

- ◆ Being a volunteer provides excellent work experience and a source of references if you are thinking about applying for courses or paid jobs in Care.

Confidentiality: All personal information about children must be kept confidential unless it raises concerns about the wellbeing of the child.

Expenses: Interest Link would pay all your expenses, including car costs at 30p per mile and activity costs such as cinema tickets and basic refreshments. Costs are claimed monthly and paid promptly. They will not affect Benefits.

Insurance: If you use your car for your volunteering you should tell your insurer and can claim back any premium increase from the project. The project also has public liability and personal accident insurance to cover you during your link.

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Children's Service

Information for Volunteers



unsung heroes
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 operates:

- ◆ Children learn about the service through school and parents and register with us if they are interested in being linked up with a volunteer. We gather information from family and professionals to ensure that we can link the child safely and match them up with the volunteer that is right for them..
- ◆ As a volunteer you would go through a process of interviews, references, police checks and training to prepare you for your role.
- ◆ We would then match you with a child and introduce you to them and their parents.

- ◆ At the introduction meeting, plans would be 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 you and the child 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 as a volunteer:

- ◆ As a volunteer your role could be demanding and require a good deal of patience and persistence. Communication with a child may be difficult and it may take a while to establish a relationship. However:
- ◆ You would be given as much preparation and support as you needed. Your local co-ordinator would always be available to give advice and you should not hesitate to phone them if you have a question or a problem. They would ring you and meet up with you regularly to check things are going to plan.
- ◆ The satisfaction to be had from the role, and the difference it makes to a service user's life can be immense: By being linked with a volunteer, service users can do the things they want to and know that the person helping them is doing so because they want to, not because they are paid to or feel obliged to. As well as improving their quality of life (and giving respite to their carers), being linked to a volunteer can help them with their social skills and self-confidence and give them a sense of independence.