

Information for Parents

Bristol Child Contact Centre is open on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. The morning session runs from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, and the afternoon from 2.00 pm to 5.00pm.

We have a separate waiting room for the parent or relative who the child(ren) live with.

Contact visits take place in a large comfortable hall with play facilities. Children and contact parents can enjoy each other's company in a neutral place with volunteers always around to help if needed.

Where is the Centre?

Visits take place in the Leonard Hall, Trinity-Henleaze United Reformed Church, Waterford Road, Henleaze, Bristol, BS9 4BT.

How do we arrange to come?

Each parent will need to complete the self-referral application form available online. There is a £50 one-off administration fee. Referrals are made by each of the parents – starting with the person applying for contact (non-resident parent). Referrals can also be made by professionals working with the Family.

Following a referral, you will go through a 'preparation for contact' visit at the Centre before contact starts. Having seen the place in advance can help children settle when they meet their contact parent. If you want to talk it over before committing yourself - whether as a resident or a contact parent - do ring us.

Who runs the Centre?

Bristol Child Contact Centre operates independently, with no connection with the Courts or Social Services. Sessions are run by trained volunteers. We have some funding from the Ministry of Justice Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) but rely mostly on charitable giving. There is no charge for contact but donations are greatly appreciated.

Do we have to meet?

Not if you do not wish to. This will always be discussed at your 'preparation for contact' visit, along with any other concerns.

Can we get refreshments?

Hot and cold drinks, fruit and snacks are available at low cost.

What if I can't come?

Please ring the Coordinator on 07511 290505 as soon as you can, so she can inform the team and the other parent. If possible let each other know, to save a wasted journey. Otherwise ask us to pass the message on for you. If your arrival is **delayed** it is helpful to ring, so we can explain this to the other parent or relative. We also need to know if you change your phone number!

Does the Centre write any reports about us?

If you come to the Centre via Cafcass, a Social Worker or Solicitor, we will let that person know whether you attended your first contact visit. After that, we make no more reports, unless specifically asked (e.g. by a Solicitor) for dates and times of attendance.

How long can we come for?

Many families need the Centre, so we cannot offer long-term contact. We will review your attendance after an agreed number of sessions, and support your plans to 'move on' in stages, as soon as it is appropriate.

Are there any rules?

We want all the children to be safe and happy, and the atmosphere calm and friendly. Anyone behaving in an aggressive or abusive way, or appearing to be drunk, will be asked to leave. Our space is limited, so please do not bring other family members or friends with you, unless agreed in advance. Also, no pets!

Can I take my child out?

Only if it has been agreed in advance. Some families use us as a 'handover' point, at least for a while, and we are happy to do this.

Children First

Your children are the most important people at contact. Please do all you can to make their time at our centre happy and rewarding, whatever the past difficulties may have been. We have leaflets about Family Mediation and other sources of help for adults, and picture books about contact, suitable for children of different ages and different families (resident mum/resident dad). If you have any suggestions for improving our service, or a complaint, please speak to the Coordinator or one of the team.

Please note that **parents are responsible** for the safety and supervision of their children at all times whilst at the Centre.

Two important points

- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times in the hall and no photos can be taken in the hall.
- Photos may only be taken in a designated area, if agreed in advance. Ask any team member where to go.

We look forward to welcoming you at the Centre!

Coordinator: Vanessa Kitchen
Telephone: 07511 290505