

Interim Evaluation Report

National Independent Visitor Network

OCTOBER 2016 – OCTOBER 2018



The Tudor Trust

The Tudor Trust is an independent grant-making charitable trust, which supports organisations working in any part of the UK. They fund a wide range of people and organisations working to build stronger communities. Tudor supports work, which tries to meet the many different needs of people at the margins of society. They are interested in how organisations tackle these needs, and their root causes. Tudor Trust are keen to work with organisations which have a real understanding of the challenges facing the communities they support, and a clear sense of the difference they seek to make through their work.

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Report compiled by Sophie Wellings
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Poem

Young Person (YP): We are Friends

Independent Visitor (IV): Sometimes

YP: We also communicate

IV: Sometimes

YP: We like each other

IV: Sometimes

YP: We help each other

IV: Majority of the time

YP: We get on each other's nerves

IV: *NOD*

YP: And we are there for each other

IV: When I arrive on time!

YP: Compatible

IV: Reactable

YP: I get to choose the food

IV: I HOPE SHES IN A GOOD MOOD

YP: I get to choose the drinks

IV: SO she thinks!

YP: And I get to choose where we go:

YP+IV: On a journey together we grow

YP (Female, aged 11) and IV (Female)

This poem was created as part of the young people's conference

Executive summary

The National Independent Visitor Network (NIVN) was established in April 2014 thanks to funding from the Tudor Trust which was awarded to the children's charity Barnardo's. Barnardo's agreed to host the NIVN whilst allowing it to function independently and provide support to all those involved in delivery of IV services. The overall aim of the NIVN was agreed as being: '*To raise awareness of the role of the Independent Visitor, within an agreed set of national standards*'. This was in recognition that despite the role of the IV being a statutory one there was a lack of both awareness and provision. This was later borne out through the findings of the National Independent Visitor Data Report following a freedom of information request which highlighted that 3.2% of the looked after population were matched with an Independent Visitor (IV).⁽ⁱ⁾ The objectives identified to achieve the aim are:

- » to improve consistency & standard of IV services
- » to increase awareness around the IV role
- » to increase numbers of children accessing IV services
- » to enable partnership working sharing best practice
- » to establish recommended level of provision

The outputs identified for the first three years of funding which included: developing the network through mapping of all current providers, development and dissemination

of the standards and the establishment of regional network meetings were all achieved. The NIVN Manager also developed relationships with key stakeholders such as the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted. As a result of the achievements during the first period of funding, the Tudor Trust agreed to continue funding the NIVN for a further three years.

The second period of funding commenced in April 2017. It was agreed that the work of the NIVN would again be externally evaluated and this report provides an interim review of the work achieved to date and recommendations for the work for the remaining period.

The achievements since the previous evaluation report include:

- » IV standards for young people developed with young people and disseminated to provider of IV services.
- » Development and launch of a film on the role of the IV.
- » Further endorsement of the standards by charitable and not for profit organisations and local authority providers.
- » Ofsted have updated their assessment framework to include a specific reference to the provision of IV services.

- » Development of an outcomes framework and theory of change model.
- » Development of a self assessment tool for benchmarking against the standards.
- » Delivery of a young people's conference and the second NIVN conference.
- » Development of a website for the NIVN which will go live in 2019.
- » Discussions taking place as to work that the NIVN can do to address issues relating to out of county matches.
- » IV services have been established within four local authorities that didn't previously have a service.

A key finding is that those involved in delivering IV services value the work of the NIVN. There is a strong consensus that the standards have been highly influential in both establishing consistency and raising the profile of the work. However, despite the progress, there is recognition that there is still some way to go to increase both understanding and awareness of the role of the IV. Providers feel that the NIVN are well placed to lead on campaigning and influencing due to not being tied in to contractual relationships or competing for service delivery. The NIVN also offers opportunities for increased partnership working and cohesion in relation

to common issues such as out of county matches and challenges in recruiting male volunteers. The work that has been identified for the remaining period of this round of funding will assist in profiling the achievements of the NIVN. The website will provide a showcase for the work and easy access to the details of local provision although it will require maintenance on an ongoing basis. The second freedom of information data report will be significant in terms of highlighting whether the number of IV matches has increased, decreased or remained static. It could also provide a story that may be of interest to the media which would serve to further increase awareness of the IV role and the work of the NIVN.

