

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

Independent Visitor Scheme 6 Monthly Report September 2019

Reporting Period	01 April 2019 – 30 September 2019
Report of	Kirklees Children Looked After Independent Service (Children's Rights Team)
Report to	Corporate Parenting Board
Report Originator	Christopher Berridge
Date of Report	7 October 2019

Overview of Service

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Children Looked After Independent Service. The scheme is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer and day to day administration is provided.

The scheme matches independent adult volunteers with 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 the opportunity to talk with someone independent of their care, seek advice, guidance and support from, and have fun with, in an informal setting.

Current Position

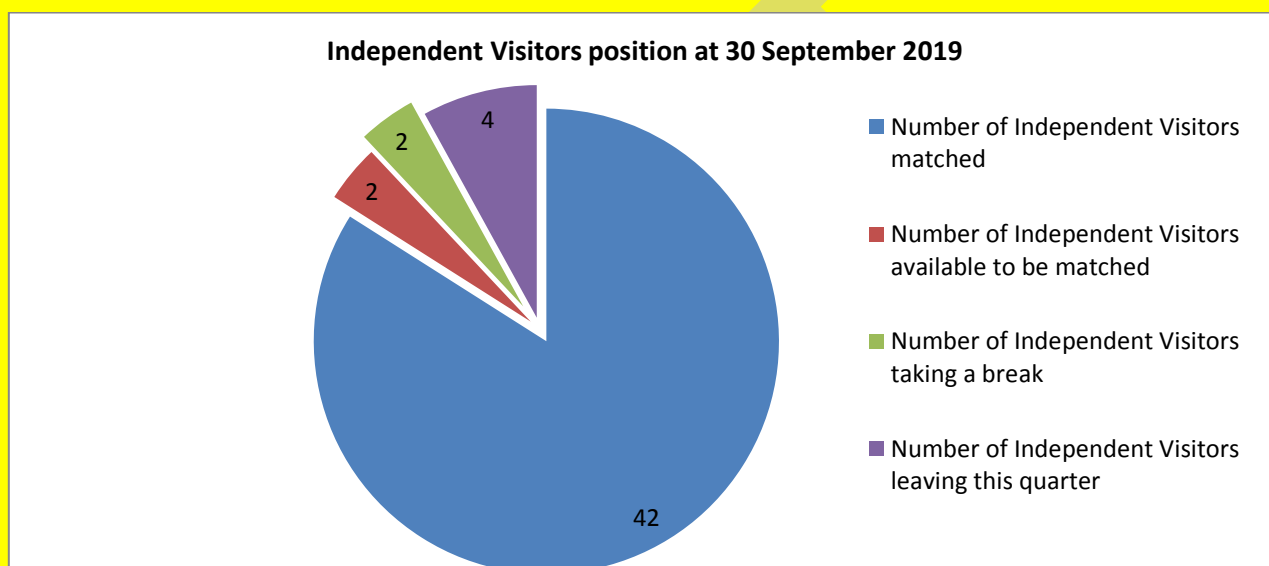
Volunteers

At the end of the period, (30 September 2019) there were 44 trained volunteers: 42 of whom were matched on a one to one basis with a young person. In addition, two experienced volunteers support two separate young people who are seen individually, making a total of 44 young people matched with an Independent Visitor.

During the period, 4 Independent Visitors left the scheme. One volunteer left following the Care Order of the young person they were supporting being discharged. A further two Independent Visitors left the scheme as the young people they had been supporting became 18 years old and they made the decision that they did not want to be matched with/support a different child /young person. A further volunteer decided to leave the scheme following the breakdown of their match.

At the end of the period, there were two volunteers available to be matched.

At 30 September 2019	
Number of trained Independent Visitors	44
Number of Independent Visitors matched	42
Number of Independent Visitors available to be matched	2
Number of Independent Visitors taking a break	2
Number of Independent Visitors leaving in this period	4



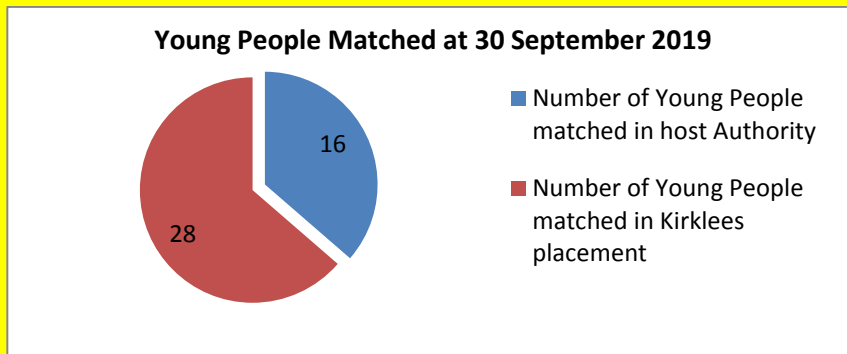
Young People

At the end of September 2019, there were 44 young people who were matched with an Independent Visitor. During this period, four matches between volunteers and children /young people ended due to;

- A Care Order being discharged,
- A young person turning 18
- A volunteer leaving the scheme and
- A match breakdown.

