



Standard Referral Guidance

For use by professionals

1. Introduction

The Chichester Child Contact Centre aims to provide a safe and neutral environment for contact to continue between child and non-resident parent / extended family member.

- The Centre operates on alternate Saturdays, between 09:30am - 13.00pm at Christ Church, Old Market Road, Chichester
- The Centre provides supported contact and handovers only, suitable for families where there has been no significant risk identified to the child, or those around them

2. Benefits of supported contact:

- Impartiality
- Volunteers' assistance
- Community environment (several families in one large space / multiple rooms)
- Encouragement for families to develop mutual trust
- Documentation of dates and times are logged and provided on request
- Temporary arrangement, that can be flexed and reviewed

3. Limitations of supported contact:

- There is no 1:1 observation, monitoring, or evaluation of individual supervised contacts / conversations
- Detailed written reports will not be made to a referrer, CAFCASS, Solicitor or Court, unless there is a risk of harm to the child, parent, or Centre worker
- The Centre is to be seen as a steppingstone for families whilst they explore a long-term solution

4. Standard Referral Process

Professionals supporting families to apply for a place at the contact centre will need to follow the following process:

1. Contact the Child Contact Centre Coordinator first to ensure availability of space and time before referring a family
2. Complete a standard referral form, posting or emailing it back to the Centre address / Coordinator email. Providing a copy of court orders (if applicable). Forms can be downloaded from the Centre website: www.chichesterchildcontactcentre.org
3. Wait for an acknowledgment from the coordinator, before informing any family of a potential start date and time

Additional Information:

1. Only people named on the referral form will be allowed to enter the Child Contact Centre. This can be altered by written agreement with both parties
2. Visits to see clients on our premises in the event of needing to complete an observation or report must be planned, discussed, and agreed with the coordinator ahead of happening
3. In the unlikely event of it becoming necessary to quote the Coordinator 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

4. 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
5. The Child Contact Centre will withdraw the offer of a place if three contact sessions are cancelled unless there are exceptional circumstances
6. 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
7. Referrers should plan for the provision of an interpreter where English is not the first language of the family involved and problems may arise with communication. 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
8. The Child Contact Centre Coordinator needs to be notified of any changes to contact needs (by phone if possible) i.e. need to cease contact or alter timings
9. Parents are responsible for their children at all times whilst they are at the Child Contact Centre

Note: 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.