

KNOCK CHILD CONTACT CENTRE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Knock 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 their own home or community.

The Management Committee of Knock Child Contact Centre accepts that some families using their Centre will have experienced varying levels of domestic violence. They 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 feel safe. In order to meet these requirements the Management Committee of Knock Child Contact Centre will ensure that:

1. The Centre's intake form will ask one or more questions about domestic violence.
2. Save in exceptional circumstances, information forms will be completed by the coordinator prior to the family using the Contact Centre or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. Any information concerning domestic violence or the abuse of drugs/alcohol will be treated seriously.
4. Use of the Centre will be denied to individuals or families where the coordinator feels their presence is likely to present a threat to the well-being of other Centre users and volunteers/staff.
5. Once a family has been accepted the coordinator will consider their needs and develop a means for them to be addressed. This will include:
 - Parents being invited to visit the Centre separately in advance of contact commencing.
 - Parents being given clear instructions about arrival and departure times and arrangements.

- Where appropriate resident parents being asked to explore the possibility of someone other than themselves 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.
6. Any distress to children or adults brought about by bullying or pressure to disclose information will be dealt with promptly and firmly.
 7. If an individual or family's behaviour is threatening, causes distress or is disruptive they may be asked to leave and if necessary the Child Protection procedures will be followed.
 8. If an individual or family refuses to leave, the police will be called.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required.