

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Independent Visitor Service

Report

April 2023 – September 2023



Scope

The service has been provided for children and young people who are looked after by Cwm Taf Morgannwg, who have little or no contact with their birth family (as defined in The Children Act 1989).

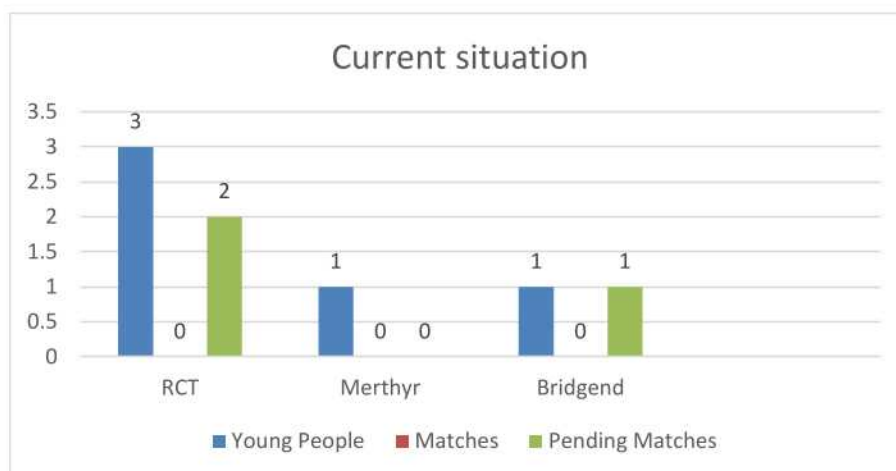
Background

This is the seventh Independent Visiting report, for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, referred to throughout this report as CTM. CTM comprises three local authorities: Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

We have observed increased interest in volunteering opportunities during this period, and four new potential volunteers started the recruitment process, and one new volunteer has finished the process and is pending being matched. The recruitment process is robust and therefore lengthy, and volunteers require mandatory training before matches can begin.

Matches

The graph below represents the current situation across CTM as of 30th September 2023.



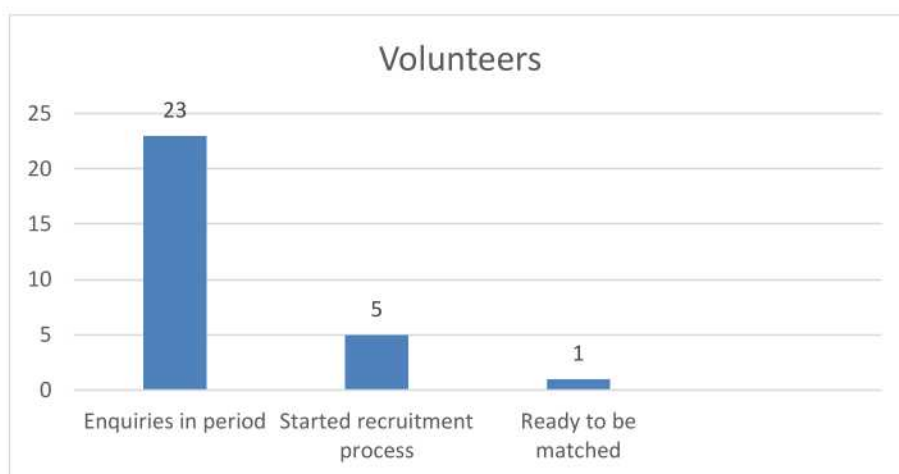
Currently, RCT has three children and young people referred into the service, with no matches. One referred RCT young person, is currently based in Devon. The IV Coordinator has contacted local services but has not yet been able to source a potential volunteer for this young person.

The two remaining RCT young people waiting for an IV are siblings which has prolonged the matching process as we will attempt to match them at the same time. However, we have two potential volunteers awaiting training who we will look to match with the siblings. We are hopeful this will happen in quarter three or the beginning of quarter four.

