


## CHILD CONTACT CENTRE CASE STUDY



“I can’t thank the staff enough as they do make a big difference in peoples’ lives. I only wish more people knew what they do, because it really is amazing work.”

**Mum and Dad, who had been together for over 15 years, separated after a prolonged period of escalating conflict. They shared the care of their 10-year-old child, who was deeply affected by the separation. Mum became the primary caregiver, and Dad’s contact with the child became increasingly limited. The child, feeling torn between the parents, started to express a strong preference for Mum and resisted spending time with Dad. This led to further strain, as Dad felt alienated from the child and increasingly frustrated with the lack of communication with Mum.**

Following their separation, the children lived with Mum and had regular contact with Dad. However, ongoing conflict and disagreements between Mum and Dad led to a halt in Dad’s contact with the children. Dad attributed this to Mum’s control, while Mum claimed it was based on the children’s wishes. For over a year, Dad had no physical contact with the children and no telephone contact for six months. The situation prompted the courts to refer the family to the Family Mediation West of Scotland Child Contact Centre.

Mum was initially concerned that the children, who have learning disabilities, might struggle to settle in at the contact centre. However, the staff reassured her that they would do everything possible to accommodate the children’s needs, creating a supportive environment that facilitated their comfort and ease during the sessions.

The Contact Centre provided a neutral environment to facilitate contact between Dad and his children. Dad began attending two-hour supported contact sessions at the centre, which were scheduled once a week over several months. The supported contact sessions took place in a structured setting designed to provide a safe space for the children and Dad to reconnect, with a contact centre worker present to offer assistance if needed. The centre offered a neutral ground where both parents’ concerns could be managed by trained professionals. During these sessions, activities such as board games and other interactive exercises were encouraged to foster positive interactions between Dad and the children.

As the sessions progressed, the children became more comfortable with Dad, and Mum observed that the children were happier and more at ease. This positive development facilitated a transition to pick-up and drop-off arrangements at the contact centre. Dad was granted weekly contact with the children from 10am to 4pm, with handovers taking place at the centre. Transitioning to this arrangement gave Dad the chance to spend extended time with the children in a more natural and relaxed environment and helped the children regain a sense of normalcy. This shift was crucial in helping to rebuild their connection outside the structured setting of the contact centre.

The family has since moved on from the contact centre, with Dad now having regular contact with his children and handovers taking place outside the centre. This change highlights the significant progress made in rebuilding the relationship between Dad and his children.



Dad emphasised that he couldn't thank the contact centre staff enough for their role in helping him reconnect with his children. Initially sceptical and without much hope, he was unsure how the service could improve his situation. However, he found the staff to be incredibly professional and approachable at all levels, and shared that their unwavering support encouraged him to continue with the process.

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