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In association with



Believe in children



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Volunteering with Wakefield CAPS

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Opportunities for
volunteering with
Wakefield Children's
Advocacy and
Participation Service

In association with
wakefieldcouncil
working for you



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY AND
PARTICIPATION SERVICE

Introducing our service

Wakefield CAPS (Children's Advocacy and Participation Service) is managed by the UK's leading children's charity Barnardo's, with funding from Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.

The service began as a pilot in 1999 and has developed and grown into a well established service provider for children and young people who are in the care of the local authority.

Under the umbrella of Wakefield CAPS we offer an Independent Visitors Service, Exit Interviews, Mentoring and Peer Mentoring Service. These services are provided by our volunteers who represent our service.

All children and young people need an adult in their life who will take an interest in their welfare and encourage them to develop as successful, confident and happy individuals. This is where you as a volunteer can make a difference.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life but are people who have the time and commitment to give to a child or young person on a regular basis.

Unfortunately we cannot accept people who work for Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Family Services as there could be a conflict of interest.

Do you have what it takes to support a child or young person in care?

Have you:

- the ability to offer support to children and young people who are looked after by the local authority?
- the ability to communicate well with young people?
- the ability to listen to and understand a child or young person's point of view?
- the time and commitment to offer to a young person?
- the patience of a saint?!

Then read on to find out more!



Independent Visitors

An Independent Visitor is an adult volunteer over the age of 21 who has time to share with a child or young person who is looked after by the local authority and who has little or no contact with adult family members. Our volunteers give time and commitment to the young person they are matched with and maintain contact on a regular basis.

This rewarding role involves visiting and advising a young person and taking a long term interest in their well-being. We expect volunteers to share in regular social activities, assist with problems and concerns and become a positive adult role model.

Befrienders

A Befriender is an adult volunteer over the age of 21 who befriends a child or young person who is looked after by Wakefield Local Authority up to the age of 19.

The role of the Befriender is to offer support and friendship as well as any agreed plan of work to a child or young person, who for a variety of reasons would benefit from having additional support from a positive adult role model, through a one to one consistent relationship.

*"A great sense of achievement when they say "thanks that was a good time today".
(Volunteer)*

*"The training is lots of fun and I'm always learning."
(Young person)*

Peer Mentors

In addition to our befriending and mentoring service we also recruit young people who have worked with our service to act as peer mentors to other children and young people in either local authority care or educational settings.

We offer an accredited training course for peer mentors that is fun and informative.

Exit Interviewers

Our Exit Interviewers are volunteers aged 18+, many of whom are young adults who have lived in the 'looked after' system themselves. We recruit volunteers to undertake exit interviews with children and young people who are changing placement or leaving the care of the local authority.

The interview is undertaken by means of a questionnaire which gives young people the opportunity to speak openly about their last placement or time in care.

The role of the exit interviewer is to assist the child or young person to complete the questionnaire, to give them the confidence to voice their opinions and encourage them to put forward any ideas or suggestions they may have.

The information gained is used to look at continually improving the services they receive and to make for a more positive future from their time in care.

*"I feel honoured to be involved with the young person I work with. When I've had a bad day, once I've met him he makes me value what I have and how much I enjoy his company."
(Volunteer)*

What's in it for me?

In return we offer all our volunteers;

- a full training programme
- support through supervision
- peer group support
- further learning and development opportunities
- expenses for travel, outings etc. (as agreed).

Would you like to support young people in care, learn new skills and enhance your CV?

Then don't hesitate to get in touch – our contact details are on the back cover.

We are waiting to hear from you!

Frequently asked questions

Do I need experience?

No – many of our volunteers are ordinary people, probably untrained in professional childcare with no formal qualifications.

What training can I expect to receive?

We take great care to ensure that our volunteers have relevant training to support them in their role which is why our mandatory training consists of sessions that include:

- child protection and safeguarding children and young people
- working with children and young people
- equality and diversity
- health and safety.

Why do I need to have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check?

All Barnardo's staff and volunteers must undertake an enhanced CRB check to ensure that we protect the children and young people we work with.

What happens next?

- application form returned and references are sent for
- prospective volunteers invited to meet with staff
- training begins (normally two evening sessions and one Saturday session)
- CRB applied for
- interview with young people's panel
- matched with young person.

*"I get great satisfaction from knowing that I am helping a young person start out on a new journey. I don't need payment for doing what I do, to see him grow as an individual is reward enough."
(Volunteer)*

