

(such as cinema admission), but would normally expect you to pay your child's activity costs).

- ◆ 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



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 and are likely to go on to use adult learning disabilities services.
- ◆ 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