Introduction

This interim report has been compiled to evaluate the work of the National Independent Visitor Network (NIVN) during the period October 2016 to October 2018. The NIVN was initially set up in 2014 thanks to funding acquired by the children's charity Barnardo's from the Tudor Trust. Whilst the funding was obtained by Barnardo's, it was agreed that the charity would host the NIVN but its work would be independent and for the benefit of all those involved in delivery and recipients of Independent Visitor (IV) services. The initial funding from the Tudor Trust covered the period March 2014 to March 2017 and a number of objectives were identified for delivery during that period. The achievements of the NIVN during the first period of funding have been detailed in two previous evaluation reports.¹ The success of the NIVN in achieving its objectives and in highlighting the importance of the role of the NIVN led to a commitment from the Tudor Trust to a further three years of funding to cover the period from April 2017 to February 2020. This report is intended to provide an overview of the progress to date and to make recommendations regarding the focus of the work for the remaining period of the funding. A full evaluation will be completed in November 2019.

¹ Cherize Haugland Sirevag, L. (2015) - First Annual Evaluation Report
Wellings, S. (2016) - NIVN Evaluation Report 2014-2016

Project Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the project was identified as: '*To raise awareness of the role of the Independent Visitor, within an agreed set of national standards*'.

The objectives set to achieve this aim are:

- » to improve consistency & standard of IV services
- » to increase awareness around the IV role
- » to increase numbers of children accessing IV services
- » to enable partnership working sharing best practice
- » to establish recommended level of provision

For the first three years of the project, the key outputs that were identified and met were:

- » Set up a national IV network
- » Set up an online network for professionals
- » Maintain an overview of IV services nationally
- » Carry out consultations on IV standards
- » Introduce national IV standards
- » Offer support and information for Local Authorities and IV services

For the second period of funding, April 2017 to February 2020, further outputs were identified which are:

Year 4 - April 2017 - March 2018

- » Department for Education and/or relevant authorities endorse national IV standards
- » Develop an outcomes framework with monitoring tools (toolkit requires securing additional funding)
- » Assessments and accreditation for IV services in line with National Standards

Year 5 - April 2018 - March 2019

- » Hold the second national IV conference – raise the profile of IV and address current issues
- » Develop an understanding of the challenges around out of county matches and share best practice
- » Freedom of information data request to compare statistics on IV to the Freedom of Information request carried out in 2015

Year 6 - April 2019 - February 2020

- » Wider understanding of the long term outcomes for children accessing IV
- » Campaign and guidance around accessing IV for careleavers

This report will provide an evaluative overview of the work of the NIVN from October 2016 to October 2018 encompassing both the overall aim and objectives and an indication of progress from the last reporting period.

Overview

The role of the IV was originally established as a statutory service for looked after children (LAC) in the Children Act 1989. The Act identifies that an IV is someone who has the duty of visiting, advising and befriending the child.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ The legislation outlines that the role should be available for those who are having infrequent contact with family members and if it was thought to be in their best interests. This was updated by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which repealed section 17 of the 1989 Act to replace it with reference to Section 23ZB: *“A local authority looking after a child must appoint an independent person to be the child’s visitor if – (a) the child falls within a description prescribed in regulations made by the appropriate national authority; or (b) in any other case, it appears to them that it would be in the child’s interests to do so.* (2) *A person appointed under this section must visit, befriend and advise the child.”*⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Whilst the role of the IV has been enshrined in legislation for some time, the need for the NIVN was identified as responding to an inconsistency of provision of the IV service to young people and a lack of awareness of the IV role amongst both professionals and young people. This lack of awareness and provision has been highlighted in a number of studies including research by Ofsted’s Children’s Rights

