

## Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)

### Independent Visitor Scheme Quarterly Report

Reporting Period	1 October 2018 – 31 December 2018
Report of	Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)
Report to	Ophelia Rix
Report Originator	Christopher Berridge
Date of Report	4 January 2019

#### Overview of Service

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Looked After Children Independent Service. The Scheme was established in its current format five years ago. The scheme is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer and day to day administration is provided.

The aim of the scheme is to provide independent adult volunteers to befriend young people in the care of the local authority; to spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertake positive activities and develop independent meaningful trusted adult relationships. The volunteers provide children and young people with someone to talk to, seek advice, guidance and support from, and have fun with, in an informal setting.

#### Current Position

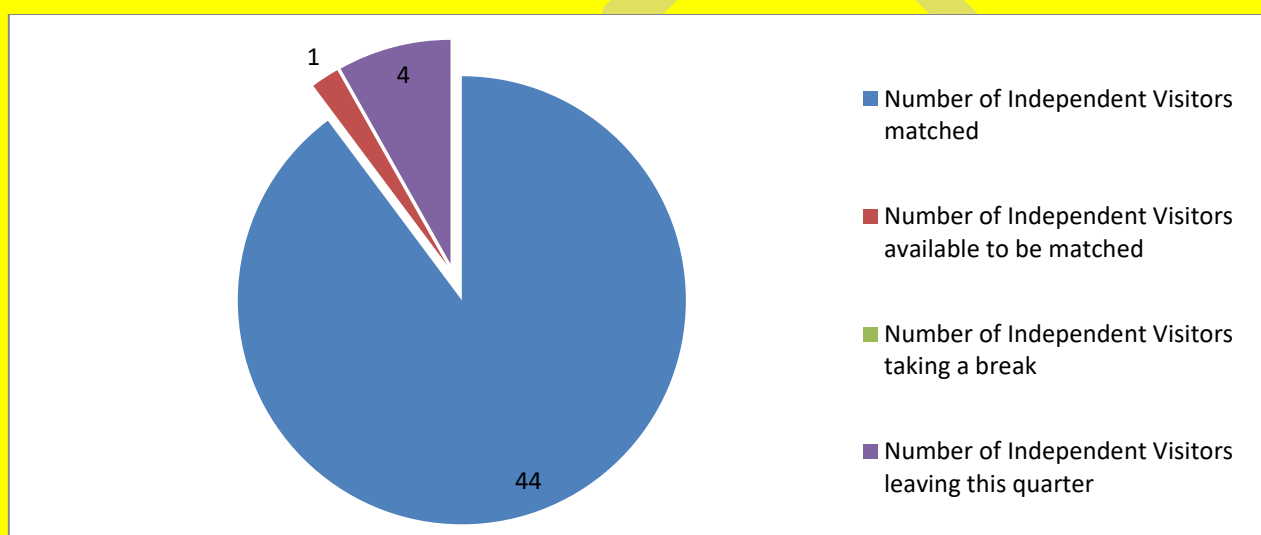
##### Volunteers

At the end of the quarter, 31 December 2018, there were 41 trained volunteers, 38 of whom were matched on a one to one basis with a young person. In addition, three experienced volunteers support two young people who are seen individually, making a total of 44 young people matched with an Independent Visitor.

One experienced volunteer has left the Scheme following the care order of the young person they were supporting being discharged. A further two Independent Visitors have left the scheme as the young person they had been matched with turned 18, and they decided that they didn't want to be re-matched with another child /young person, furthermore another volunteer, decided to leave the Scheme following the breakdown of their match.

At the end of the quarter, there was one volunteer available to be matched having returned to the scheme following a break.

At 31 December 2018	
Number of trained Independent Visitors	41
Number of Independent Visitors matched	44
Number of Independent Visitors available to be matched	1
Number of Independent Visitors taking a break	0
Number of Independent Visitors leaving this quarter	4



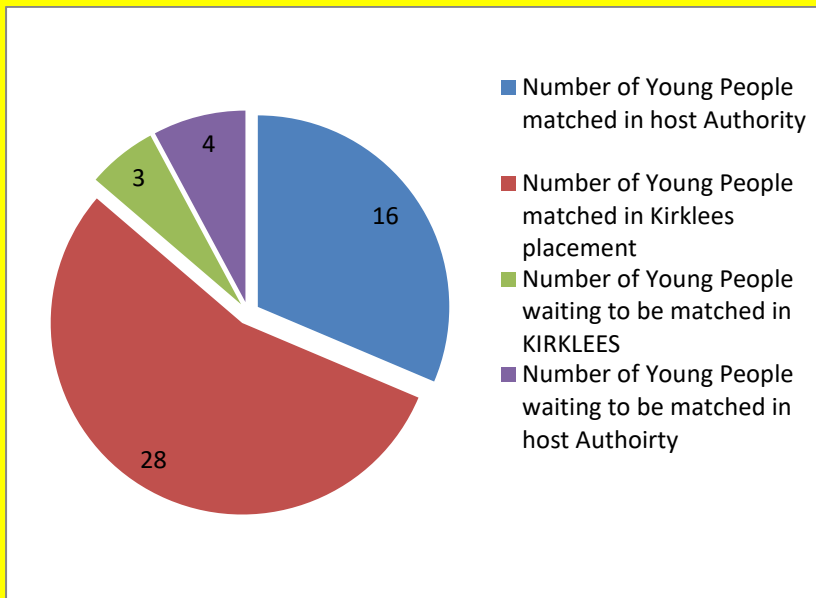
## Young People

At the end of December 2018, there were 44 young people who had an Independent Visitor. During this quarter, three matches of volunteers with children /young people ended due to; a discharge of Care Order, a young person turning 18 and a match breakdown.

