

REFERRAL GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PROFESSIONALS

Littlehampton Child Contact Centre operates at Littlehampton Baptist Church Hall, Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton on the first and third Saturday mornings of each month between 10.00am and 12.00 noon.

Supported Contact

Please note that Littlehampton Child Contact Centre offers supported contact and handovers only. Supported contact takes place in a neutral community venue where there are facilities to enable children to develop and maintain positive relationships with their non-resident parent. Supported Child Contact Centres are suitable for families where no significant risk to the child, or those around the child, has been identified.

The basic elements of supported contact are:

- ◆ Impartiality.
- ◆ Volunteers are available for assistance but there is no close observation, monitoring or evaluation of individual contacts/conversations.
- ◆ Several families are usually together in one room.
- ◆ Encouragement for families to develop mutual trust and consider more satisfactory family venues.
- ◆ Apart from attendance dates and times, no detailed report will be made to a referrer, CAFCASS, Solicitor or Court, unless there is a risk of harm to the child, parent or Centre worker.
- ◆ An acknowledgement that use of the Contact Centre is viewed as a temporary arrangement to be reviewed after an agreed period of time.

Referral

1. Please do not refer a family without contacting the Child Contact Centre Co-ordinator first to ensure suitability, availability of space and time.
2. A completed referral form should be posted or e-mailed to the Co-ordinator – addresses at top of page. Forms can be downloaded from our website: www.littlehamptonchildcontactcentre.org
3. When the Centre has a waiting list a completed referral form should still be sent. The Centre will then notify you when a place becomes available.
4. Only people named on the referral form will be allowed admittance to the Child Contact Centre. This may be varied by written agreement with both parties.
5. Parents are responsible for their children at all times whilst they are at the Child Contact Centre.

6. To try and maintain a friendly, impartial and confidential environment, we would request that you do not ask to see your clients on our premises, or make arrangements for any other professional to do so, without prior agreement with the Contact Centre Co-ordinator.
7. Only dates and times of a family's attendance will be disclosed unless it is felt that anyone using the Centre, or a volunteer, is at risk of harm. In the unlikely event of it becoming necessary to quote the Co-ordinator in any report, due to a Centre user or volunteer being at risk of harm, the form of words used should be checked and agreed with the person concerned beforehand.
8. Child Contact Centres providing Supported Contact will not knowingly accept a referral when someone has been convicted of any offence relating to physical and/or sexual abuse of any child, unless there are exceptional circumstances and appropriate professional advice.
9. The Child Contact Centre reserves the right to reduce or terminate contact if it is felt to be in the best interest of the child(ren).
10. The Child Contact Centre can withdraw the offer of a place if three contact sessions are cancelled, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
11. Parents should be informed that because the welfare of the child is paramount, there might be times when contact cannot take place if the child is too upset, even if there is a contact order.
12. Referrers should make arrangements for the provision of an interpreter where English is not the first language of the family involved and problems may arise with communication.
13. The Centre should be viewed as a temporary facility to help establish contact. The Child Contact Centre will be asking for your assistance to review the family's progress after six months.
14. **Please notify the Child Contact Centre Co-ordinator (by phone if possible) if the arrangements for contact are going to change or if contact is going to cease.**

February 2024