Director for England. Ofsted conducted a survey amongst children and young people which highlighted that – amongst survey respondents – 80% had not been offered an IV.^(iv) This absence of provision was further emphasised by the Freedom of Information (FOI) data request carried out by the NIVN in partnership with Barnardo's, in 2015, which showed that 3.2% of the LAC population were matched with an IV.^(v) On commencing the FOI data report, it had been anticipated that most local authorities would be aiming to have around 10% of their LAC population matched.^(vi) This was a figure that the NIVN had been hoping to increase. The FOI request highlighted that the work required was greater than had been anticipated.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation has been conducted by an external evaluator. NIVN commissioned the previous evaluator to continue the review of the project for the second period of funding. It was agreed that there would be two reports. An interim report at a halfway point and a final report to review the overall achievements against the identified objectives. The compilation of the interim report has included both primary and secondary data collection and collation as well as the gathering and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection has included:

- » Desk research – reviewing documents relating to the role of the IV as well as project specific documents.
- » Telephone and face to face interviews have been conducted with IV Coordinators, Senior Managers and NIVN project staff.
- » Regional Network Coordinators were sent a set of questions regarding the functioning of their network meetings and a visit was carried out to one of the network meetings where a face to face group interview was conducted with those present.
- » Attendance at and a presentation made at the National IV Conference with feedback gathered from conference attendees working in small groups.

The data from all of these sources has been collated, analysed and reviewed thematically in order to present interim findings and recommendations for future delivery.

The NIVN – an overview

The NIVN has experienced a number of personnel changes since the last report. The NIVN Manager took maternity leave just after submission of the last evaluation report and cover was found for her during that 12 month period. During this time, the NIVN Manager was supported by the project's second apprentice administrator who is from a care background. In October 2017, the NIVN Manager returned from maternity leave on a part time basis and a job share was created with her previous line manager. Shortly after this, the administrator moved on to a full time position elsewhere and another apprentice administrator, who is from a care background, was appointed. In July 2018, the NIVN Manager who had been with the project from the start left and a decision was taken that rather than replacing her, a 0.8 FTE Project Officer would be appointed. This decision was reached in recognition that the NIVN would benefit from having a staff member who would focus on the operational side of the project, leaving the manager to focus on the more strategic aspects. This appointment was made in September 2018.

The work of the NIVN is overseen by a steering group who are drawn from a range of different disciplines. The NIVN Manager outlined that the membership of the steering group has been reviewed. This was prompted by a lack of consistency

in attendance by group members as well as a desire to shore the project up and to diversify the representation of the group. Current group members include IV Coordinators, volunteer IVs and a senior manager from one of the largest voluntary sector providers of IV services. The apprentice administrator also attends to provide the perspective from the point of view of a young person who has experienced care. The steering group meets on a quarterly basis and works with the NIVN Manager/s to review the work achieved to date, the future objectives as well as the sustainability of the NIVN beyond the current funded period.

Project outputs – years 4 and 5

The last evaluation report for the NIVN was completed in September 2016, prior to completion of the work for the first round of funding. This report will include a review of the work that was carried out as part of the previous funding round, that was not included in the last report, as well as the work completed to date in respect of this period of funding.

