

- ◆ The local co-ordinator is always be available to give support and advice.

Confidentiality: All personal information about the service user will be kept confidential by the co-ordinator and volunteers. However, you would told about anything the service user says or does that you need to know about as their carer.

Expenses: Service users pay their own activity costs, but these are kept to a minimum. Interest Link can organise transport if needed.

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

Buddies & Central Borders: Stefanie Poletyllo, Low Buckholmside, Galashiels TD1 1RT Tel: 01896 750020/07717 403529 stefaniepoletyllo@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 Tel: 01721 729348/0777 3303829 marymouat@interestlink.org.uk

www.interestlink.org.uk

Registered Charity No. SC030132



unsung heroes
The Queen's Award
for Voluntary



Linking people with learning disabilities and volunteers to do activities both enjoy

Young Peoples Service Information for Carers

Interest Link aims to improve the quality of life of people with learning disabilities living in the Scottish Borders. We have run a one-to-one befriending service for adults since 1990 and in July 2008 we launched a new group befriending service aimed at young people aged 16-25.

We set up the Young Peoples Service to help with the transition from childrens additional needs services to adult learning disabilities services. Transition can be difficult, with social networks developed at school not being replaced by adult networks and people being left very socially isolated as a result.

How the service works:

- ◆ Young people can ask to join the service or can be referred by carers or agencies such as schools or Social Work.
- ◆ The local Interest Link Co-ordinator will send initial questionnaires to the young person and their carer and, if they think a place in a group may be available, will then visit them to complete a registration form and risk assessment.
- ◆ Every September, we form small groups of 3 service users and 3 young volunteer mentors, all aged 16-25. The volunteers are trained and police-checked.
- ◆ The groups meet up once a fortnight from October till the following June, usually on a weekday evening, and are supervised by an Interest Link staff member.
- ◆ The groups will usually get out and about locally and do fun social activities.

- ◆ Occasionally the groups from all over the Borders will get together for workshops and discussions in which the volunteer mentors will act as role models for the service users, discussing their experiences of life as they become adults, the skills they have needed to develop and the choices they have made. The aim of this is to broaden the horizons of the young people with learning disabilities and look at the choices open to them.
- ◆ When the groups come to an end in June, young people can ask to stay on and join a group for a second year. Alternatively, they can join our Adult 1:1 service

Number and location of groups:

- ◆ We will be operating groups in each of our four branch areas (Berwickshire, Central Borders, Roxburgh and Tweeddale).
- ◆ We will base groups as near as possible to where group members live so that they can do local activities and hopefully build up longterm local relationships.

The Carer's Role

- ◆ Carers are consulted on issues such as whether the person they care for would benefit from being in a group, whether there are medical issues and what activities would be realistic.
- ◆ Carers are kept fully informed about the activities the group are doing and are asked to help the young person prepare for group meetings (e.g. ensure they are wearing suitable clothes)