

North Wales Independent Visitor Service *Information Sheet*

About Tros Gynnal Plant

Tros Gynnal Plant is Wales' leading children's rights charity. Set up in 2002 when The Children's Society withdrew from Wales, we support and represent vulnerable children and young people through a range of projects, training and campaigning.

Our aim is to promote the rights of children and young people who are looked after or in need, and enable them to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. A Young People's Advisory Group guides and advises the trustees on the organisation's development.

We provide advocacy services in ten of Wales' Local Authority areas, and an Independent Visitor service in three.

Independent Visitor Frequently asked questions:

1. What is an Independent Visitor?
2. What is the role of an Independent Visitor?
3. Who can become an Independent Visitor?
4. How often do I visit?
5. What are young people waiting for Independent Visitors like?
6. Will I be matched with a young person who lives locally?
7. How long am I expected to volunteer?
8. Will I need training?
9. What help and support will I receive?
10. Do you check volunteer Independent Visitors?
11. Are Independent Visitors reimbursed for expenses?
12. Is there anything else I should know?



Tros Gynnal Plant
Standing up for Children

1. What is an Independent Visitor?

Independent Visitors are volunteers who befriend and support children and young people who are looked after, up to the age of 18. By law, all looked after children and young people should be offered an Independent Visitor if they have had little or no contact with their parents in the last twelve months.

2. What is the role of an Independent Visitor?

Independent Visitors take an active interest in the life of the child or young person they are matched with. They can make a huge difference to a young person, by sharing a hobby or interest and by listening and helping. Independent Visitors can also assist with school or college work and usually meet their matched child/ young person every month to go on outings, play sport, or chat. It is really important that the child or young person chooses the activity you undertake together, so that they lead the process.

3. Who can become an Independent Visitor?

We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds! No specific qualifications or experiences are necessary to become an Independent Visitor. However, Independent Visitors do need to be able to relate appropriately to a young person and be able to offer the support needed.

4. How often do I visit?

We like Independent Visitors to meet their young person each month. It takes time to build up a good relationship, therefore early visits often tend to be a bit shorter but generally the amount of time you spend with a young person on each visit, is set by the young person, with support and agreement from us.

5. What are young people waiting for Independent Visitors like?

All children and young people waiting for an Independent Visitor are looked after by the Local Authority. They will be facing difficulties and situations which may be hard for us to understand. This means you will need to be patient, caring, respectful and understanding.

Every child and young person will be different. Some will be outgoing and easy to get along with, others may be quiet or shy. Some may have emotional problems or challenges with school or college. They will all have amazing qualities, skills and talents.



6. Will I be matched with a young person who lives locally?

We will try to match you with a child or young person who lives within the distance you are willing to travel.

7. How long am I expected to volunteer?

We ask for volunteers to commit for a minimum of one year. This is in order to provide some consistency for the child or young person with who you are matched. However, matches can last for a lot longer than this, especially if you and your young person develop a strong relationship. Sometimes, the relationship comes to a natural end as the young person grows older. In short, there is no fixed term!

8. Will I need training?

Yes. All Independent Visitors have to complete training before being approved as a volunteer. The training includes Child Protection levels 1 and 2.

9. What help and support will I receive?

All Independent Visitors have regular supervision from the Project Leader and the opportunity to meet as a group twice per year.

10. Do you check volunteer Independent Visitors?

Yes. To ensure all Independent Visitors are safe and suitable for the role, volunteers must undergo a comprehensive selection process involving interviews with staff and young people, enhanced CRB check, reference checks and training.

11. Are Independent Visitors reimbursed for expenses?

Yes. We pay allowances for agreed activities as well as transport costs. We do not believe volunteers should be out of pocket for any activities they take within their role of Independent Visitor.

12. Is there anything else I should know?

Only that children and young people are actively involved in choosing their own Independent Visitor so they set their 'person spec' and interview potential matches. This helps to ensure the match is as successful as possible.