

As we head towards summer, it is easy to be drawn into thoughts of lazy holidays and family get-togethers. But you might be looking for something else, a way of giving back to your community and the children of Somerset.

The number of children coming into the care of the Local Authority is at its highest level ever – at over 700. As a result, Route1 is seeing an increase in the number of children who are asking for an Independent Visitor.

What is an Independent Visitor?

An Independent Visitor (IV) is a volunteer who makes a commitment to one child in care. They visit the child once or twice each month to build a trusting, supportive relationship and friendship that can sometimes last many years. The visits might involve going out for coffee and a chat, having a picnic, or going for a dog walk. The relationship can bring life-changing experiences and opportunities to a child or young person – and their IV!



Here's what one of volunteers said: "I have been a volunteer with Route1 for five years now. Supporting a child in care has been one of the most rewarding things I have done. Last week I had the privilege of taking my young person to the beach for the first time. The joy on their face will remain with me always."

It sounds rewarding but too difficult for me...

Our youngest volunteer is 19 and our oldest is over 80! Some have experience of being with children, but many don't. If you are kind, fun and reliable then we can support with the rest. There is extensive, free training which is delivered face-to-face – no Zoom breakout rooms for us! And once trained there is ongoing support.

Your life experience will be highly valued, and you will be trained and supported in developing key skills. Your volunteering can be arranged to suit your availability.



For more information about Route1 Advocacy and Independent Visitors, you can contact us by emailing: route1advocacy@somerset.gov.uk, calling 01749 822801 and our website is www.route1advocacy.co.uk



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Route1 Advocacy & Independent Visitors



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No time to volunteer but you'd like to help out?

You can donate to the Route1 fund, set up to help enrich the lives of children in care and managed by Somerset Community Foundation. The friendly Route1 team members are always happy to talk to individuals, groups, and businesses – use the details above. You can also make a donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/route1fund>