Year 4

Department for Education and/or relevant authorities endorse national IV standards

During the first round of funding, the NIVN Manager dedicated time to developing external relationships with key stakeholders including Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE). The focus of this was looking at ways that the NIVN could work with both agencies to further the NIVN's aim and objectives. Part of the discussion with the DfE was about an official endorsement of the national IV standards. Whilst the DfE were supportive of the work they felt it inappropriate for them to officially endorse an external set of standards. Their position on this has been consistent for some time and the conversation has since shifted to other ways of partnership working. One result of this was the promotion

of IV services to DfE staff with a view to recruiting DfE staff as volunteers. Despite not gaining an official endorsement of the standards from the DfE, towards the end of year 3 of the project NIVN achieved a significant outcome as a result of the relationship that was developed with Ofsted. Ofsted have updated their assessment framework to include a specific reference to the provision of IV services. The framework now reads: '*Children in care and care leavers are helped to understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities... Children and young people have access to an advocate and independent visitor when needed.*'

Develop an outcomes framework with monitoring tools (toolkit requires securing additional funding)

The NIVN Manager worked with a number of network members to develop an outcomes framework for IV services. This work was done with support from staff within Barnardo's who have a specialism in leading on research. The framework, which includes a theory of change model, has been disseminated and is available on Huddle for network members to access, as needed. Those interviewed were aware of the framework but none had implemented it within their

work. The consensus was that there is little inclination to add another layer of work for those who are often part time and overstretched. Many of those spoken to for this report aren't required to measure outcomes and/or feel that many of the achievements of the relationship require a longer term view than the framework allows for. Comments from interviewees included: '*The only information they (commissioners) want is how many matches we have, how many volunteers and how many young people.*' '*I think it's hard to measure the outcomes of the relationships, some of which go on for years.*' Additional funding has not been secured to develop a toolkit. Based on the feedback from service providers, this would not be seen as a priority for development.

Assessments and accreditation for IV services in line with National Standards

Whilst there was initially some interest in aligning the standards to an accredited award such as NCVO's Approved Provider Standard for Mentoring and Befriending services, there was a strong feeling amongst providers that the cost would render it prohibitive for them. There was also some concern about how much work might be involved in achieving

accreditation. At the second conference in 2018 participants were asked about which areas of work felt the most important for the NIVN to focus on. None of the groups highlighted accreditation as an area of interest or priority. In recognition of this, the NIVN has developed a self assessment monitoring tool that providers can use to benchmark their service against the standards. Many of those interviewed for this report had done this work when they endorsed the standards and found it to be a useful exercise. Comments included: *'The standards are one of the most comprehensive tools I have ever used. They were really helpful for me as a new person in post.'* *'The standards help you to identify what you are doing well and where the gaps are.'*

Year 5

Hold the second national IV conference - raise the profile of IV and address current issues

The second NIVN conference took place in Birmingham in July 2018. 118 people were invited with 83 people attending. The conference included presentations from an IV and their young person, feedback from the young people's conference, a presentation from the NIVN Managers as well as their line manager and four guest speakers including the evaluator. Of

those who attended, 22.89% completed an evaluation which highlighted that 42.11% thought the event was excellent and 31.57% thought it was good. The feedback as to what participants thought were the most useful parts of the day highlighted the opportunities for networking and looking at how to recruit more male volunteers. The evaluator took the opportunity to ask participants to work in groups to review the NIVN's objectives for the remaining period of secured funding and to identify what were considered the key priorities. The consistent message that emerged from this was that the NIVN needed to continue the work around raising the profile of IV services. This was felt important in order to encourage more volunteers, more young people and an increased awareness from stakeholders such as commissioners and senior managers. Conference participants and interviewees felt that the NIVN is in the best position to influence as it is not involved in direct service provision and is, therefore, not seen as having a vested interest. This was encapsulated in one interviewee's comment who said: '*One of the difficulties is that whilst we are networking we are also direct competitors so it's hard to raise concerns if providers are then willing to come in and accept contracts that you're trying to change.*' The focus of influencing and campaigning was also

endorsed by one of the NIVN steering group members who felt that part of the NIVN's role was to increase understanding of the IV role: '*Some services are experiencing pressure around the time it takes to match young people but the matches need to be right and part of our role is creating that understanding.*' A further issue that was addressed during the conference was the recruitment of male volunteers. The presenter works for Chapter who are the advertising agency who compiled the IV film; he is an IV volunteer and a member of the NIVN steering group. Recruiting male volunteers is a national issue for social care providers and is highlighted as a challenge consistently in volunteering research. The presentation encouraged participants to consider what motivates people to volunteer and what might attract men to the role.

