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## Dear Volunteer

Thank you for your interest in the Befriending role with the Young Lives Foundation. I trust this pack will tell you everything you need to know in order to decide whether this might be the role for you.

This pack comprises the following:

- Information about the Young Lives Foundation (YLF)
- Young person's story
- About this role
- Where your role fits in the bigger picture
- Application process

More than 30 members of staff and over 170 volunteers work for YLF and together we aim to make a difference to the lives of young people across Kent and Medway. If you are excited by the possibility of joining our team, then please apply.

If you would like to have an informal discussion about any aspects of the role or the information provided in this pack, then please contact Neil Vickery on 01622 693459 or via [enquiries@ylf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ylf.org.uk)

For further information about YLF please visit our website at [www.ylf.org.uk](http://www.ylf.org.uk)

We look forward to receiving your application.

With best wishes

Stephen Gray

Chief Executive Officer

# About the Young Lives Foundation

## Our Vision

Our vision is that every young person in need shall have access to the resources and opportunities needed for them to achieve their potential and lead fulfilled lives.

The Young Lives Foundation (YLF) works towards achieving this vision by supporting young people through times of difficulty and distress, enabling their voices to be heard and assisting young people to achieve their potential.

## Our Foundation

YLF is an independent children's charity established in 2007. We are dedicated to delivering quality services that include mentoring, befriending, advocacy and positive activity programmes. Our services are tailored to ensure we achieve effective outcomes in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people across Kent and Medway.

## Our Support

YLF supports the following groups of people:

**Looked after children / care leavers**

**Young offenders / those at risk of offending**

**Vulnerable adults**

**Families in need of support**

**Children in need / on the edge of care**

**Young people disengaged in education**

**Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**

**Children who have been adopted**

YLF have over 170 volunteers committed to supporting our services and our young people.

**34,000**

*Voluntary hours are given per annum*

**3,500**

*Vulnerable people supported each year*

## Our Values

At YLF, we believe that staff and volunteers should have:

**Passion** ...to be helpful, friendly, non-judgemental and understanding

**Principles** ...to be respectful, a good listener, and a good time-keeper

**Integrity** ...to be trustworthy, open minded, reliable and consistent

**Innovation** ...to be creative, a good team player and someone who thinks outside of the box

## Who We Help



# Rachel's Story

Rachel lives in an isolated area and the family do not drive. Rachel used to have a good relationship with her brother but as he had got older he didn't want to spend time with her and could be quite nasty to her. Rachel had also previously had problems with her peer group at school and could feel very lonely. Rachel's grandfather had also recently died.

It was felt Rachel would benefit from increased confidence by developing different interests outside of home; support with accepting her older brother not wanting to spend time with her and encouragement to feel more positive about things. Rachel was referred by the family Support Worker and then matched with a YLF Mentor.

***"Six months ago Rachel would never have had the confidence to join in an activity with others especially a climbing activity"*** Sally | Parent

The Mentor worked with Rachel to increase her confidence and social skills and introduced her to swimming lessons which was something Rachel had wanted to do. Towards the end of the arrangement Rachel was referred to our Positive Activities and she

attended a Climbing Activity. YLF was able to support with transport, enabling Rachel to participate, and she has been offered the opportunity of future activities.

The Mentor was able to listen and offer support and give guidance around her relationship with her brother, whereby Rachel became more accepting of her brother's need for his own space. Rachel also started to maintain good friendships with her peers at school, with fewer arguments or upsets. At the end of their time together Rachel was able to reflect on how positive having a Mentor had been for her by recording her journey through a picture story, something that she could keep to remind her of her own ability to achieve and develop and feel more positive about things. YLF was able to signpost the family to some support groups for children with additional needs as the family had still not received a diagnosis for their son.

***"Rachel was less negative and nervous about things and has shown a more happy and positive side and approach towards things"*** Faye | Mentor



### Gary's Story

*Gary and Jane have been matched for the last three years. Gary has experienced some turbulent times recently which has involved him moving placements. Jane has been there for him during this time and has had several telephone calls from Gary when he has been in difficult situations. The most recent one occurred when Jane was on a train going to London with her family. Gary was quite upset asking if he could see Jane. Jane returned home and arranged to meet with him. The issue was concerning a new relationship he had been upset about a decision the foster carers and Social Worker had made regarding an overnight stay. Jane was able to talk it through with Gary and returned him to the foster carers a lot calmer. Gary later phoned Jane to say that he had apologised to his foster carers and felt happier about decisions that had been made.*

### Aiden's Story

*Aiden and Marion are a new arrangement. Aiden is very keen on fishing and so their first visit was to the fishing lake. When they arrived, Aiden said to Marion that they couldn't speak as it would scare the fish. This did not last long as Aiden was soon chatting away. They were there for five hours and caught nothing, but had a fantastic time! Marion and his foster carer feel that fishing is some kind of safety net for Aiden as this seemed to be all that he wanted to do. Marion is gradually helping Aiden to experience new activities. They attended the Brighton trip and have since been swimming. Marion reports that Aiden is very quiet at first but once he gets to the activity he is fine and enjoys it.*

## Role Description

### Volunteer Befriender / Independent Visitor

#### Responsible to

Designated Befriending Coordinator

#### Role

Young people who are looked after by the local authority often lack a consistent adult role model in their lives. This is particularly the case for those young people who have no contact with their birth families.