Merthyr has one young person referred into the service, with no matches. A volunteer was identified as a potential match for this young person at the end of the period, however, the IV Coordinator was asked by both the foster carer and the social worker to put the IV referral on hold as they wanted the young person to complete another piece of work before a match was made. This will be followed up in quarter three.

Bridgend has one young person referred into the service; the IV coordinator will explore the potential of a match with a new volunteer in the next period.

Volunteers



Throughout this reporting period we have received enquiries from 23 potential volunteers and sent out 23 application packs which include information about the IV role. We have accepted five new volunteer applications; one has completed the process and the remaining four are just waiting for the safeguarding and induction training. We are aiming for the remaining four to complete the process in quarter three.

Activity in Quarter Three and Four

Two new IV referrals were received between April 2023 and September 2023.

No new matches were made during this period; however as mentioned above, a volunteer for the Merthyr young person was identified, however professionals decided it was not the right time for him to be matched.

During this period, one matched RCT young person had four visits with their Independent Visitor although this formal IV relationship has now ended as the young person has turned 18.

Another match also ended at the beginning of the period as the young person turned 18 at the end of quarter one. We have been advised the volunteers and young person keep in touch informally, outside of their TGP Cymru role.

Feedback

To date no formal feedback from young people has been collected, however feedback from volunteers on visit record forms has been very positive. The IV coordinator will aim to collect some feedback from the two young people's who matches have recently ended.

Service Information

A dedicated Independent Visitor (IV) Coordinator joined the team in March. The IV Coordinator is currently working 30 hours per week and is employed to coordinate the IV service across both Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Mid and West Wales. We are hopeful that by combining the posts, we will be able to pool resources and grow this service area.

So far, the IV coordinator has –

- started an in-depth social media campaign with an emphasis on promoting the service in local hubs. This is carried out monthly and has generated the most interest and engagement in the volunteering role, all current potential volunteers found out about us on Facebook.
- Worked to develop a relationship with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) and attended a Children and Family networking meeting in person.
- Attended an open day for students at Bridgend College and has also been invited back to any future open days.
- Visited local supermarkets to enquire about having a table to advertise, a date is still to be confirmed.
- Contacted Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) We will be invited to any future advertising events and leaflet was shared.
- Merthyr College – contacted the college and they agreed to share the leaflet with students.
- Swansea University – invited us to join the website they use to advertise local volunteering opportunities, currently in the process of setting up and account to advertise.
- We have updated our leaflets and promotional equipment to give a better understanding of the role and more information.

Previous priorities:

- **Attempt to facilitate matches for all young people on the waiting list.**
Despite several applications and one volunteer completing the recruitment process, we have not been able to facilitate any new matches in this period, but we are hopeful

to have a number of new matches in the next period when the potential volunteers complete training.

- **Continue to pursue those who made enquiries about volunteering with an aim to overcoming barriers and beginning the recruitment process.**

We have contacted all previous potential volunteers; however, none were able to begin the recruitment process. This was due to personal circumstances, and no barriers were identified.

- **Promote the IV Service with Children's Services across the Cwm Taf Region.**

We are going look at promoting the service to the children's services across Cwm Taf when more potential volunteers complete the training and are ready to be matched.

Future Priorities:

- **Get the potential volunteers through training and matched with young people.**
- **Continue to network with local organisations.**
- **Develop a process to allow children and young people who have been matched with an IV to formally share their views about the service.**
- **Continue the social media campaign and search for new groups/pages to share the information in areas IVs are most needed.**

Summary

Despite the challenges of volunteer recruitment, we are pleased to have attracted increased enquiries from potential volunteers. We are looking forward to getting the potential volunteers through their training and getting them matched. We believe the recruitment of a dedicated IV Coordinator working four days per week across the two regions has greatly enhance our ability to promote the service and attract volunteers.

We will continue to prioritise recruiting volunteers, and matching young people referred into the service as soon as possible.