Develop an understanding of the challenges around out of county matches and share best practice

This piece of work is ongoing and will present some challenges due to the number of providers offering IV services. The NIVN Manager felt that the work that is being carried out currently on developing a website for the NIVN will be a significant step in facilitating conversations between

providers. The website will mean that providers can locate the service provider for each local authority that commissions or delivers a service. Out of county matches was the most often cited challenge from those interviewed, a number of whom had young people placed some way from their home authority. Comments from interviewees included: '*My current approach has been to recruit someone locally myself but it takes up a lot of time and it would be much easier to be able to link with a local provider.*' '*I know it would be a challenge to make it happen (partnership working) due to people's time and cost constraints but we need to put the young people first.*' This area of work was also identified as important by conference attendees. The NIVN Manager said that this is a piece of work that it is hoped that the senior managers who are part of the steering group will help to lead on this area of work in respect of developing a strategic approach.

Freedom of information data request to compare statistics on IV to the Freedom of Information request carried out in 2015

This work will be progressed in 2019.

Project aim and objectives

Aim

To raise awareness of the role of the Independent Visitor, within an agreed set of national standards.

The overall aim of the project is the one that is raised consistently by interviewees, conference participants and the regional coordinators in terms of work that still needs to be done. For those who have worked in and around IV services for a long time there has been a strong feeling that IV services are often overlooked in terms of their importance. This was encapsulated in the previous evaluation report^(vii) and the comment from a consultant who was reviewing IV service provision in Wales who commented that IV services are often the ‘Cinderella’ service. There is a strong feeling that the work of the NIVN has made great strides in addressing this issue and bringing awareness of IV services much more to the forefront. Comments included:

‘Having the standards definitely makes it easier to back up your case in terms of things that you are asking for as you are making the case with the backing of the Network.’

‘Being part of the network gives the IV projects weight in that each IV project is part of a bigger picture to improve outcomes for children who are looked after.’

'I think that NIVN has improved the standards of IV practice throughout the country as we share information, ideas and training. It has also liaised with Education Department as well as Ofsted so that they are aware of the role. Their influence has been demonstrated by Ofsted now including independent visitor provision in their inspections.'

However, there is also a sense that there is some way to go and that the momentum established by the NIVN needs to be maintained. Interviewees said:

'It feels a bit like, yes we've got the standards but what now. There still needs to be impact at a higher level.'

'I wonder if there's work that could be done that would be targeted more at the commissioners and the funders that would increase their understanding.'

Objectives

To improve consistency & standard of IV services

Achievements to date

- » At the time of the last report, 8 charitable or not for profit organisations had endorsed the standards. This has now increased to 14 charitable or not for profit organisations and 8 local authority organisations.
- » The six regional network meetings have been maintained and continue to meet on a regular basis.
- » Feedback from those who attend the regional meetings and those who coordinate them remains positive in respect of the value they feel the NIVN and the standards have had for them.
- » The work developing the standards carried out by NIVN, which was for England and Wales, has prompted the Welsh Government to develop a set of Welsh standards which will be distinct from the NIVN standards. The regional network coordinator for Wales commented: *'The standards produced by the NIVN were used to base the Wales standards on to reflect Welsh legislation, NIVN has been involved with this development in Wales.'*

- » A set of standards for young people have been developed with young people and disseminated to IV Coordinators.

Taking the work forward

- » The standards are due to be reviewed in order to gather feedback from those who have endorsed them as to how they work in practice.

