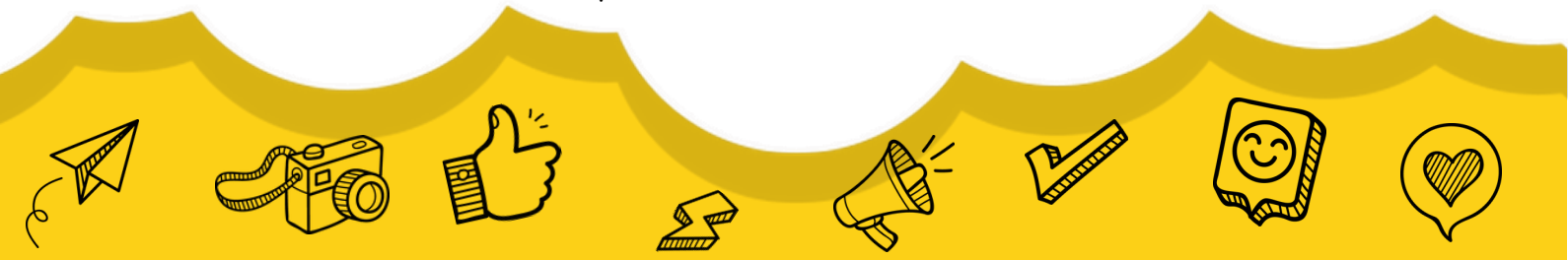




MEDWAY INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE REPORT

Quarter 1 2025
April 2025- June 2025



Listen . Support . Empower

“

The Medway Independent Visitor service concludes this quarter supporting a total of 26 young people (since October 1st 2024).

There are currently 21 active Medway arrangements across the County, delivering consistent and stable support to young people in the community.

”



Chloe Harris,
on behalf of the Independent Visitor service

The IV Mission....



Providing long term levels of support, independent from the care system



Improving resilience and social and emotional wellbeing



Providing consistency and stability to young people in care



Upholding the statutory right of providing an Independent Visitor to all those who it is suitable for



Improving the experiences of young people in care

Achieving the Mission Goals

Monthly visits out in the community



Consistent role models



Trying new things



Interest and young person focused



Young person led



Independent volunteer





Volunteer's Week



To thank our wonderful volunteers and supporters, YLF threw a 'Thank you' BBQ at The Friars in Aylesford. The event was a huge success, allowing us to catch up with our volunteers and thank them personally with food, drink and a little gift. Social events are really important with volunteer retention and following feedback from some of our independent visitors, we have arranged more social events over the summer to encourage everyone to share experiences and ideas.



Goodbye to Frank

This quarter we said goodbye to Frank Martin, who has left the YLF after 8 years in the befriending team to try his hand in a new sector. We wish him the best of luck in his new role!

We will be welcoming Tajnic Higgins to join the team in July and we're looking forward to an exciting new chapter for the service




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Providing consistency and stability to young people in care



Improving the experiences of young people in care



Improving resilience and social and emotional wellbeing



Case Study - Millie and Charli

Millie and Charli were matched in 2022, after Millie was struggling to navigate the tough world of secondary school and friendships. Millie came into care in her teen years, so struggled with a sense of rejection and found it very difficult to trust adults. As a result, she was prone to pushing boundaries and this led to a breakdown of her foster placement. Having Charli volunteer with her gave her safe space to vent her day-to-day frustrations, and with time things improved. Millie moved to semi-independent accommodation aged 16 and Charli's role changed to offer more support with practical things and preparing her for independence. With this move came all of the challenges of adult relationships to navigate but, Millie felt she could rely on Charli's support with. After three years of visits, plus virtual support on the phone, Millie has learned to trust Charli. Charli can give an honest opinion when asked about Millie's plans for the future, and Millie understands it's because she genuinely cares about her. Millie turns 18 this summer and the pair decided very quickly that they would continue their arrangement and Charli would become a Leaving Care Mentor. They have a special dinner planned for Millie's big 18th birthday before getting stuck into setting her up for the future. Charli is looking forward to supporting Millie as she leaves care and enters the big wide world!

Case Study - Imogen and Cassie

10 year old Imogen's independent visitor journey began when she was referred in 2024, after her foster placement broke down and she was moved away from her little sister. She was matched with a volunteer who supported her through the placement change and then a change in schools. Unfortunately, due to ill health, Imogen's volunteer had to resign suddenly. As Imogen was quickly approaching the end of primary school and the scary transition to secondary, it became very important for the team to find her a consistent and stable adult she could trust for support.

Luckily, Cassie was coming through our recruitment process and it became very clear to the team after a few meetings that her passion and commitment to the role was exactly what Imogen needed in her next volunteer. The match meeting went beautifully; Cassie very confidently and calmly led Imogen into conversation with a little gift and they booked their first official visit in the following week.

Since then, the pair have gone horse-riding (a passion of Imogen's), to the park, or exploring the local area. Imogen has a wild imagination and they spent hours searching for fairies in woodlands. They are already so in tune, Cassie recognises when Imogen needs a few moments to readjust or settle herself and if she is tired of walking they'll rest and play a little game. Both of them treasure their time together and we look forward to seeing how their friendship blossoms over the coming years!



