2020)

Matches

- 94 referrals since October 2023, 65 matches occurring
- Since September 2020, 239 referrals, 187 matches.
- 50 matches have concluded this year, (112 matches in total)
- Currently, 75 active matches, 27 young people on the waiting list

Service Impact

- A qualitative response – care review meetings, meetings with young people and volunteer feedback.
- Care Review Meetings – meetings with social workers, foster carers, key workers and other professionals (99% positive feedback).
- Young person meetings – after one year of matching, 10 this year (97% positive feedback about the IV and the match impact)
- Volunteer Supervisions – every 16 weeks to discuss the matches, (93% see positive impact with their young person, 98% enjoy the volunteering experience).

Future Development

- To reach the National Independent Visitor Service (NIVN) target of matching 10% of children in care (120) with an Independent Visitor, dependent on how the figures are interpreted, the service has matched with 12.8% of the children in care, actively matching with 6.8%.
- Exceeding the Durham County Council target of 50 referrals and 30 matches annually.
- Cost of activity is £40 per visit, plus £26 for transport costs and these figures are monitored quarterly with Commissioners to ensure the service demand is aligned with service resource.
- Group activities, peer support, increased IV forums and practical workshops have all been introduced to increase the level of support for both young people and independent visitors.
- The recruitment of part-time business support has supported the future development of the service and work will continue with Commissioners and Senior Managers to continue this support as well as a budget review to ensure the service can respond to need.