

Child contact centre policy

Overview

While recognising and valuing the professional autonomy of our practitioners (Family Court Advisers, Assistant Service Managers, Service Managers, Heads of Practice), Cafcass has a responsibility to ensure that work with children and families is of the highest quality in line with the best social work practice and the expectations of the family court.

This policy sets out our expectations for all practitioners when considering the use of external organisations for supervised child contact arrangements, in private law cases.

Why this is important for children

This policy will promote the use of safe and child-focused services to keep the best interests of the child at the centre of the work we do.

1. Principles for Cafcass staff when considering the use of supervised child contact services

- 1.1 All planned work and recommendations to court should be in line with the Cafcass [Child Impact Assessment Framework](#) and [Guidance for Cafcass commissioned contact activities](#).
- 1.2 Where a practitioner considers the use of an external organisation to provide child contact services either as part of planned work, signposting parents to an organisation or when making a recommendation to court – the organisation providing a service will need to be accredited with the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC¹). This applies to supported or supervised child contact services being delivered in community settings or centre based.
- 1.3 Practitioners should consider what support children might need to prepare them for recommended services and who will deliver this preparation.
- 1.4 Cafcass' National Commissioning Team (NCT) will only contract NACCC accredited organisations where child contact services are being offered.
- 1.5 Practitioners can check the location of the nearest centre before making a recommendation to court. An up-to-date list of all accredited organisations and centres can be found on the NACCC website ([Find a Child Contact Centre - NACCC](#)). Practitioners should check with the contact centre if there are waiting times and services can be delivered. Cafcass is not able to provide any support with travel arrangements.
- 1.6 Where a practitioner becomes aware of an organisation offering supported or supervised child contact services without NACCC accreditation they should inform Cafcass' National Commissioning Team (NCT) by emailing nct@cafcass.gov.uk.

¹ The National Association of Child Contact Centres, [NACCC](#), is the membership and accreditation body for child contact services and works to ensure that in, and out of, court, contact centres and services are child focussed, safe and deliver meaningful contact that helps parents, where appropriate, to move on and resolve their dispute.

Where appropriate, NCT will liaise with NACCC to encourage organisations to gain accreditation.

- 1.7 Where a practitioner has concerns about an organisation's compliance with the NACCC accreditation standards they must raise the concerns with NCT, nct@cafcass.gov.uk. NCT will alert NACCC about the concerns.
- 1.8 Cafcass has an agreement in place with NACCC to share information to support safe referrals for supported contact. The template letter from NACCC is attached in the Annex to this policy. FCAs should only disclose the nature of the dispute unless the court has given permission for the disclosure of additional information².

Policy owner	Head of National Commissioning
Approved by	CMT
Approved on	11/01/2022
Implemented	24/01/2022
Version	1.2
Amended	13/07/2022 – 1.8 and annex 1 added to include NACCC template letter. 23/02/2024 – Updated 1.1, 1.8 and Annex 1.
Next review	February 2027

² [NACCC's judicial protocol for referrals of children and families to child contact centres in family proceedings is a useful resource when considering recommendations for court orders.](#)



Annex 1

The National Association of Child Contact Centres,
5 Russell Place, Nottingham,
NG1 5HJ

Tel 0115 948 4557

Email contact@naccc.org.uk

Web: www.naccc.org.uk

Case Information Sharing Request from NACCC to Cafcass.

Date completed by NACCC	
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Dear FCA,

A referral has been received for supported contact.

We can confirm that we have consent to checks being made with agencies from the relevant parties.

NACCC to Complete.	
Name of FCA	Email or Telephone

Family Name	Parent Wishing to Have Contact

1. Are the above child/ren currently open to Cafcass?

Yes No

If no, have they been open to Cafcass in the past^?

Yes No

2. Are you aware of any current risk that is likely to have an impact on supported contact?

Supported contact is usually offered by volunteers who are unqualified, but not necessarily trained. Supported centres do not make recordings, share observations, or provide direct 1-2-1 supervision. At a supported centre families are supported to move on but would not usually have all interactions directly observed on a 1-2-1 basis.

Yes No



If no, are there any historic risks or concerns that might impact upon contact?

Yes

No

3. Is there permission by the court to share further information*?

Yes

No

If yes, what further information can be shared?

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Upon completion, please return this form to the sender.

Name of FCA Completing	
Email of FCA Completing	
Date completed and returned	

[^]Searches go back to 2005.

^{*}Under the [Family Procedure Rules](#) Cafcass can disclose the nature of the dispute but is unable to provide details of any family proceedings. Any additional information requires permission of the court to disclose.