

Individual case study

The young person (K) in this case study lives in a residential children's home and at the time of matching with his Independent Visitor he had no contact with his birth family.

K was introduced to his Independent Visitor in January 2011. The Independent Visitor visits K once a month and takes him out to places he is interested in, giving him some time away from the residential children's home and the opportunity to enjoy different activities of his own choice.

The Independent Visitor has worked hard to develop a trusting relationship with K. The Independent Visitor reports that K can be a very quiet and shy young person and initially she found it quite hard to make meaningful conversation with him. However the Independent Visitor now reports that K seems to enjoy her visits and actively takes part in planning what he wants to do on the next visit.

K's needs for an Independent Visitor were identified by his social worker as he was looked after and living in a residential children's home. At the time of referral to the NYAS Independent Visitor Service K had no contact at all with any of his birth family. K had been in a number of foster care placements prior to living in the residential children's home.

It was felt by his social worker that K should have someone independent to build up a long term positive relationship with him and provide some time out from the residential children's home.

Planned outcome:

- For K to be able to identify, plan and enjoy activities he would like to engage in on a regular basis.
- For K to have someone who is independent of staff, social workers, teachers, and other young people in the children's home who is there just for him.
- For K to have someone he can rely on and can develop a positive relationship with.
- For K to have some time away from the residential children's home and to have someone independent he can talk to in confidence.

Living in the children's home has sometimes been a stressful experience for K and he benefits from the time away from this environment that is provided by his Independent Visitor.

The Independent Visitor is a person K relies on – he knows that she will visit him every month and he looks forward to these visits.

The Independent Visitor takes K out to enjoy different experiences he would not otherwise have, or may have to share with other young people and staff from the children's home.

K is a quiet and shy young person who can find it difficult to talk to adults on a one to one basis. His Independent Visitor has worked hard to find ways to communicate with him that he feels comfortable with.

The Independent Visitor reports that K enjoys his visits, and is happy to engage in planning activities for the next visit.

The Independent Visitor feels that these visits and her relationship with K are important to him. She says that at the start of their relationship K did not seem keen on her visits. However she reports that recently K has only missed one planned visit and this was because he had been double booked to go Christmas Shopping with staff.

The Independent Visitor reports that initially K was very quiet and shy and conversation between them was limited as K seemed reluctant to engage with her. However, the Independent Visitor has used imaginative ways to engage with K, playing games with him such as "Table Talk" that ask simple and general questions about favourite food, TV programmes, ideal holiday destinations, what would you do in a certain situation etc. The Independent Visitor has reported that K enjoys these games and this takes the pressure off him to engage in "small talk" or conversations about how he may be feeling. The Independent Visitor reports that her relationship with K has developed with the use of these communication strategies, and balancing this with allowing K to choose activities where he does not feel forced to engage in lengthy conversations, such as going to the cinema.

The Independent Visitor is committed to developing her relationship with K at his own pace and to providing this service until K is 18.

The Independent Visitor hopes that her relationship with K will continue to be a positive aspect of his life until he is ready to leave the care of the local authority.