

Independent Visitors Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Independent Visitor?

Independent visitors (also known as IVs) are adults who share their time with young people who are in care. IVs are completely separate from Children's Social Services. Your IV does not replace your carer or social worker, but is another person who you can rely on to support you. They aim to be a person who is there for you for a long time, if you want them to be. They do this because they would like to see you regularly and spend time with you. Other young people tell us they really like having an IV...we hope you will too!

What can they do?

IVs can support you and encourage you to make the most out of your time together. When meeting your IV, you can do activities together such as: talk over a coffee, go to the cinema, go for a walk, play football – anything you like doing or want to try out.

An IV is there to:

- Visit you regularly
- Be there just for you
- Help you try out new interests and hobbies
- Listen to you, your views and opinions
- Take you out and have some fun!

Do I have a say in what happens?

Yes! It is important that you have your say at every stage. You will be asked if you would like an IV, what sort of person you think you'll get on with and the things you would like to do. This will help with matching you with someone with similar interests. When you have an IV, you and your IV will work out together how you will spend your visit and what activities you will do.

What can I expect from an IV?

Someone who is interested in you, will visit you regularly, do fun things with you, listen and chat to you. They will also help with advice if you want them to. All our IVs are checked and trained to make sure you will be safe when you are with them.

What is an IV Co-ordinator?

The IV Co-ordinator is the person who recruits and trains Independent Visitors. They make sure that the IV knows how best to support you and keep you safe. They offer support to your IV and will regularly be in touch with them to see how things are going. Your IV may speak to the IV Co-ordinator if they have any worries about you and they will try to work out the best thing to do.

How am I matched up with an Independent Visitor?

Your social worker will talk to you about what information needs to be sent to the IV Coordinator. The IV Coordinator will choose an IV who they think would be a good match with you and then share information with you about them.

If you would like to meet the person, this will be arranged. You will probably be introduced to your IV for the first time at your foster home or residential home with your social worker. You can then decide whether you would like to meet up again.

How often would we meet?

You will meet up once a month with your IV, visits usually last a few hours depending on what you have decided to do.

Will they talk to anyone about me?

IVs will not usually talk to others about you without you knowing about it. The main person they will talk to is the IV Coordinator because it is their job to support the IVs. They will not usually talk about you to other people such as your social worker or foster carer/key worker unless you give permission. However, if they were worried that you or another young person was being harmed, they would have to tell someone to try to stop this from happening, even if you didn't agree. If this happened, they would let you know who they were going to talk to and what they were going to do.

What if we don't get on?

We will try very hard to link you up with someone you will get on with. But if things don't work out, you just need to make sure the IV Coordinator is contacted. You can contact the IV Coordinator yourself or you can ask your foster carer/keyworker or social worker to do it for you. It is understood that people might not always get on and so we would want to sort it out for you the best we can.

What if I move somewhere else?

We hope that your IV will be able to visit or keep in touch with you wherever you are if this is at all possible.

Do I need to take money when I go on visits?

You don't have to take any money as your IV can claim expenses for activities up to a limit of £20.00. If you want to take some pocket money for extras, that is fine. If you want to go out for a meal with your IV, you might need some extra money for this. It might also be a good idea to take a pack up, depending on where you are going or how long you are going to be.

Getting in touch with the IV Coordinator

You can either do this yourself or you can ask your foster carer, keyworker or social worker to do this for you. Stef Benson IV Coordinator Email: stef@nyy.org.uk Tel 079398 149498