On 30 September 2019, 28 of matched young people matched with an Independent Visitor volunteer were living in Kirklees and 16 were living in a host Local Authority. A small number of Independent Visitors met with the young person they supported on almost a weekly basis, however on average, the young person and their Independent Visitor continued to meet every 3-4 weeks.

At 30 September 2019	
Number of Young People matched in host Authority	16
Number of Young People matched in Kirklees placement	28

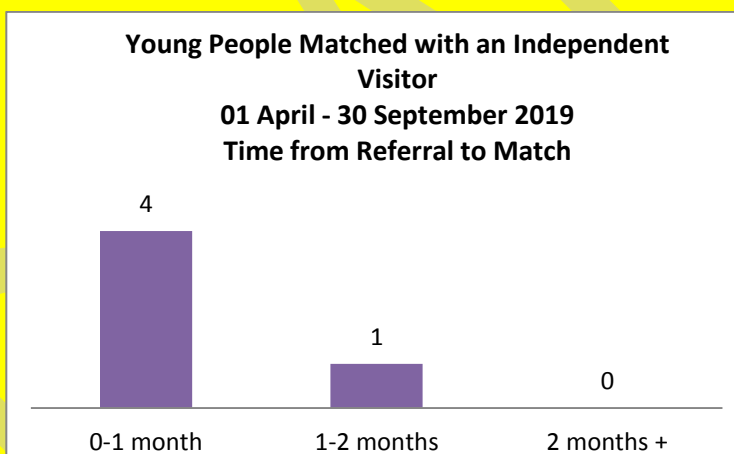


Matching Activity

9 new referrals for young people to be allocated an Independent Visitor were received during the period between 01 April and 30 September 2019; of these 5 were allocated an Independent Visitor of their choice.

Young People Matched during period 1 April - 30 September 2019	
Kirklees	4
Host Authority	1

Length of time from Referral to Match	
0-1 month	4
1-2 months	1
2 months +	0



Waiting List

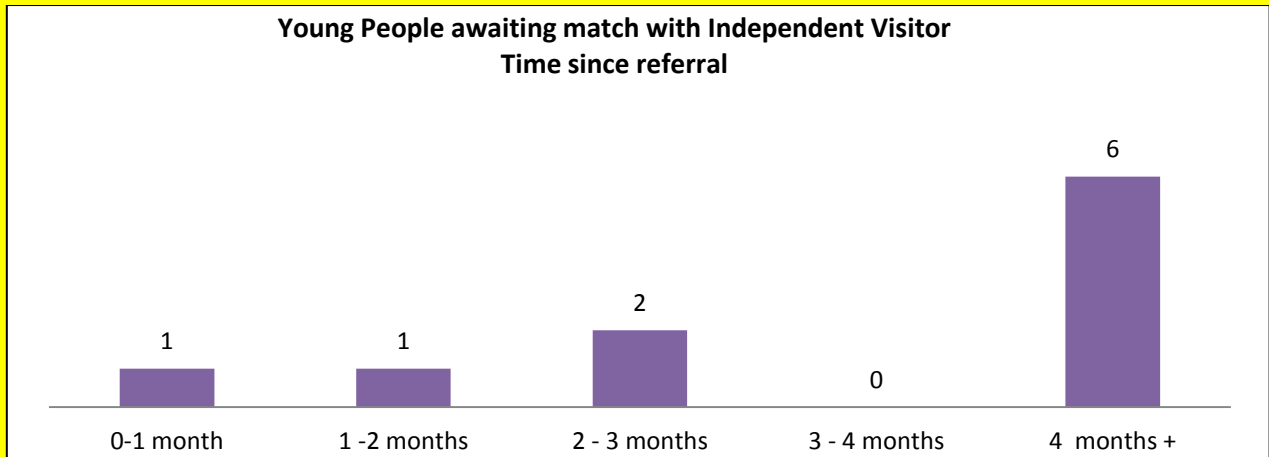
At the end of the period, there were 10 young people waiting to be matched with an Independent Visitor: of which 7 of the young people were living in host Local Authorities; Poulton-le-Fylde (2) and Leeds (5).