The Children Act (1989 & 2004) states a local authority looking after a child must appoint an independent person to be the child's visitor if it appears to them that it would be in the child's interests to do so. These people are called **independent visitors**.

An independent visitor can provide the consistency and stability that these young people are missing out on. It is widely agreed that it is in the child's best interests to have somebody special for them who is independent from the care system.

Independent visitors are trained volunteers who visit, advise and befriend a young person. It is the statutory right of any eligible young person to have an independent visitor; however, it is also their choice.

In order to provide consistency and stability all independent visitors commit to a minimum of two years but many relationships last much longer.

#### Main Responsibilities

- Be able to commit a minimum of two years to the role
- Visit, advise and befriend the young person
- Arrange visits, activities and outings with the young person and share in quality one-to-one time with them
- Take time to assist with any problems, issues and concerns and empower the young person to problem solve for themselves
- Take an interest in and contribute to the young person's general welfare, including promoting the young person's social, emotional, educational and cultural needs
- Encourage the young person to exercise their rights and to participate fully in the decisions that are made on their behalf
- Advocate for the young person if they request you to, and accompany them to any meetings, appointments, etc
- Be open minded and prepared to raise questions about decisions that are made, in the interests of the young person
- Support the care plan that has been formulated for the young person and their carers, unless it is felt that there is clear evidence to act differently



- Ensure that you maintain good and open communications with YLF and work within the guidelines set

### General Requirements

- Maintain regular contact with the young person
- Visit the young person on a monthly basis for a minimum of two years
- To develop and maintain effective liaison with the Young Lives Foundation.
- To attend training sessions focused around children in care, safeguarding and core skills
- To comply with follow YLF policies and procedures
- Report any concerns or written reports to enable YLF to support the development of the friendship
- To take part in supervision with the Independent Service Manager or Befriending Officer
- To keep accurate records of visits you have made with your young person
- To keep within the activity budget of £25 and complete expenses form in a timely manner

### Training and Support

Training and on-going support is provided to help you in the role and the service prides itself on the welcoming and friendly style in which it operates.

YLF delivers a thorough training course to all applicants. One session will focus on the experiences of young people in care, with particular emphasis on the care system; Another session will focus on how to safeguard your young person, and another on the core skills required to be a good independent visitor.

Formal and informal supervision is made available to all volunteers. Additionally, we also provide an open door policy to volunteers.

YLF reimburses all authorised expenses

## Person Specification

Knowledge and Experience	Essential	Desirable
General knowledge of issues affecting young people		X
Some experience of working with young people		X
Skills		
Ability to motivate, guide and support young people	X	
To manage time effectively in order to meet young person on a monthly basis	X	
Ability to maintain accurate and up-to-date records	X	
To be able to communicate effectively	X	
Personal Characteristics		
Good understanding of own feelings and life experiences and how these may affect relationships and reactions to situations	X	
Recognition of the importance of professional boundaries in terms of relationships, communication and conduct	X	
Approachable and non-judgemental	X	
A high level of integrity, reliability and to be trustworthy	X	
Energy and sense of humour with a willingness to engage in activities	X	
Enthusiastic and positive attitude	X	
Collaborative team player	X	
Have a genuine interest in the wellbeing of young people	X	
Other Requirements		
Commitment to, understanding of, and maintenance of the sensitive nature of our work and values in all communications	X	
The post is subject to an YLF Safer Recruitment Process and an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service	X	

This role description does not form a binding contract and can be amended, as the needs of YLF and the volunteer require. All amendments will be discussed with the volunteer. The role description set out above is intended for guidance only. The role is subject to YLF's Safer Recruitment Process, a satisfactory DBS check and a successful accreditation.

# Application Process

## How to Apply

Please complete and return an application and safeguarding form (there is also an optional equal opportunities form).

You can apply directly online or download these forms from our website:  
[www.ylf.org.uk/resources](http://www.ylf.org.uk/resources)

If you require hard copies, they are available upon request.

**Applications are then submitted online automatically or can be sent to:**

**Email |** [volunteering@ylf.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ylf.org.uk)

**Post |** YLF Volunteering, 71 College Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6SX

## DBS/Referees

All volunteers are required to complete an enhanced DBS form; we also seek a reference from your current employer and two others (whom you have known for over 5 years).

## Further Info

Please visit the volunteering pages of our website for further information and frequently asked questions at [www.ylf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer/](http://www.ylf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer/) or feel free to call us with any questions on 01622 693459