



# Volunteer Information



- We are looking for people of all ages, from all walks of life and from every corner of the Borders to volunteer and make an impact on the quality of life of over 300 socially isolated children, young people and adults with learning disabilities who use our services.
- You don't need any special experience or skills, just your goodwill and a few hours every week, fortnight or month.
- Seeing the difference you make to the life of someone with learning disabilities can be immensely satisfying. As well as improving their quality of life (and giving respite to their carers), they benefit hugely from knowing you are with them purely out of choice.

## Our volunteering opportunities include:

### 1:1 Links

- Being linked 1:1 with a child, young person or adult with learning disabilities who lives locally and has similar interests to you.
- You would do activities that both of you choose: for example the cinema, cycling, local events, walks, shopping, going for coffee, arts & crafts, golf, swimming or football, usually for two-three hours.
- You could do this as often as once a week or as little as once a month: our main priority is to set up a sustainable relationship that you both enjoy.

### Befriending Groups:

- Groups usually have equal numbers of volunteers and people with learning disabilities and all the members are as close in age to each other as possible.
- Group members decide what they want to do, and as well as fun social and leisure activities, they often do personal development projects involving, music, art, drama and outward bound activities.
- The large numbers of volunteers involved mean the groups operate just like mainstream community or youth groups.

## Volunteering with us

- The first step is to contact your local Branch Co-ordinator (details below) who will come and meet you for a chat and ask you to fill in an application form.
- Your Co-ordinator will train and prepare you and discuss whether a 1:1 or group link would suit you best. You will need to provide two references and undergo a police check.
- Your 1:1 link or membership of a group would be on a trial basis for the first month or so, giving you time to decide if the role was right for you.
- Your Branch Co-ordinator would always be available to give advice, answer any questions or solve problems. You would see them frequently when your link was new and then at least every six months after that.

- As a volunteer your role could be demanding and require a good deal of patience and persistence. Communication with people with learning disabilities can be difficult and it may take a while to establish a relationship.
- Our younger volunteers usually achieve Saltire Awards, and some put their volunteering towards Duke of Edinburgh and other volunteering awards.
- Being a volunteer can also provide valuable work experience and references for courses or jobs in the care field.
- We pay all your expenses, including a mileage allowance if you use your own car for volunteering (35p). This would not affect any Benefits you receive.
- Insurance: If you use your car for your volunteering you should tell your insurer. If your insurer makes you pay an extra premium, you can claim this back from Interest Link. The project also has employer's liability, public liability and personal accident insurance to cover you during your link.

#### Further information

- Our website at [www.interestlink.org.uk](http://www.interestlink.org.uk) has information about your local branch as well as videos and photos to help you form a picture of what we do.

#### Branch Contact Details

<p><b>Berwickshire:</b> Volunteer Hall, Langtongate, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3AF 01361 883662  <b>Adult Service:</b> Judy Kay 07776 221843 <a href="mailto:judykay@interestlink.org.uk">judykay@interestlink.org.uk</a>  <b>Youth Service:</b> Kate Borthwick Tel: 07527 699888 <a href="mailto:kateborthwick@interestlink.org.uk">kateborthwick@interestlink.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Central Borders:</b> Stefanie Poletylo, Triest House, Bridge Street, Galashiels, TD1 1SW  Tel: 01896 750020/07717 403529 <a href="mailto:stefaniepoletylo@interestlink.org.uk">stefaniepoletylo@interestlink.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Roxburgh:</b> Val Reilly, CHSS Community Hub, 61 High Street, Hawick TD9 9BP  Tel: 01450 377600/07738 567498 <a href="mailto:valreilly@interestlink.org.uk">valreilly@interestlink.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Tweeddale:</b> Mary Mouat, Volunteer Resource Centre, School Brae, High Street, Peebles EH45 8AL  Tel: 01721 729348/0777 3303829 <a href="mailto:marymouat@interestlink.org.uk">marymouat@interestlink.org.uk</a></p>