



"I know that just by being there and listening can make all the difference, that's why I volunteer."

Volunteering as an Independent Visitor in the London Borough of Barnet

you.plus

Sova

Being there, being the difference

Many children and young people in foster care don't have anyone there just for them. Don't you think that they should? We do. The Sova Barnet Independent Visitors Project provides looked after young people with 1 to 1 support on a long term basis. Join us and volunteer...

What is an Independent Visitor?

The Children's Act (1989) places a duty on the local authority to appoint an Independent Visitor for any looked after child. They are there to 'assist, befriend and advise' and ensure wherever possible that the young person's views are heard and taken into account. Independent Visitors are unpaid volunteers from the local community. They are separate from social services, and spend time with the young person because they choose to.

Why are Independent Visitors there?

Life in foster care is often unsettling and chaotic. They can provide support throughout changes of placement or Social Worker, and help build a young person's confidence and self worth.

Independent Visitors are there as a consistent reliable adult role model in the young person's life as someone there just for them. Most importantly they are there to listen.

Who do Independent Visitors work with?

Independent Visitors work with children and young people aged 5-18 who are living in care across the London Borough of Barnet. Independent Visitors usually work with only one young person at a time, building a long-term consistent relationship.

"My Independent Visitor has supported me and helped me with loads over the years."

The option to have an Independent Visitor is always the young person's choice and they can be involved with the project for as long as they like.

How are Independent Visitors 'matched' with young people?

Independent Visitors are matched with young people based on personality and similar interests. We do not operate on a first come first served basis, we take our time to match with the hope that the relationship will be sustainable for the foreseeable future.



What does an Independent Visitor do on visits?

Independent Visitors visit their young person on a regular basis for a few hours at a time, generally during evenings and weekends, and engage in a variety of activities in the local area within a budget. For example:

- + swimming
- + ice skating
- + out for tea
- + shopping
- + to the cinema
- + picnics in the park

It all depends on what the young person enjoys doing.

What training and support do Independent Visitors receive?

All volunteers must complete the Sova Independent Visitors training course, which can be accredited by CERTA, before becoming a volunteer along with references and DBS check.

Anything else?

Independent Visitors receive ongoing support and guidance from Sova project staff and supervisions are completed on a regular basis.

Out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

"Being with my Independent Visitor is great because its fun!! We get time to do things."

Join us

If you think you can offer long term time and commitment to be there for a young person in foster care as an Independent Visitor then join us. Please get in touch and we'll tell you how you can get involved.

Sova Barnet Independent Visitors project works in partnership with Barnet Council.

Contact

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