To increase awareness around the IV role

Achievements to date

- » Additional funding from Barnardo's donors was secured to develop a short film to promote IV services. The film was made with the support of the advertising agency, Chapter, and has been launched and made available to service providers. There has been some feedback from Network members that the film was: '*... too heavily branded with the Barnardo's logo.*' Despite this, the general feeling from those interviewed was that the film is useful and reflective of the IV role. One coordinator commented: '*I like the way that they're just doing low key stuff in a local park. It shows how simple the relationship can be.*' Several of those interviewed are

using the film within their training for IVs.

- » In October 2017, Ofsted updated their inspection framework for local authorities to include a specific reference to Independent Visitor services.
- » A significant piece of work that is being carried out at the moment is the development of a website for the NIVN. This work is again being supported by Chapter. The website should be available from March/April 2019.

Taking the work forward

- » The website will go live in 2019.
- » The steering group will be reviewing ways in which the NIVN can increase their influence with policy makers and commissioners.

To increase numbers of children accessing IV services

Achievements to date

- » The National Independent Visitor Network Data Report^(viii) highlighted that there were 8 local authorities with no IV service provision and 5 who were operating on a spot purchase provision only. With varying degrees of support being offered by NIVN, 4 of the local authorities who didn't have a service have

commissioned one and 2 of those who were operating on a spot purchase only have commissioned full services.

- » IV Coordinators fed back that they are using the young people's standards and the IV film with their local Children in Care Councils. One commented: '*... the work with our Children in Care Council has prompted conversations with young people and an increase in their awareness of the IV service and, in one instance, a request for an IV.*'
- » Many of those interviewed have highlighted the challenges in increasing numbers of IV matches when local authorities are still constrained by budget cuts. However service providers have felt more able to push back against cuts by highlighting the work of the NIVN and the recommended resources detailed within the standards. There was a high level of awareness of the recommendation that IV coordinators' working hours correlate to an hour per match and most were close to this.

Taking the work forward

- » The second freedom of information data request will be made in 2019. The follow up report that stems from

this will identify whether or not the numbers of young people who have an IV match has increased.

- » Work will continue with those local authorities who currently don't commission an IV service to ensure that all local authorities offer a service that is reflective of the looked after population in the locality.

To enable partnership working sharing best practice

Achievements to date

- » The 6 regional network meetings continue to meet and those who attend report the benefits of the peer support that the meetings provide. One commented that the best thing about the meetings was: '*Learning from other IV coordinators and supporting each other. I found it especially useful when I first started in my role.*'
- » The NIVN Manager talked about how much time has been spent on an ongoing basis keeping the database of network members up to date. There can be quite a high turnover of staff at the IV coordinator level which the NIVN aren't informed of. The NIVN Manager said that they had taken a proactive approach and contacted all those listed to ensure their details were up to date.

- » A young people's conference was held which was attended by 6 young people and 11 professionals. The turnout for this was lower than expected. Some of the reasons cited for the lack of attendance included the demands on IV Coordinators time and the location of the event in terms of travel and cost.
- » The second NIVN conference took place in July 2018 with 83 people attending.
- » The Huddle portal has been maintained and contains up to date reports and information for IV coordinators. Those interviewed use huddle on a regular basis and have posted questions and found the feedback useful. However, it should be noted that the request for people to be interviewed for the evaluation was posted on Huddle so the response came from those who are active on the site.

Taking the work forward

- » The development of the website will provide greater opportunities for interaction between providers.
- » The work around out of county matches will potentially provide much greater opportunities for inter agency working.

To establish recommended level of provision

Achievements to date

- » The work around recommendations regarding the level of provision was predominantly achieved in the previous funding round. The standards recommend that an IV Coordinator's working hours should be equivalent to 1 hour per match.
- » The National Independent Visitor Network Data Report^(ix) highlighted that, at the time of the request, 3.2% of young people were matched with an IV. The NIVN concluded that a more appropriate target would be 10% of the looked after children population.
- » The IV coordinators and senior managers interviewed were aware of the recommendations and some had used these to negotiate a different level of service provision. One coordinator commented: '*I think it's really useful to have the back up of the standards when you're trying to negotiate with the commissioners.*'

Taking the work forward

- » The findings of the follow up freedom of information request will inform further guidance as to recommendations regarding levels of provision.