In this quarter, 28 of the matched young people were placed within Kirklees and 16 were living in a host Local Authority. On average, the young people and their Independent Visitor continued to meet every 3-4 weeks.

At the end of the quarter, there were 7 young people waiting to be matched. 4 of these were placed in host Local Authorities; Poulton-le-Fylde (2), Leeds and Halifax.

At 31 December 2018	
Number of young people matched in a host local authority	16
Number of young people matched in a Kirklees placement	28
Number of young people waiting to be matched residing in Kirklees	3
Number of young people waiting to be matched in a host local authority	4

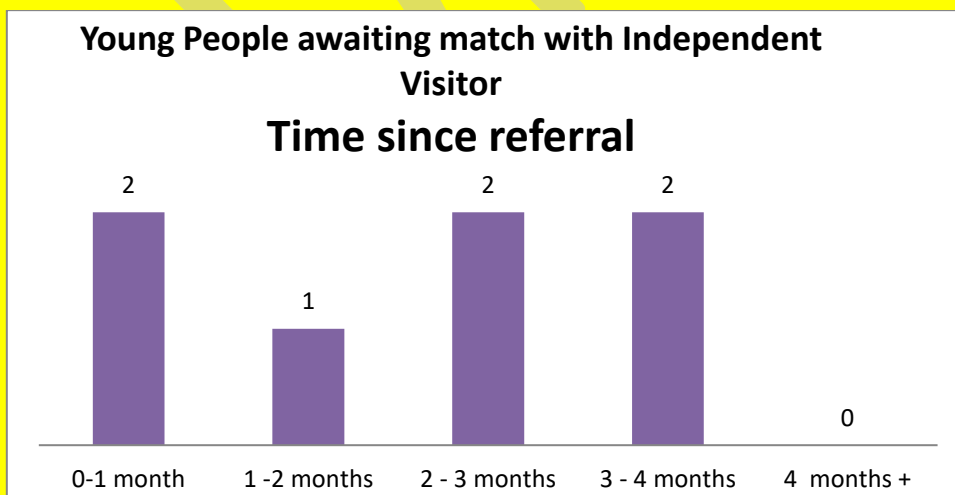


## Referrals

Four new referrals were received during the quarter, the length of time children /young people waited to be matched with a volunteer from the time of referral is shown in the table below.

As at 31 December 2018

Number of Referrals	7	Kirklees	3	Out of Area	4
Time since referral	0-1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-4 months	4 months +
	2	1	2	2	0



## What difference did we make for Children?

### Feedback from young people

A short questionnaire has been sent out to all the young people who currently have an Independent Visitor; 18 (39%) of these were completed and returned. The results provide good evidence that young people really benefit from the time they spend with their Independent Visitor. A small number of young people indicated that they would like increased visits, and this is being followed up with the volunteers.

## What do we want to improve?

### Challenges and Priorities

A number of key challenges for the Independent Visitor Scheme have been identified, these are:

- **To continue to reduce waiting times from referral to the scheme to matching a young person with an Independent Visitor.**

Waiting times have been reducing over the past 12 months and the majority of young people placed in Kirklees have been matched within 8 weeks of referral to the scheme. The decision to offer experienced Independent Visitors the opportunity to support a second child /young person is working effectively, with three experienced volunteers supporting two children / young people.

- **Provide greater flexibility in the recruitment process**

A marketing and recruitment campaign is underway; seven applications from prospective new Independent Visitors have so far been received by the Scheme's Coordinator. The closing date for applications is 31 January 2019. A wide range of marketing is being used including Social Media, a Press Release, Internet and Intranet presence, presence on a National Volunteering website and promotion through partner agencies. Following shortlisting, interviews will take place in February and the training of new volunteers should be completed by the end of March 2019. Appropriate references, employment and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will also be carried out for all successful candidates following their interviews. The Volunteers will not be permitted to work with a young person prior to these references and checks being returned but it is envisaged that matches between Volunteers and children / young people will begin early / mid April 2019.

<b>Marketing &amp; Recruitment Timeframe</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Marketing & Recruitment	10-Dec-18	31-Jan-19
Interviews	11-Feb-19	21-Feb-19
Young Peoples Panels	02-Mar-19	04-Mar-19
Training	09-Mar-19	23-Mar-19

As previously reported, the scheme currently has 44 matches, and as such it is oversubscribed based on the National Independent Visitor Standard. (37 matches per full time Coordinator).

In order for the Independent Visitor Scheme to be able to support an increased number of volunteers and the children / young people they are matched with, a Business Case is being prepared for an additional Coordinator capacity (1 FTE worker.)

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