



**Cornwall Mental Health Project**

## **APPLICATION FORM TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT VISITOR**

The Independent Visitors Scheme (IVS) exists to support people with mental health problems who are in hospital. The role of an Independent Visitor is to act as a confidential and independent listening ear and to support patients in having a collective say about their care, treatment and quality of life during their stay in hospital. We are not there to problem solve but to give people time, support, help raise issues, signpost and because you may well have been there yourself - give cause for hope.

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS**

**CONTACT NUMBER:**

**1. WHAT INTERESTS YOU IN BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT VISITOR?**

**2.DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PERSONAL SKILLS & EXPERIENCE WHICH YOU FEEL COULD BENEFIT THE ROLE OF AN INDEPENDENT VISITOR? IF SO PLEASE OUTLINE THEM HERE.**

**3.ARE YOU PRESENTLY USING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?**

YES       NO

*If yes, can we let your Care Co-ordinator know you have applied?*

**Name of Care Co-ordinator:**

**Address:**

**Tel No:**



## Forum Independent Visitor Guidelines

- 1) The Independent Visiting Scheme is a hospital based scheme only and covers all four acute adult psychiatric wards (Fletcher, Harvest, Perran & Carbis) in Cornwall. In addition the scheme visits two recovery units (Fettle ward and Lower Cardrew), the Low Secure Unit (Bowman) and two older people's wards (Garner & Cove).
- 2) All personal info given by in-patients is confidential unless the individual concerned is a risk to themselves or others. In which case the information must be passed on to the senior nurse on the ward/unit.
- 3) Independent Visitors must ask staff for a panic alarm on arrival at a unit and if there is anything they need to know prior to their visit relating to issues of health and safety.
- 4) Personal experiences can be disclosed by Independent Visitors if relevant to the discussion.
- 5) Be aware that body language can be misunderstood. If, however, it feels that some form of physical contact (e.g. a hug) might be helpful check this out with the person first.
- 6) For the safety of residents and Independent Visitors any 1:1 time should be in the quietest part of an open area (e.g. corner of dining area, the quiet lounge, table in garden area) not in closed rooms or residents' bedrooms.
- 7) If friends and/or family are resident on the ward it can prove difficult to separate formal Independent Visiting with simply visiting someone you care about. If this is an issue for you please speak to the Forum Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- 8) Independent Visitors will be required to attend a monthly meeting held in Truro. If this is not possible Visitors must make sure the feedback sheets are completed and sent in.
- 9) In-patient visitors will undertake any training as required and be expected to adhere to policy in this area.

10) Prospective Independent Visitors will be informally interviewed by a Forum Co-ordinator.

11) Supervision with a Forum Co-ordinator will be available on request.

12) Independent visiting is a commitment and visits to units may need to be weekly. If, for any reason, visitors are unable to attend or need to swap visiting days they should let a Forum Co-ordinator know as soon as possible.

13) In-Patient Visitors will receive transport/mileage costs and out of pocket expenses.

14) As Independent Visitors you may be asked or want to meet up with in-patients after discharge. As the IVS scheme is a hospital-based project The Forum is unable to support such requests. If, therefore, you choose to meet up with people after their discharge we ask that you do this as an individual in your own right not as an Independent Visitor.

**As an Independent Visitor we have money available to cover the following:**

- Transport/mileage costs (mileage is currently 40p per mile). Mileage can only be paid wholly and exclusively for the voluntary work you undertake as an Independent Visitor.
- These expenses can be claimed using a Mental Health Forum IVS expenses form which is sent to our office at 2 Princes Street, Truro. Payment is usually made by cheque.
- It is important to remember that if you are in receipt of social security benefits, housing benefit or council tax benefit you are obliged to notify these departments of any voluntary work you undertake or payments you receive.
- The Cornwall Rural Community Council/Mental Health Forums have no responsibility for contacting any social security benefits departments.



**Cornwall Mental Health Project**

## **INDEPENDENT VISITOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

**I understand that in my role as an Independent Visitor I may be given information that is confidential. This may be in a variety of ways i.e. personal information from another Service User or information given at any meetings I attend. I agree not to disclose such information to a third party unless there is a risk to the individual or others.**

**Signed:.....**

**Date: .....**