

# POWYS CHALLENGE

Registered Charity No: 1091494    Registered Company No: 4350654

## INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL WORK STAFF ABOUT USING POWYS CHALLENGE

**The enclosed information is designed to help you decide whether you wish to use a Powys Challenge volunteer with your client  
And, if so, how to do it.**

**Please could you ensure that all appropriate staff have access to this information, together with supplies of the forms mentioned.**

**If you would like Powys Challenge staff to come to talk to your team meetings, or to individual new staff, please let us know.**

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# 1. What is Powys Challenge?

Powys Challenge was formed in 1994 with the primary objective of assisting in the work of reducing re-offending in Powys by offering support and opportunities to offenders and defendants using trained and accredited volunteers. Initially Powys Challenge worked solely in partnership with Powys Probation Service and worked entirely with adults. It was originally funded by a Home Office grant. Since 1996, the scope of our work has extended so that now **we offer services to anyone who is an offender, a defendant, or is at risk of offending, regardless of age. We also provide services to the families of those involved in the criminal justice system.** We are in partnership with Powys Probation Service, Powys Social Services, the Employment Service and other local organisations.

## Who are the Volunteers?

Our volunteers are representative of the communities of Powys. They are local people with an interest in working with young and older people who are experiencing trouble in their lives. They may be 18-80 with a wide variety of backgrounds. Some are retired; others are setting out on career paths. All bring enthusiasm, commitment and together have a vast range of skills and talents.

## How are the volunteers organised?

All volunteers undergo a rigorous selection procedure and a minimum of four days' core volunteer training. If satisfactory, they become accredited as Volunteers. They are managed by a small team of paid staff who are responsible for ensuring good matching between client and volunteer and that the volunteers carry out the work they have been asked to do. Powys Challenge staff support volunteers but do not directly manage their case work. Volunteers have the opportunity to be trained in other areas of work throughout their period of commitment to the organisation.

## Who Pays?

Powys Challenge receives grants from a wide range of organisations including Powys Social Services. Powys Challenge is therefore contracted to supply volunteers to work with clients. No additional cost is incurred by referring a young person for support except in minor instances such as costs of leisure activities and regular long-term transport. These would need to be funded from other Social Services sources.

## Why use volunteers?

- They bring time, skills, experience, and out-of-hours support.
- They are not seen as authority figures.
- They can enhance your role and will provide feedback concerning work done.
- They can provide an enhanced level of service and support to your clients.

## How can you access a Volunteer?

See flowchart later in this pack.

## 2. What do volunteers do?

Volunteers usually work on a one-to-one basis with clients, under the supervision of a case officer and undertake tasks defined by the case officer. Volunteer involvement can be short or long term.

Tasks may include –

- **BEFRIENDING**
- **BAIL SUPPORT**
- **LITERACY SUPPORT**
- **BUDGETING**
- **EMPLOYMENT MENTORING**
- **EDUCATION MENTORING**
- **TRANSPORT**
- **LEISURE SUPPORT**
- **DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SUPPORT**
- **HELP WITH MANAGING DEBTS**
- **HOUSING SUPPORT**
- **FAMILY SUPPORT**

and much more.

If you are not sure if volunteers can help with the tasks you need – please ask.

Some examples.....

A 16-year-old young man was given Bail Support after a series of offences. He was living alone in his own flat and following many complaints was evicted. His volunteer helped him obtain a flat at a Supported Housing Scheme and helped him move. Subsequently he was sentenced to a period in a YOI. On release he returned to his flat and is continuing to receive support from two volunteers.

Support was given to a young man of 14 who was awaiting sentence for a sexual offence. He was under 24-hour curfew for an extended period and a volunteer worked with him on a weekly basis.

A volunteer had a very positive influence on a young man who has had a serious drug problem. A place was obtained for him at Coleg Powys and he is making excellent progress. It is likely that he will be able to take 'A' levels within a year.

Ongoing befriending was given to a young man while on a Supervision Order. The volunteer was able to work with him to improve his employment prospects and accompanied him to Profile testing at Powys Careers Guidance. This was valuable in boosting his self-confidence and he subsequently obtained a work placement.

A young man of 13 completed a successful period of Bail Support and during this time formed a good relationship with his volunteer. After three months he was placed a Supervision Order. Volunteer involvement continued. The volunteer, through the Employment Mentoring Scheme, saw him weekly to teach him basic numeracy and literacy as he had been expelled from school. Once a month the volunteer accompanied the client to a visit to his Social Worker.

### 3. Juvenile Bail Supervision and Support

The Bail Support Scheme is available to all young defendants, particularly those at risk of remand into secure accommodation. It is aimed at providing support to individuals to help them:

- **to turn up for court appearances as required**
- **to keep other Bail conditions** (except curfew surveillance which is a police responsibility)
- **not to re-offend while on Bail**

It is possible that other issues may be able to begin to be addressed while a young person is on bail, but the primary aims are those listed above.

**Bail Support is a Court condition of Bail** and Magistrates are familiar with how the Scheme works.

Trained volunteers will meet with the defendant frequently each week in the early stages, and at agreed intervals thereafter. Often more frequent meetings take place – and are arranged to coincide with reporting requirements.

Volunteers are managed by case officers and Powys Challenge staff.

Powys Challenge Project Managers: -

- are required to report failures of Bail Support meetings to the YOT Manager
- may be required to write a short report for the Court relating to the Bail period, as directed by the YOT Manager.

Bail Support can be enormously helpful, both to the young person and to her/his parents during a stressful time. The support of a volunteer can help the young person to come to terms with Bail restrictions and to understand their significance.

If the young person receives a Community Sentence, it is often possible for the volunteer to continue working with the young person as a mentor if the Case Officer so wishes.

**NB - From April 2000, the Crime and Disorder Act will require that each Local Authority area has a Juvenile Bail Support Scheme in place.**

**In response to this, the Juvenile Bail Supervision and Support Scheme in Powys is now available to a wider group of young people – it can now be offered as a voluntary option for low risk offenders whom you feel have insufficient home support to help them through the bail period. Court Duty Social Workers, or Duty Social Workers who have seen a young person at a police station, can request this support from Powys Challenge without it becoming a court condition. In such cases, failure to attend meetings will NOT be breachable.**

If in doubt about Bail Support, please contact Powys Challenge staff for more information.

