



Information, Advice and Support Service Would you like to volunteer for our service?

Would you like to make a difference for children and young people who have special educational needs?

We are in need of new volunteers

... to help us support parents and carers of children with special educational needs and to support young people with special educational needs.

Our trained volunteers support parents and carers and young people to make decisions about their child's or their own education and enable them to become partners with professionals.

Our volunteers will not make decisions on behalf of parents, carers or young people. Our aim is to provide an impartial source of independent advice and support.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life; some have helped us for many years. However, people's lives change and we are in need of some new "recruits".

Our aim is to support our volunteers to empower parents, carers and young people.

We ask new volunteers to commit to supporting us in our work for a minimum of 6 months after completing the initial training course. We pay all expenses.

A volunteer may help a parent / carer or young person with:

- viewing schools
- completing forms
- preparing for school meetings and annual reviews and helping them to express their concerns during the meetings.
- explaining the education system, the structures and roles of professionals and any confusing terminology
- signposting to any relevant literature or other organisations that may be able to help
- parent/ carer information days
- administration work in the office.

"Local Authorities must have regard to the importance of providing children and their parents and young people with the information and support necessary to participate in decisions." **SEND Code of Practice 2014**

After the initial training course a volunteer will:

- want to help parents, carers and young people work in partnership with schools and the local authority,
- want to help parents, carers and young people play an active and informed role in their child's or their own education,
- be aware of the need for confidentiality
- be interested in issues regarding special needs, disability and education,
- enjoy working as part of a team,
- be prepared to participate in ongoing training,
- have some spare time available, particularly during term time



The Training Course

The next initial training course will be held on **22nd & 23rd April, 5th, 6th, 19th, 20th, 21st May** at the **Civic Hall, Ellesmere Port from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm**. We would also like to meet potential new volunteers on **23rd March** in our office.

The training is **free of charge** and gives our new volunteers information and practical experience:

- 30 hours in the “class room” and 30 hours homework
- Invaluable experience and in depth knowledge of the special educational needs processes and procedures
- Opportunity to learn new and enhance existing skills including listening and other communication skills
- Accredited qualification with Open College Network
- Delivered by Information, Advice & Support Service staff and other professionals
- Very practical and uses case studies
- Includes shadowing in meetings
- Trainees meet a wide variety of professionals

To request an information pack, a more detailed role description and an application form, please see contact details below. Please also do contact us if you want to have a chat about this volunteering opportunity.

Additional Information:

- All volunteers require an enhanced DBS check which will be undertaken when you enrol on the initial training course.
- Two written satisfactory references are required
- It is helpful if you can drive. However, if you cannot drive or do not have a car this does not prevent you from volunteering for our service.

Information Advice and Support Service will support volunteers by:

- matching you appropriately with parents/carers/young people
- providing regular supervision to help identify development needs
- providing training opportunities on a continuing basis
- providing opportunities for volunteers to meet each other and to feel part of the team.

To find out more about our service and volunteering opportunities, please contact:

Information, Advice & Support Service, Tel: 0300 123 7001
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E-mail: iasservice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk