



**Change
Grow
Live**



**“I like having chats with my volunteer – they
always listen.”**

**Independent Visitor
Recruitment Pack**

Volunteering with Change Grow Live

Change, grow, live Independent Visitors

The Children's Act of 1989 introduced the role of

Independent Visitors (IVs) for looked after children; their task is "visiting, advising and befriending the child"

Looked after children are often at risk of social isolation, low educational achievement and can often face instability and uncertainty.

The role of the IV is to provide an adult who is separate from the professionals involved in the life of a looked after child, providing friendship, emotional support, someone to talk to and have fun with. The IV meets regularly (usually once a month) with their young person, developing a stable and enduring relationship.

For further information, please go to www.changegrowlive.org

Independent Visitor

Role description

Project Base: You will provide support in your chosen or local area.

Context of role

The role of a Change Grow Live Independent Visitor is to build a healthy and child focused relationship with a young person who is in the care of the local authority; aiming to support them to grow in confidence, feel valued and thrive in their lives. IVs are usually matched to a young person according to a variety of considerations such as location, interests and hobbies. The IV will be fully trained for the role and will be supported throughout. The Change, grow, live team will make a match with a young person and organise an initial meeting where they can meet their young person, talk about themselves, plan what they would like to do and agree on when they would like to meet. The role has an element of responsibility to report regularly on all meetings and contact as outlined by the project.

More details are available in the Key Responsibilities section about the types of activities required to carry out the role of an IV. Additionally, the Training section outlines what training is provided to IVs to support them in carrying out their role.

Equality and diversity

At Change Grow Live we strive to reflect the people and communities we exist to support in the make-up of our staff and volunteer teams. The benefits to Change Grow Live of diversity are clear. By recruiting our staff and volunteers from the widest possible pool we believe we will find the most talented people, who are best placed to understand and empathise with the people we support.

Change Grow Live is determined to lead by example. All of our staff and volunteers will be given an equal chance to develop and progress and enjoy equal treatment and reward.

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Volunteers with a criminal record

At Change Grow Live we actively promote equality of opportunity for everyone. We welcome applications for volunteering opportunities from a wide range of people, including those with criminal records. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working as a Change, grow, live volunteer. It will depend on the nature of the volunteering role and the nature of your offences. However those applying to be a volunteer will be expected to disclose fully any previous criminal convictions and be prepared to have a DBS check before becoming an active volunteer.

Please note: An individual who is on a DBS barring list will not be able to volunteer for Change Grow Live. Being DBS barred means an individual cannot work with children or vulnerable adults, and it is a criminal offence for an individual to attempt to do so. Change Grow Live would also be breaking the law if we recruit someone who is DBS barred.

Prospective volunteers will be asked about any criminal convictions they may have at application.

Other factors

Additional restrictions on volunteer recruitment may apply on a project-by project basis

Key responsibilities/activities for an Independent Visitor

- Meet with their young person, as directed by the project, (with project staff and or/any referring agency)
- Create a positive relationship between themselves and the young person
- Contribute to the young person's development and confidence
- Assist and advise the young person in developing skills and appropriate attitudes that will assist them in achieving the goals in their life
- Encourage and motivate the young person to make positive changes and encourage their personal development (In liaison with the project, the referring agency and the young person concerned)
- Encourage young people to make positive use of local resources and activities, such as local parks and leisure centres
- Maintain principles of confidentiality, especially in relation to the young person, the project and any referring agency
- Operate at all times within the Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities policies of Change, grow, live and any relevant referring agency
- Complete all paperwork and attend supervision meetings as directed by the project
- Attend young people's reviews as required

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- Participate in providing feedback to SPACE ¹(Change Grow Live participation and continuing engagement)
- Willingness to attend additional training

Volunteer Person Specification

1. A commitment to Change Grow Live for a minimum of 24 months
2. 100% reliability with regular activity of one session a month
3. A willingness to gain an understanding and awareness of the Project and Safeguarding Policies.
4. A commitment to the Health & Safety and Equal Opportunities policies under which the Project operates.
5. An understanding of the issues some individuals can face whilst in care or leaving care.
6. Over 18 years of age, with a mature attitude and positive outlook.
7. A non-judgmental, non-patronising and honest approach.
8. An ability to communicate effectively with both individuals and relevant agencies.
9. Gain an understanding of the role, responsibilities and boundaries of the volunteer.
10. A commitment to assist participants to work towards the aims and objectives identified by and for them.
11. The ability to reflect upon a participant's support needs and direct activity accordingly.
12. An understanding of local resources and how to access them.
13. A willingness to gain an understanding of issues relating to confidentiality and the differing roles of Project staff and those from other relevant agencies.

