

Domestic Violence Policy

Preston Child Contact Centre

Preston Child Contact Centre believes that everyone has the right to live safely and without the fear of violence and cruelty. We recognise that domestic violence is unacceptable and that it occurs throughout society, irrespective of class, income, race, culture or religion. Its effects are far-reaching and can impact on others, notably the children. We recognise that every child has the right to grow and develop in an environment free of domestic violence, whether directly as a victim or witness of violence in its own home or community.

Preston Child Contact Centre accepts that some families using its Centre will have experienced varying levels of domestic violence and we will ensure that they will receive sensitive and appropriate services. We also accept that the Centre needs to be organised and run in a way which allows these families, other Centre users and volunteers / staff to be safe. In order to meet these requirements we will ensure that:

The Centre's referral form will ask one or more questions about domestic violence.

1. No family will be accepted until a referral form has been completed in full and received by the co-ordinator.
2. Any information concerning domestic violence or the abuse of drugs / alcohol will be treated seriously.
3. Use of the Centre will be denied to individuals or families where the co-ordinator feels their presence is likely to present a threat to the well-being of other Centre users and volunteers / staff.
4. Once a family has been accepted the co-ordinator will consider their needs and develop a means by which they can be met. These will include:
 - * Parents being invited to visit the Centre separately in advance of contact commencing.
 - * Parents being given clear instructions in writing about which entrances to use and what times to arrive.
 - * Where appropriate resident parents being asked to explore the possibility of someone other than themselves or their new partner bringing the child(ren) to the Centre.
 - * The contact waiting room doors being kept closed and precautions taken to ensure parents do not visit the refreshment area or toilets at the same time.
 - * Asking one parent to wait at the end of contact until the other has left the Centre and the area immediately around it.
 - * Ensuring that addresses, telephone numbers and other sensitive information always remain strictly confidential.
5. Any distress to children or adults brought about by bullying or pressure to disclose information will be dealt with promptly and firmly.
6. If an individual or family's behaviour is threatening, causes distress or is disruptive they will be asked to leave.
7. If an individual or family refuses to leave the police will be called.

Essential requirements for volunteers and staff:

1. There will be a minimum of three volunteers/staff on duty at all times and this number will increase depending upon the number of families using the Centre and rooms to be covered.
2. Volunteers/staff will be made aware "of the particular needs of each family attending the Centre."
3. All volunteers/staff will receive training in the areas of domestic violence, child protection and conflict management.
4. Volunteers/staff will have immediate access to a telephone when the Centre is open.
5. The Centre will have an agreed procedure to follow in the event of an incident or an emergency. All volunteers/staff will be made aware of this.
6. The Centre will have a recognised and easily accessible system for offering support to volunteers/staff who have become involved in stressful or violent incidents.

Additional requirements:

1. Referrers and families using the Centre will be made aware of its policy in relation to domestic violence.
2. Any individual or agency wishing to challenge how the Centre is implementing its policy in relation to domestic violence should be referred to the Centre's complaints procedure.
3. The Centre's policy in relation to domestic violence will be reviewed and if necessary updated annually.

Incident/Emergency Procedure

- 1 Immediately an incident arises the volunteer shall inform the Team Leader or Coordinator.
- 2 The Team Leader/Coordinator assisted by the volunteer, shall deal with the situation in accordance with the following guidance notes:

Action to be Taken when Conflict Arises

- * Make sure all the children are safe and out of the way.
- * Move those involved to a quiet area if possible.
- * Never back them into a corner, either physically or psychologically.
- * Remain polite and respectful and never lose your temper.
- * Keep the tone of your voice down and lower than the person who is angry.
- * Never tell them to 'calm down'.

- 3 In cases of emergency the following contact shall be made at the discretion of the Coordinator/Team Leader:

- Police – 01772 203203
- Fire Service – 999
- Ambulance - 999