

Volunteer Policy

Coleraine Area Child Contact Centre inc. Ballycastle offers a facility where children of separated families can enjoy contact in a neutral meeting place with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members, in a safe and comfortable environment. In order to offer this service, volunteers are needed to:

- co-ordinate the service* (*if the Co-ordinator is voluntary);
- keep attendance records;
- serve refreshments;
- prepare and clear up the Centre on the day;
- ensure that the Centre is secure and safe;
- be on hand to assist the families using the Centre.

Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by the Co-ordinator and if this is successful the two references asked for will be taken up.

An enhanced level criminal records Disclosure with Access N.I. will be made for every volunteer working in a Child Contact Centre.

Induction and training

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the Co-ordinator or Team leader.

This will include:

- The role of the volunteer.
- A list of all staff members and volunteers.
- A list of Management Committee members and sub-committees.
- Copies of all the Child Contact Centre policies including this Volunteer policy and those on Child Protection, Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Domestic Violence and Conflict Management.
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, rota etc.
- Details of ongoing training.
- Information about NACCC and its Values and National Standards.
- Other information as appropriate.

There will be a trial period of 3 months to give the Child Contact Centre and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel, meals and childcare. (Add or delete those areas of expenses your Centre will cover.) In order to claim

expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to the Co-ordinator Shirley McPhillimy or the Deputy Co-ordinator on duty

Support

The Co-ordinator, team leaders and other volunteers will offer support to the volunteers. There will be a briefing session at the beginning and a de-briefing at the end of each Child Contact Centre session.

The Co-ordinator will support all volunteers and will have regular meetings with the volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise.

The Co-ordinator (whether paid or un-paid) will receive support and regular supervision sessions from the Chair of the Management Committee (or from another named committee member).

Insurance

The Child Contact Centre has a valid insurance policy which you are advised to read.

Confidentiality

The contact process requires an explicit confidentiality policy, which all Centre workers, which includes Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are obliged to observe.

1. Volunteers should not disclose information about what they have seen or heard in the Child Contact Centre to outsiders.
2. Volunteers should never give their own telephone no. or address to any families
3. Volunteers should only talk in general terms about themselves and avoid disclosing personal or intimate information
4. Volunteers should not make arrangements to meet individuals or families outside the Child Contact Centre.
5. If a volunteer meets an individual or family away from the Child Contact Centre they should not introduce them to family or friends.
6. A volunteer should tell the Co-ordinator if somebody known to them comes to use the Centre
7. Volunteers must not commit themselves or others to make verbal or written reports in any family proceedings.
8. Unless a child is at risk of harm through further contact or there is risk of physical violence only dates and times of attendance will be disclosed to referrers by the Co-ordinator.
9. Confidentiality issues will be overridden by the need to act for the welfare of the Child.

Resolving problems

The relationship between the Child Contact Centre and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the Child Contact Centre is able to

maintain its agreed standards of service to the children, families and referrers who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the Child Contact Centre's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

1. Initially with a meeting with the co-ordinator who will explain the concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee will be convened.
3. If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using your services.

At all times you will be able to freely state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your work you should:

1. Initially explain your dissatisfaction with the Team Leader
2. If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Co-ordinator should be convened
3. If that does not resolve the issue then a formal meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee should follow.
4. If after this, your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your grievance, then it would be inappropriate for you to continue to be a volunteer.

At all times you will be able to state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis to adapt or improve it.