- » One interviewee highlighted that the local authority commissioning the IV service has started to impose requirements around the length of time required for making each match and, in doing so, were placing unrealistic expectations on the service. The steering group representative noted that part of the future work would be seeking to influence policy around these sorts of issues. One IV Coordinator commented: '*I have learnt that the most important thing is the appropriateness of the match. Sometimes it's taken me nearly a year to find the right person but these are long term relationships and the most benefit comes from getting it right.*'

Conclusion

The NIVN has continued to build on the work that was completed against the objectives and outputs that were identified for the first 3 years of the project. The six regional meetings are still running with those who attend finding the meetings both supportive and informative. Interviewees are impressed by the difference that the NIVN and the standards have made in respect of raising awareness and assisting with a consistency of approach. The work done in England has influenced and facilitated the work that is now taking place in Wales which will culminate in a set of standards for IV services in Wales. In addition, the young people's standards and the IV film have helped to promote the role to young people and to increase the understanding of the role. However the Barnardo's branding on the film needs to be addressed as this has acted as a deterrent for some providers. The move by Ofsted to incorporate the reference to IV services within the assessment framework has been a significant achievement and it will be interesting to see what impact this might have over time in respect of young people's access to the service. The NIVN has also been able to encourage and influence those local authorities who previously weren't offering IV services or full services and this work is ongoing. The conference, regional meetings and access to Huddle and the NIVN team

continue to provide opportunities for networking and sharing practice issues which is valued by those involved with service delivery.

This period of funding has brought some review of the initial objectives and a recognition that some of those identified were not deemed to be either viable or a priority for the work. This has led to the development of a self assessment tool in place of a formalised accreditation process and a decision not to progress the work around outcomes. This shift in focus comes in response to feedback from network members who have emphasised the practice issues that impact on their work including the challenges presented by out of county matches, recruitment of male volunteers and the ongoing difficulties presented by dealing with commissioners who are constrained by finance and can lack an appreciation of the capacity and resources required for a quality service provision. Network members are keen for the NIVN to take the lead on the campaigning and influencing role that providers can feel constrained to do due to contractual relationships and the competitive nature of the sector.

Recommendations

- 1.** It is recommended that the steering group continue to discuss the ways in which the NIVN can influence policy makers and commissioners around the provision of IV services.
- 2.** The NIVN needs to work with senior managers from a number of the large and smaller providers to review current arrangements and practice in respect of out of county matches. It is recommended that the NIVN develop a set of recommendations as to what would constitute good practice in respect of how providers can work together to increase access to the IV service for out of county young people.
- 3.** The NIVN could undertake further work around the recruitment of male volunteers in terms of developing some guidance, a campaign or advice as to how to target male volunteers.
- 4.** The IV standards are due to be reviewed following 12 months of implementation. The NIVN may want to consider how this work could be combined with the final report for the external evaluation. A detailed section on the standards could be built into the online survey for the external evaluation.

5. It is recommended that the NIVN consider the communications strategy that will support the launch of the website. From the launch, the traffic on the site should be monitored by the steering group on an ongoing basis. The NIVN will want to identify and resolve the implications for the ongoing maintenance of the site.

6. Following the completion of the second Freedom of Information data request and subsequent report, the NIVN will want to consider how the findings from the report can be promoted externally. The first report generated a significant amount of media interest and the NIVN should explore whether this can be replicated.

7. It is recommended that the NIVN send a reminder to IV services about the revision of the Ofsted framework. IV services should be encouraged to feedback regarding the impact of this change both during and following assessment visits.

References

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- iii. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
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- vi. Gordon, A. & K. Graham (2016) Op Cit.
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- ix. Gordon, A. & K. Graham (2016) Op Cit.



NATIONAL
INDEPENDENT
VISITOR
NETWORK

the **Tudor** trust