

- ◆ You could let the volunteer know that they are appreciated if it is difficult for your child to do so because of communication problems.
- ◆ The co-ordinator would always be available to give support and advice.

**Confidentiality:** All personal information about your child will be kept confidential by the branch co-ordinator and volunteer.

**If you think your child might benefit from being linked up, please contact your local branch co-ordinator:**

**Berwickshire:** Judy Kay, Platform One, Station Road, Duns Berwickshire TD11 3HS Tel: 01361 883662/07776 221843 judykay@interestlink.org.uk

**Central Borders:** Stefanie Poletylo, Low Buckholmside, Galashiels TD1 1RT Tel: 01896 750020/07717 403529 stefanie-poletylo@interestlink.org.uk

**Roxburgh:** Val Reilly, Katherine Elliot Centre, Howdenbank, Hawick TD9 7JT Tel: 01450 377600/07738 567498 valreilly@interestlink.org.uk

**Tweeddale:** Mary Mouat, Volunteer Resource Centre, School Brae, High Street, Peebles EH45 8AL Tel: 01721 729348/0777 3303829 marymouat@interestlink.org.uk

[www.interestlink.org.uk](http://www.interestlink.org.uk)



## Children's Service Information for Parents



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary  
Service 2006

### **The Children's Service and its aims**

- ◆ Our Children's Service aims to improve the quality of life of children aged 11-16 who have complex learning needs.
- ◆ We achieve this by linking children 1:1 with trained adult volunteers who support them in mainstream out-of-school activities.
- ◆ These befriending links overcome problems of transport, communication and lack of social networks which might otherwise prevent children from enjoying social and leisure activities.

### **About Interest Link Borders**

- ◆ We are an independent charity founded in 1990.
- ◆ We have four branches, based in Duns, Galashiels, Hawick and Peebles (see contact details overleaf).
- ◆ In addition to the Children's Service we operate a 1:1 befriending service for adults with learning disabilities and a group befriending service for young people aged 16-25 who are in transition from children's additional needs services to adult learning disabilities service.

### **How the Children's Service works**

- ◆ Information about the service is passed onto children and their parents through schools and children's services.
- ◆ Children interested in joining the service fill in a brief form.
- ◆ The local branch co-ordinator will then make a home visit to discuss matters such as support needs, preferred activities, activity times and frequency in more detail. The branch co-ordinator will also, with your permission, talk to teachers and children's services to form a complete picture.
- ◆ We cannot guarantee that everyone registered with the service will be linked up: this depends mainly on how many volunteers can be recruited and where they live.

- ◆ Volunteers go through a strict process of interviews, references, police checks and training to prepare them for their role.
- ◆ The most appropriate match is then made and the volunteer is introduced to the child and their parents by the branch co-ordinator.
- ◆ At the introduction meeting, plans are made for initial activities and any potential problems are discussed.
- ◆ The link operates on a trial basis for the first month or two and is then confirmed if both the child and volunteer are happy with it.
- ◆ There are no pre-set limits on how long a link can last, and duration is determined mainly by the child's and volunteer's wishes and whether the child grows out of the service's age range (11-16). The service is currently funded by Scottish Borders Council until March 2011.
- ◆ Once a child is too old for our Children's Service, it is likely they will be eligible to join our group and/or 1:1 services for people over 16.

### **Your role in the link**

As a parent, you would be fully involved at every stage:

- ◆ During registration you would be consulted on whether a link would be practical and what activities would be realistic.
- ◆ You would have a large role to play in deciding if a link continues beyond the trial period.
- ◆ You would be the liaison between the volunteer and your child in arranging visits and trips out.
- ◆ You would ensure that your child is wearing suitable clothes for a trip out and has any money that might be needed (we pay for the volunteer's travel and activity costs (such as cinema admission), but would normally expect you to pay your child's activity costs).