Whilst, there are two Independent Visitors available to be matched with a young person, the complexity of need of some of the young people waiting to be matched, combined with volunteer travel requirements (not outside of Kirklees) has hindered suitable matching.

For young people who have not as yet been allocated an Independent Visitor, the length of time from referral is shown in the table below.

As at 30 September 2019

Number of Referrals	10	Kirklees	3	Out of Area	7
Time since referral	0-1 month	1 -2 months	2 - 3 months	3 - 4 months	4 months +
	2	1	2	0	6

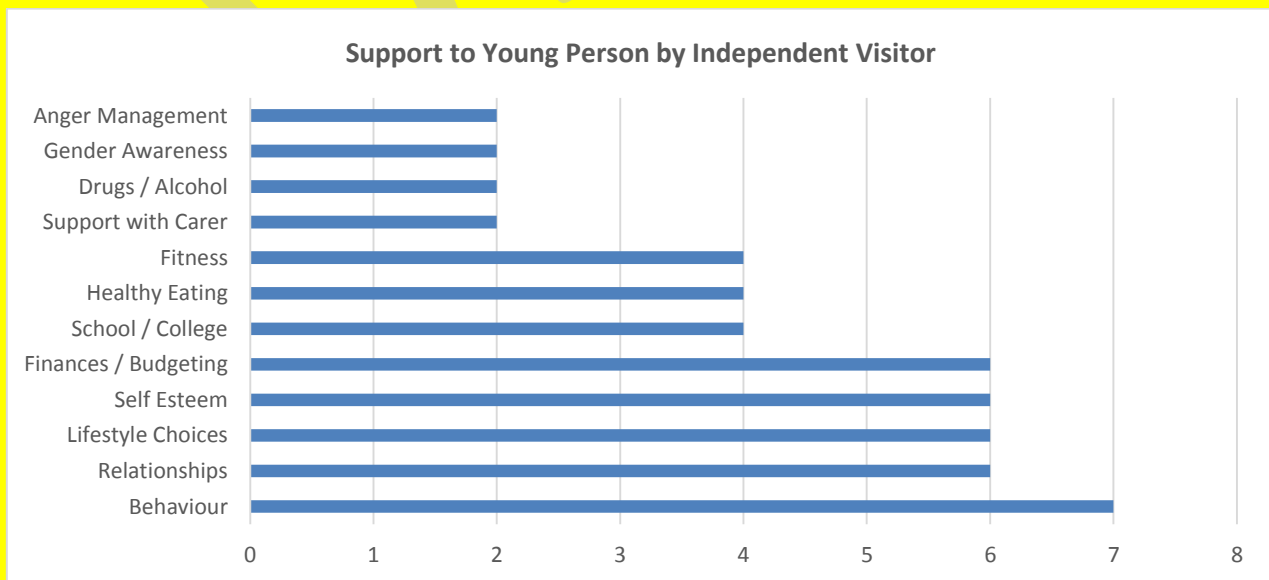


What difference did we make for Children & Young People?

Feedback from Independent Visitors

A short questionnaire was completed by Independent Visitors who attended a recent Peer Support meeting to capture the areas of support they feel they provide young people.

The support and information to young people is generally provided via informal conversations, whilst occasionally more practical support is offered, for example the Independent Visitor and young person exploring career options.



What do we want to improve?

Challenges and Priorities

The key challenge for the Independent Visitor Scheme has been identified as:

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

Waiting times for young people to be matched with an Independent Visitor have been reducing over the past 12 months, with the majority of young people living in Kirklees being matched with an Independent Visitor within 8 weeks of their referral to the scheme. The decision to offer experienced Independent Visitors the opportunity to support a second young person is working effectively, with two experienced volunteers supporting two young people.

On 30 September 2019, there were 10 young people who having been referred to the scheme had not been allocated an Independent Visitor. Crucially, 6 of these young people had been waiting for 4 months or more. 5 of these young people are living in host authorities and it has not proved possible to provide a match. The young person living in Kirklees who has been waiting for over 4 months has had a previous Independent Visitor and a second appropriate match is being sought.

As reported, the scheme currently has 44 matches, and as such it is oversubscribed based on the National Independent Visitor Standard. (35 matches per full time Coordinator).

In order for the Independent Visitor Scheme to develop and support an increased number of children and young people, a business case has been submitted for additional Coordinator capacity.