

Contact Centre frequently asked questions

1. How do I get a referral?

Most referrals are made through the court, but we also accept self-referrals. If you think we can help you, please get in touch with our service manager and we can discuss arrangements. Please be advised that child contact centres have the right to refuse a referral or cancel a service once it has begun.

We ask that clients contact us directly to receive the necessary registration forms and your solicitor should be informing you of this process.

You must have legal representation to use the Contact Centre.

2. How long does a referral take?

The length of the referral process depends on parental co-operation, the judicial process and the availability at the contact centre. Typically, we advise that the time between an initial intake appointment and contact being scheduled can be between four and six weeks.

3. What is an intake appointment?

Each family member is offered an individual, confidential meeting to discuss their situation and explore how the contact centre can benefit your family. After each person has attended this appointment, the case will be reviewed by the service manager, and they will contact parents directly to schedule contact. You are not required to bring any information or documents with you to this appointment.

4. What happens at contact?

Child contact centres help to support children who do not live with the other parent. Being in a centre can help to make the situation feel more normal for the child as they see other children meeting up with a parent whom they do not live with.

Supported contact takes place in a room with other families and while a contact centre worker will be on hand for support, the session will not be supervised.

Supervised contact is a more specialist, more formal service in which a supervisor observes interactions between a parent and child and notes are collated throughout the session. This takes place on a 1-2-1 basis.

We also offer a pre-visit appointment to allow children and parents to become familiar with the contact centre ahead of their first visit.

5. How much does it cost to use the contact centre?

An intake appointment for supported contact costs £50 per person. Each contact session is £30 per person, per session.

An intake appointment for supervised contact costs £200 per person. Each contact session is £100 per hour, per person.

If a court report is needed, this costs £200 per report.

6. What is a court report?

One supervisor is in the room at all times to observe a supervised contact, listen to, and take notes of the interaction between the parent and child. These notes form the basis of the report provided to the Sheriff. The payment for Supervised Contact and reports is typically funded through legal aid but privately paying clients can also access supervised contact.

7. When is the contact centre open?

Opening times vary from centre to centre. You can find out more by contacting your nearest child contact centre.

8. Will I have to see the other parent?

No. You will not have to meet with the other parent at the contact centre. Staff will facilitate a handover between parties and staggered arrival and departure times mean you will not be entering or leaving the building at the same time.

9. Can I bring things to contact?

The parent who is attending for contact often asks to bring toys or snacks for children. This will be discussed at the intake appointments with the resident parent, and you will be advised whether they have given permission for this.

10. Can I bring someone along for support?

Unfortunately, we ask that you come along to contact on your own. As the Contact Centre is busy, we often don't have space available for parents to wait. If you are attending contact for the first time, or if your child is still settling in this new environment, we would make arrangements for you to stay at the centre. However, when contact is established and going well, we would ask you to leave and return at the end of the session.