



October 2020

## Route 1 are delighted to welcome Tom and Rachel to our team, a little about them...

### Hi, I'm Tom.

I have worked in Education for many years as a Music Teacher and Learning Mentor specialising in Music Therapy and Inclusion. For several years I led a children's music workshop called 'YouthJam' aimed at supporting inner city teenagers in Birmingham.

Over the years I have seen how children yearn to be listened to and how important positive role models are for their well-being and development. I am passionate about advocating for children's rights and ensuring their voices are heard.

In my free time, I enjoy reading, playing the guitar and going hiking in the Somerset countryside.

I am looking forward to supporting volunteer Advocates and Independent Visitors in providing this vital service for the young people of Somerset.



### Hi, I'm Rachel.

I have been working as a primary school teacher in a small independent school in Somerset.

I felt the time was right for a change and wanted new challenges, so I applied for this position. It sounded so exciting and varied and, as I used to be an independent visitor myself, I felt it was the perfect opportunity.

I have a Jack Russell dog called Molly. She's an old lady now, but we enjoy going on short walks together.

In my spare time I love playing tennis although I am unfortunately unable to do so at the moment due to injury. But I am still active in the club and spend a lot of time watching others playing. I am also in charge of the junior section of the club and work with a team of other volunteers to provide coaching and other fun opportunities for them.



I love going on holiday and my favourite place in the world is Walt Disney World in Florida. I go there as much as I can and have had some amazing experiences and met some wonderful people. I am really looking forward to working with all of you and I can't wait to meet you.

**We are also happy** to announce that we will soon welcome a new administrator to join Hazel in the Business support team. Please also note that we have a new email address for administrative matters [route1businesssupportadmin@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:route1businesssupportadmin@somerset.gov.uk)



**A new advocacy feedback form** for children and young people to complete was sent out in recent months, please use for all face-face meetings and (if appropriate) for virtual meetings too! Many thanks



## Basic Child Protection Training

The Somerset Volunteer Bureau will be offering this virtually for the foreseeable future, using either Teams or Zoom. The dates are:

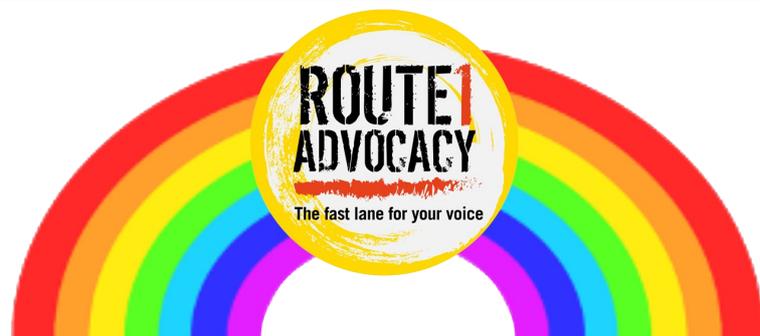
Thursday 29 October, 5.45 for a 6pm start, finishing at 9.30

Saturday 21 November, 1.45 for a 2pm start, finishing at 5.30

Monday 7 December, 5.45 for a 6pm start, finishing at 9.30

**If your safeguarding training is out of date and you haven't done the online training and would prefer to attend one of the above sessions then please let Route1 know by emailing:**

[route1businesssupportadmin@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:route1businesssupportadmin@somerset.gov.uk)



**Fostering Feasibility study** - Route 1 are currently supporting a six month study with Fostering Somerset within the Yeovil area.

The initiative is a feasibility research study that is looking at the type of support that foster carers and children looked after need.

**We are currently looking at matching volunteers to support Foster carers and children looked after**, this will give the child or young person the chance to build a relationship with someone outside of the placement and to support their social and emotional wellbeing. It is also to allow the foster carer to have some informal respite whilst the child or young person is with the volunteer as well as offer the foster carer the opportunity of having someone who is not a paid professional to speak to and who will listen to them – someone to share the 'emotional load' of being a foster carer with.

Volunteers can be anyone living locally who has an interest in supporting foster carers and helping children living in care, or who can bring different life experiences to a foster carers life. If you are interested in this opportunity or would like to know more please get in touch with Route 1 Rachael Wren: [RXWren@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:RXWren@somerset.gov.uk)

**In our August newsletter**, we shared with you an account written by one of our independent visitors.

We are now delighted to share with you an account written by a 12 year old boy about his independent visitor.

*HARRY, MY INDEPENDENT VISITOR, MY FRIEND. When I first met Harry I thought, "wow, you are old" ha ha. But as I got to know him I found that he was very smart and kind. Every time Harry took me out he told me stories about things he had done when he was younger, quite a lot of these made me laugh. Each visit I had, I liked Harry more, he just seemed like a wise old owl and became more of a friend than an 'independent visitor'. We have had lots of fun together, but one of my favourite places was the Sealife Centre in Weymouth. We also visited SS Great Britain in Bristol and I got to climb the rigging right to the very top, it was very high, Harry didn't think I would do it, but I had to show him that I wasn't a wimp ha ha.*

*Some of Harry's visits had to be quite short as he lived about an hour away from me so we spent time walking in fields, or eating cake in coffee shops, this was still fun as I could just listen to Harry and his stories. If I had to say one bad thing about Harry it would be his interest in cricket and golf, boring!!!!, oh, and because he had lots of nice holidays, but he always sent me a postcard with pictures on of the place he was visiting and sometimes he brought me back souvenirs.*

*I got to meet Harry's grandchildren and his wife, they made me feel very welcome and I enjoyed playing games with the girls. Because of the coronavirus and lockdown, I was not able to see Harry, but one day a letter arrived for me, he was telling me how he was and what sort of things he had been doing whilst being on lockdown. From then on we wrote letters to each other, that was nice. When the lockdown was eased, Harry was able to come and visit me, we had a garden visit and I was able to show him some of things I had been doing with my foster family. I showed him around the garden and the flowers that we had planted, he knew the names of many of them, he is so smart.*

*Because of covid-19, his age, and the advice given by the government, Harry is unable to continue his visits as he has to consider the risk to his health and his families. I will be sad not to see very much of him, but we are going to carry on writing to each other, because, Harry may have only started out as 'my independent visitor' but, he became my FRIEND!!!!*

**Route 1 are pleased to share that this child has been matched with a new Independent Visitor to begin more adventures!**



**Take care everyone, stay safe**