Volunteer Activities

1. Meet with a child or young person on a one to one situation once a month.
2. Create a positive befriending relationship between themselves and the participant.
3. In liaison with the Project, the referring agency and the participant concerned, encourage and motivate the participant to make positive, focused and constructive use of education, training, employment and personal development opportunities.
4. Encourage participants to make positive use of local resources.
5. Assist the participant in developing skills and appropriate attitudes that will assist them in achieving their personal action plan if relevant.
6. Maintain principles of confidentiality, especially in relation to the participant, the Project and any referring agency.

¹ Some regions have regular SPACE forums where active volunteers meet regularly with project staff. These forums allow volunteers to input into the review of our Volunteer Policy, Procedures and Practices.

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7. Operate at all times within the Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies of Change Grow Live and any relevant referring agency. This applies where volunteers are on any premises or operating on behalf of the project or any referring agency.
8. Complete monitoring, review and expense sheets promptly and feedback accordingly.
9. Receive informal support and supervision as agreed with the project. Attend periodic support groups and attend on-going training courses.
10. Attend relevant child and young person meetings if required and as discussed with project staff.

Training

As part of the selection and recruitment process individuals are required to undertake the training so as to enable them to carry out the roles as described above.

Mandatory training for this role includes:

- Core Volunteering Skills
- Independent Visitor
- Safeguarding

Learning achieved through completing this training can accredited through Certa (OCN) and Agored (Welsh projects only). Prospective volunteers will be able to discuss accreditation with their project manager. Ongoing training and support is provided regularly to volunteer to provide opportunities for development.

Selection Criteria

As part of the recruitment process prospective volunteers will be assessed against a number of criteria, which help to determine suitability for a particular role. These criteria will be assessed at various stages of the recruitment process, including application form, 1st interview, training and pre commencement discussion.

Individuals applying to become a Change Grow Live Independent Visitor will be required to demonstrate ability in the following areas:

- **Attributes**
 - Understanding the role of volunteers
 - Reliability and commitment
 - Honesty
 - Declaration of criminal record
 - Ability to hold confidential information
- **Personal approach**
 - Motivation to volunteer
 - Self-awareness
 - Ability to accept failure
 - Ability to give support
 - Confidence and ability to deal with difficult situations

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- Understanding personal boundaries
- Attitudes
 - Perceptions, assumptions and attitudes regarding looked after children
 - Ability to work in a non-discriminatory way
 - Respect for other people's point of view
- Communication
 - Effective listener
 - Appropriate non-verbal communication
 - Adequate verbal communication
 - Perceptive

Recruitment process

The recruitment process in becoming a Change Grow Live volunteer involves:

- Application
- Short listing
- 1st Interview
- Conditional offer
- Training
- Pre commencement discussion
- Satisfactory DBS disclosure
- Right to work documents
- Satisfactory references
- Volunteer registration process
- ID Card Issued

Feedback from one of our young people about having an IV:

"The IV has always been there when she says she will, she listens to me and we talk about me and how I am. I have told her about my issues and she will always be a good listener. I don't always want to tell my carer as she might be worried or get stressed. We have similar interests and we go out to places that I choose like Merry Hill Pizza Hut and Resorts World at the NEC. We have also been to the movies to watch movies and we once went on a high ropes course which was really scary but I was really proud of myself for finishing it. We are planning a visit to Christmas market next and next year, we have booked for a go karting trip!"

Feedback from one of our IV's:

"The best thing about volunteering is the sense of pride and achievement I feel. I feel that I am making a real difference to the life of a young person increasing their confidence and self-esteem, allowing them to go new places, try new things and just have fun. A question Change Grow Live ask at the end of every session is how I have enabled the young person to get involved in decision-making, this really supports their growing independence into adulthood"

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