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Service Wins

SUPPORT IN CARE AND BEYOND

Five of our volunteers who are matched with Medway young people have been on, or are booked to go on, training for our leaving care mentoring service, so the young people have the option of consistent support with an adult they already know and trust as they prepare to leave care.

Our Futures Care Leavers programme concentrates more on support with practical skills as young people begin to live independently. This might be help with budgeting, cooking or maintaining a good social circle they can lean on for support to combat loneliness.

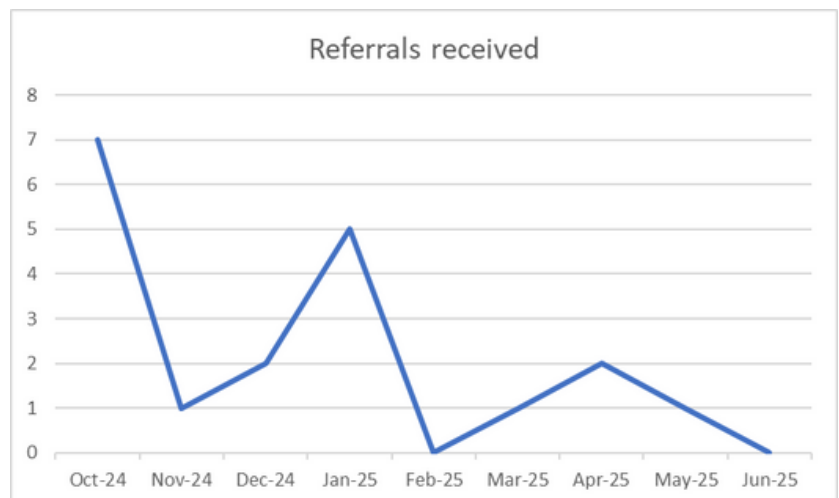
Service Challenges

PLACEMENT MOVES AND UPDATES

The team encounter barriers when trying to find updated placement information for young people who have been moved. This can cause disruption to existing IV arrangements, but also hinder the matching process. To try and rectify this, we e-mail the social worker at the point of referral so they have a direct contact for the IV team. We will also be looking at 2 monthly check-ins with referrers so we can make sure details remain up to date.

REFERRAL NUMBERS

We see peaks in referral numbers at the beginning of each quarter, but they have started to slow down as the year progresses. We have been approached by a foster support group to talk about the service, which will hopefully generate more referrals





Upholding the statutory right of providing an Independent Visitor to all those who it is suitable for

Data Monitoring

DEMOGRAPHICS

76%
of matched
young people
are female

5%
of matched
young people
are gender-
fluid

19%
of matched
young people
are male

There is no updated national data on the gender split between those waiting for a match and those who are matched. However, it is a common trend across all Independent visitor services in England that the number of males matched is lower. This might be due to the lower numbers of male volunteers we get coming through the service.

42%
of all active
referrals for this
service are
female

58%
of all active
referrals for this
service are male

We are in line with the national trend in that the majority of those awaiting a match are male.

It is also recognised across the national independent visitor network that males can be challenging to match. This is attributed to data that suggests females are more likely to volunteer for the service and male young people often indicate the need for a male role model.

Data Monitoring

VALUE OF ARRANGEMENTS

70%
of young people
discussed their
emotional wellbeing
with their IV on visits

Discussion of emotional wellbeing is encouraged, however we train our volunteers to allow these discussions to come up organically. For some young people, time with their independent visitor is best used for fun, especially for newer arrangements

One of the key benefits to having an IV is being able to try something new. However, over time some young people tend to lean towards creating new traditions with their volunteer; something special that is just theirs

29%
of young people tried
something new whilst
out with their IV this
year

94%
of young people stated
that they enjoyed their
visits this year

Of course, we love to hear that young people have enjoyed their visits, but sometimes trying new things means they find something that isn't for them. We encourage them to be honest about their experiences so they can try something else next time.





Length of IV Arrangements



One of the primary objectives of an Independent Visitor is to become a long term member of their young person's support network. It is a requirement for all of our volunteers to make a minimum commitment of two years in order for them to become a consistent and trusted adult in the young person's life and achieve this objective.

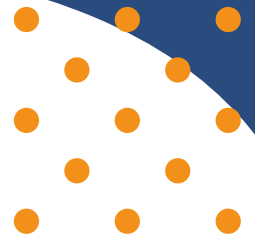
43%
of active
arrangements
have been active for
over
2 years

19%
of active
arrangements
are currently in
their second year

38%
of active
arrangements are in
their first year



Data Monitoring



21

Active arrangements

- Number of young people matched currently

3

Matches this quarter

- New arrangements since 1st April 2025

69

Total young people supported this year

- Number of young people that have had an Independent Visitor this year (October 2024 to current)

19

Newly recruited volunteers this Year

- New accredited volunteers for this service since October 2024. These are spread across both the Medway and Kent services

4

Referrals this quarter

- New young people referred to the service.

19

Referrals in total this year

- Total number of young people referred to this service this year (October 2024 to current)

14

Young people awaiting match

- Number of young people waiting to be matched (including referrals carried over from previous contract)

1

Arrangement ended this quarter

- Number of arrangements concluded

1

Referrals for young people placed out of area

- For those young people out of area, we are looking to identify local volunteers that are part of clubs/organisations that the young people are themselves are interested in

1

Volunteers that are Care Leavers

- We welcome more Care Leavers to volunteer for this service.