

What is a Child Contact Centre?

A Child Contact Centre is a safe, friendly and neutral place where children of separated families can spend time with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members. It is a child-centred environment that puts the needs of the children first.

What is it like at a Child Contact Centre?

The most important people in the Child Contact Centre are the children. We aim to create a warm, sociable atmosphere where you and your children can relax and enjoy yourselves. The Centre has a variety of games, toys and books for children of all ages. Tea, coffee and other refreshments are provided. You may want to bring along some favourite toys, special drinks, or other things you might need such as nappies.

The Child Contact Centre is run by fully trained volunteers. They are impartial, so they do not take sides. They work to a strict confidentiality policy and have all been through an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

How are the visits arranged?

Referrals can be made by a social worker, solicitor, CAFCASS officer or a court order, or you can apply yourself. How often you come

to the Centre depends on you. It is advisable for you and your child or children to come and see the Centre before your first arranged visit. This will help you get to know the Centre and the staff, and make your first visit easier.

Do I have to meet my ex-partner when I go to the Centre?

Not if you don't want to. Parents are responsible for their children at all times while at the Centre so you will have to wait with your child until your ex-partner arrives. However, the Centre staff can deal with the handover of your child so you don't need to meet your ex-partner.

What happens if I can't come at a time when I've arranged a visit?

Let your ex-partner and the Centre Co-ordinator know as soon as you can.

Does the Centre make any reports about us?

A Child Contact Centre is independent of the courts, social services or any statutory agency. We do not make verbal or written reports, apart from the dates and times of attendance. The only exception to this is if we believe that a child is at risk, or if a volunteer or Centre user is at risk of harm.

Are there any rules?

As few as possible! However, the Centre is used by several families at the same time, so we have to ensure the safety of everyone and consideration for others:

- Parents are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children at all times while at the Centre. No child may be left without a parent in attendance.
- You must provide a contact telephone number when leaving children at the Centre.
- A child may only be taken from the Centre during a visit if this is stated on the referral form, or with the written consent of both parents.
- Relatives or friends can only attend if they are named on the referral form.
- There must be no arguing in front of any of the children. Abusive or aggressive behaviour and racist or other offensive remarks will not be tolerated. Any visitor acting in such a way will be asked to leave.
- Finally, please only use your phone if you are sharing something with your child. Alcohol, drugs, or anyone under the influence of these will not be allowed onto the premises.