



Guidelines for Referrers

All correspondence should be sent to the Centre Manager:

Sophie Lodge, IRIS People Ltd, 15 Athenaeum Street, Plymouth. PL1 2RJ.
Fax: 01752 261115 email: sophie@irispeople.co.uk

There are three basic levels of contact provision – Supported, Supervised and Assessed:

Supported Contact

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, CAFCASS, 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.

Supervised contact

A referral for supervised child contact should be made when it has been determined that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering harm during contact. Supervised contact ensures the physical safety and emotional well being of a child. It also assists in building and sustaining positive relationships between a child and members of their non-resident family. This requires supervisors who are qualified, skilled and confident enough to intervene immediately and firmly if necessary and can work professionally in a planned way with vulnerable children and highly distressed adults.

Supervised contact requires: -

- Individual supervision of contact with the supervisor in constant sight and sound of the child, which in turn requires they have the support of a nearby colleague
- A high commitment of resources including continuity of supervision and the professional oversight of staff.
- The supervisor and the centre having access to all relevant information about any judgments in order to supervise effectively. Please ensure that the court gives permission for such disclosure.
- All contact to be closely observed and recorded in a manner appropriate to the purpose of protecting children and working in a planned way with parents.
- A venue that provides privacy and confidentiality to each child and family and is structured to provide maximum safety to all concerned and maximum stimulation for children
- Contact is time limited with a planned aim to regularly assess and review progress and the possibility of safer future outcomes.

The level of supervision may be reduced in a planned way after a professional initial/risk assessment has been made. Some families, after being assessed, may move from constant supervision to an intermediate level of supervision, escorted outings, or supported or unrestricted contact.

Contact Assessments

These can be used to identify the issues that have prevented contact from starting, caused it to breakdown or made it unworkable, making recommendations, working on resolution to move the case on. They will be carried out over a period of eight - twelve weeks and in addition to contact sessions include:

- One or more interviews with both parents either separately and or together.
- Interviews with any other adults involved either directly or indirectly in the contact process.
- Possible contact with statutory agencies involved with the adults and children such as doctors, health visitors and schools.



1. Please do not refer a client without contacting the Contact Manager first to check availability of space and time.
2. A completed referral form should be received by the Centre Manager one week in advance of the date which your client would like contact to commence. When a waiting list is in use, 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. Following receipt of a completed referral form the Contact Manager will complete a Risk Assessment. If an area of concern is identified additional information may need to be obtained.
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 Contact Manager 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.
- CRB 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.