

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

Expenses: Interest Link Borders will pay all the volunteer's expenses, such as petrol costs and activity costs. Service users pay their own activity costs.

If you think the person with learning disabilities for whom you care 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

Buddies & Central Borders: Stefanie Poletylo, Low Buckholmside, Galashiels TD1 1RT Tel: 01896 750020/07717 403529
stefaniepoletylo@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
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www.interestlink.org.uk



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

Information for Carers Adult Service



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary
Service 2006

Interest Link Borders Information for Carers

What the service does and why

Interest Link appreciates that many people with learning disabilities have things they would like to do independently but that these can be difficult to organise.

To overcome some of the problems, Interest Link links people aged 16 and over who have learning disabilities with volunteers so they can do activities both enjoy.

Interest Link is an independent Borders-based charity operating through four branches (see overleaf for addresses).

How the service works

Any adult with learning disabilities who wishes to use the service can register with Interest Link by filling in a form. The local branch co-ordinator will then visit them and their carer at home and discuss what they would like to do. This could be anything from golf, bowling or swimming to shopping, crafts, music, going for a walk or drive or going to the cinema, a concert or the pub. It could just involve being visited at home.

Volunteers are recruited, often through the Volunteer Bureau or by way of adverts in the local press. The branch co-ordinator interviews volunteers, obtains two written and oral references and carries out a police check. Volunteers are given disability awareness training to ensure they appreciate the problems that service users face.

Service users and volunteers are then matched up, taking into account such factors as age, interests and

location so as to ensure a compatible and practical link. It can take a long time to find a suitable volunteer.

Volunteers are introduced to the service user and their carer by the co-ordinator. Ideas for the link are discussed and plans made for the volunteer to take the service user out, or visit them, on a regular basis (for example once a week or fortnight for 1-2 hours). At the introduction the specific problems faced by the service user are also discussed. These could include problems with epilepsy or eating or simple things such as help needed when crossing a road.

The link initially operates on a trial basis for a month and is then confirmed if the service user and volunteer are happy with it. The link continues for as long as both wish.

Your role in the link

As a carer you would be consulted at every stage.

You would be consulted during registration on whether a link would be practical and what activities would be realistic for the service user to do.

You would always be fully involved when the Co-ordinator came to visit the service user initially and at the introduction of a volunteer.

You would be the liaison between the volunteer and service user in arranging visits and trips out.

The volunteer would always check in with you before collecting the service user and ensure that the service user is wearing suitable clothes for a trip out and has any money that might be needed.

You could let the volunteer know that they are appreciated if it is difficult for the service user to do so because of communication problems.

The co-ordinator would always be available to give support and advice.