

CHILD CONTACT SERVICE INFORMATION

The Child Contact service provides a warm, safe environment where parents/carers and children can relax and can spend time together.

The service is for parents, grandparents or other family members who are no longer living with their children. A Centre such as ours can arrange contact in a safe and secure environment. We provide a range of resources such as toys and games to enable contact to be a positive experience.

Contact is not just about allotting time between parents and family members. We believe it is more helpful to think of contact as 'time for children' with an emphasis on the quality of that time. The focus should be on meeting your children's needs as best you can to ensure their time with you is of value to them.

Child Contact Centres can help when there are safety considerations, or to help trust and reliability to develop between parents and carers. We can help when parents or carers need time to agree alternative plans or relationships need some time and support to develop.

Types of service offered

Supervised contact

Where there are more complex issues or concerns as to the safety of children and or adults, we supervise the contact to ensure everybody is safe. Someone will always be in sight and sound of the children and will monitor conversations and provide assistance or intervention if necessary.

Families are supervised on a one to one basis. The behaviour of both parent and child are observed and conversations are monitored. During and after the contact session, staff will provide feedback and offer support and guidance to parents to enable contact to be a positive experience for their child or children. We also work with the parent the child lives with to address any worries or concerns they may have.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the contact centre.

A typed summary of each session will be provided to both parties. Parties can then choose to share the records with the Court or professionals such as Cafcass, solicitors, or social workers.

Assisted contact

Assisted contact is a low level of supervised contact, which supports two families within a session. Staff remain present and monitor interactions and conversations and provide a typed summary of each session.

This service may be suitable for those families where children are well settled in their relationship with the visiting parent and have no high level safeguarding concerns, but still require typed summaries to provide in professional arena's, such as family courts.

This service is not suitable for families where one to one support is required.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the contact centre.

A typed summary of each session will be provided to both parties. Parties can then choose to share the records with the Court or professionals such as Cafcass, solicitors, or social workers.

Supported contact

This is a follow-on service offered after families have attended for supervised or assisted contact. Supported contact is for cases where unsupervised contact has not yet been agreed or is not

appropriate but there are no concerns about interaction between parents and children and the main requirement is for a safe, neutral space to spend time together.

There may be up to three families in a session at any one time. Sessions are supported by our well established volunteers. A worker may not always be in sight and sound of the children.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the contact centre.

No written observations are provided. Verbal feedback is given after each session.

Handover contact (pick up and drop off)

When unsupervised contact is appropriate but parents do not wish to meet, handover contact can be used and a contact worker will support the handing over and handing back of children.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the contact centre.

No written observations are provided. Verbal feedback is given after each session.

Specific Saturdays timeslots are offered:

9:15am – 12:30pm
9:15am – 4:30pm
12:30pm – 4:30pm

Letterbox / Indirect contact

****Items to be sent to the main Huddersfield office****

We can support indirect contact by sending on letters, cards and/or gifts either via post or via email. The addresses of both parents remain confidential.

Items received are checked and read to ensure they are appropriate before being sent on. A log is kept of any items received and sent on.

Contact venues

Huddersfield

Yorkshire Children's Centre
Brian Jackson House
2 New North Parade
Huddersfield
HD1 5JP

Telephone – 01484 519988

Email – children-familyservices@yccuk.org.uk

Doncaster

****PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DONCASTER VENUE IS HIRED ONLY. We do not have an office at this location. Please contact the main Huddersfield office for any information.****

Doncaster Central Family Hub
Welcome Way
Doncaster
DN1 3LE

How are sessions arranged? Arrangements are by referral. The referral can be made by a social worker, solicitor, family mediator, CAFCASS Family Court Advisor or other appropriate professional. Arrangements will vary depending on which type of contact session is taking place.

I don't have a solicitor. Can I self-refer? Yes, we do accept referrals from parents or family members that do not have legal representation, subject to safeguarding checks. For self-referrals we require each parent or carer to complete and sign the referral form. If one referral form cannot be filled in by

both parties then we require EACH parent or carer to complete their own separate referral form. Referrals will be accepted at the discretion of the contact centre co-ordinator.

What happens once a referral is submitted? When a complete referral is received, it is assessed by the centre co-ordinator who will confirm if we can accept. We may need to ask some follow-up questions or request further information. Once a referral is accepted, we will arrange payment of the referral fee, and each adult party will be booked in for an introductory meeting with a contact worker. After the introductory meetings the contact arrangements will be booked in and confirmed.

