

Guidelines for Referrers



All correspondence should be sent to the Centre Co-ordinator:
Mrs Shirley McPhillimy The House Abbey St. Coleraine BT52 1EX
Tel 07899792948 e-mail SmcpCACCC@aol.com

Coleraine Area Child Contact Centre is based at The House Abbey St. and opens...10am – 12pm every Saturday...Ballycastle Branch is based at Youthlinks 15–17 Market St .and opens 10am – 12pm alternate Saturdays. Contact the Co-ordinator to confirm dates.

Please note that our Child Contact Centre offers supported contact only. Supported contact takes place in a variety of neutral community venues where there are facilities to enable children to develop and maintain positive relationships with non-resident parents and other family members. Supported Child Contact Centres are suitable for families when no significant risk to the child or those around the child has been identified.

The basic elements of supported contact are:

- Impartiality.
 - Staff and 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 or a number of rooms.
 - 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, Social Worker, a party's solicitor or Court, unless there is a risk of harm to the child, parent or Centre worker.
 - An acknowledgement that it be viewed as a temporary arrangement to be reviewed after an agreed period of time.
1. Please do not refer a client without contacting the Child Contact Centre Co-ordinator first to check availability of space and time.
 2. A completed referral form should be received by the Centre Co-ordinator one week in advance of the date which your client would like contact to commence. Where a Centre has a waiting list, a completed referral form should still be sent, the Centre will then notify you when a place becomes available.
 3. Only people named on the referral form will be allowed admittance to the Child Contact Centre. This may be varied by written agreement by both parties.
 4. Parents are responsible for their children at all times whilst they are at the Child Contact Centre.
 5. Please ensure that both parents have read and understood the Child Contact Centre's information leaflet in advance of contact starting.

6. To try and maintain a friendly, impartial and confidential environment, we would request that you do not at any time ask to see your clients on our premises without prior agreement.
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 or member of staff is at risk of harm. In the unlikely event of it becoming necessary to quote a Co-ordinator / Centre Manager in any report, due to a Centre user, volunteer or member of staff being at risk of harm, the form of words used should be checked and agreed with that person concerned beforehand.
8. Child Contact Centres providing Supported Contact will not knowingly accept a referral when somebody involved has been convicted of any offence relating to a) physical or b) sexual abuse of any child, unless there are exceptional circumstances and they have sought 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Please notify the Child Contact Centre Co-ordinator if the arrangements for contact are going to change or if contact is going to cease.

This Centre is a Member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres and operates in accordance with its National Standards for Child Contact Centres. We have working policies on the following:

- Child Protection.
- Confidentiality.
- Health and Safety.
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity.
- Domestic Violence.
- Volunteers.
- Access N.I. Disclosures

All these policies are available to view at the Centre or by request. There is also a Complaints procedure, which can be used should there be any problems.