Are all referrals accepted? No. Following receipt of the referral form(s) and any other information, we will make a decision as to whether we are able to offer a service. We use the guidelines issued by the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC), in order to make such decisions, and there may be occasions when we are not able to offer a service, such as when there are on-going criminal investigations or pending safeguarding investigations by the Court. Should this be the case we will provide information to the parties as to why this decision is made.

We can usually accept referrals where there is the following:

- Ongoing court proceedings
- Children looked after by local authorities
- Children adopted or living with family under SGO arrangements (or similar)
- High levels of conflict
- Parental communication breakdown
- Parents building skills and experience caring for their children
- Parents with learning difficulties

Referrals we cannot accept:

- If parties are awaiting a court hearing / Finding of Fact with regards to domestic abuse. We must know the outcome before a referral can be considered
- If one of the parties has a conviction or Finding related to domestic abuse, they must have successfully engaged with appropriate work e.g. Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP), Safer Relationships or similar before a referral can be considered further. Anger manager programmes are not appropriate or accepted in this instance
- Where there is an ongoing police investigation or criminal proceedings
- Adults who have sexually offended against children, regardless of whether legal proceedings have concluded or are ongoing
- Referrals whereby there is a threat/risk of violence to another person (regardless of age)

How long will I have to wait before contact starts? Once a referral and any additional documents or information is received, the referral will be assessed by the contact centre co-ordinator who will confirm if we can accept. If we cannot accept a referral we will explain why and also offer any guidance if we can.

Once a referral is accepted we will arrange payment of the referral fee, and each adult party will be booked in for an introductory meeting with a contact worker.

Following completion of introductory meetings, and once we are satisfied that it is appropriate to commence contact, we aim to arrange the first session at the first available opportunity. This will dependant on a number of factors such as centre capacity and parent/carer and child availability.

The referral process could take up to 8 weeks, or longer if we have a large waiting list.

Do I have to meet my former partner when I go to the centre? Not if you don't want to. We implement staggered arrival and departure times and the centre staff will support with the handover of your child so you don't need to meet your former partner.

Does the centre make any reports about us? During Supervised and Assisted contact sessions an observation record is completed by contact centre staff. These are typed up and shared with parents. Parents can then choose to share the records with professionals such as a solicitor Cafcass, or Court.

How much will it cost and who pays? Unfortunately, we are not currently able to offer a subsidised service. It needs to be mutually agreed by the parties as to who will cover the costs.

Referral Fee for Supervised/Assisted/Supported contact – £100.00 NON-REFUNDABLE

This covers initial administration, assessment of referral form and any additional paperwork, and introductory meetings for parties.

Referral fee for Handover or Indirect/Letterbox contact – £30.00 NON-REFUNDABLE

This covers initial administration, assessment of referral form and any additional paperwork, and introductory meetings for Handover referrals.

Supervised Contact - £75.00 per session consisting of 15 minutes staggered arrival/check in, 1 hour direct contact time, and 15 minutes staggered departure/verbal feedback. A typed observation report is provided.

Assisted Contact – £45.00 per session consisting of 15 minutes staggered arrival/check in, 1 hour direct contact time, and 15 minutes staggered departure/verbal feedback. A typed observation report is provided.

Supported Contact – £20.00 for a 1 hour session. Staggered arrival and departure time is implemented but not charged for. Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Handover - £7.50 for either handing over OR handing back

Staggered arrival and departure time is implemented but not charged for. Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Handover – £15.00 for handing over AND handing back

Staggered arrival and departure time is implemented but not charged for. Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Each Indirect/Letterbox item - £5.00 plus reimbursement of any additional postage.

Email correspondence, standard letters, and cards are covered by a £5.00 fee for each instance.

Larger or expensive items (e.g. gift cards) will usually be sent via 1st Class Signed For post or ParcelForce 24, whichever has the lowest postage cost. The party providing these items will be invoiced for the cost of any additional postage. Further items will not be passed on until the invoice has been cleared.

Parties are required to provide us with appropriate packaging (e.g. box, plastic packet, bubble wrap).

Payment terms and information

- Each contact session must be paid for before or on the day of contact. Contact sessions will not go ahead unless payment is received.
- We can accept cash and credit/debit card payments for contact sessions.
- In the event of a contact session being cancelled with less than 24 hours notice, full payment is required. Payment of the cancelled session must be provided before the next scheduled session. Failure to pay will result in the remaining sessions being suspended until the outstanding balance is cleared.
- In the event of persistent non-payment (2 sessions) contact arrangements will be suspended until any outstanding balance is cleared
- If a contact session is cancelled by Yorkshire Children's Centre the contact fee will be waived.

If you have any further queries or require a referral form please contact us.

children-familyservices@yccuk.org.uk
01484 519988 – main Huddersfield office