

Bexleyheath Contact Centre

Re-accreditation Summary



"Keeping children in touch with parents following separation"

NACCC child contact centres and services have an endorsed accreditation process which shows that all NACCC services work to agreed and approved national standards, which ensure that families using the services are safe. The national standards are updated by NACCC in line with legislation and good practice. All NACCC child contact centres which offer supported contact undergo an accreditation process which is renewed every three years. Accreditation demonstrates that the centre is working to the national standards for supported contact.

Re-accreditation process fully completed: 14th May 2018

Bexleyheath Contact Centre is a supported contact centre operating in Bexleyheath, Greater London. Contact information can be found on the [NACCC website](#)

Conclusion of Accreditation Assessment

The Bexleyheath Contact Service is based in a church building in the town centre shopping area of Bexleyheath. The centre is well lit and welcoming. The space is large enough to hold several families and the children. Observations at the centre noted that children have access to a variety of toys and other activities and that this enriches their time together at the centre.

Photos of Bexleyheath Contact Centre



The centre offers a two-hour contact time frame which allows the centre to accommodate several families between 10am and 4pm. Contacts are planned around the individual needs of children and their families and therefore, sometimes children and babies may have only an hour as they may become restless if they were there longer and this might have difficult implications for that contact session. However, such agreements are put in place with parents and reviewed regularly.

The volunteers were expecting about 30 families to come for contact on the day the accreditation visit. Some of those using the service on this day were also being supported with a handover service.

Pre-visits are arranged on a Saturday as the contact service does not have a separate space and time at the church for this to take place. Contact is then booked to begin the following week or asap after this. Sometimes on the same day if it is felt to be safe enough. Parents are seen separately in the first instance.

The volunteers are longstanding members of the team with about 5 joining within the last two years. Most of the volunteers have had years of experience of working directly with children or in a field where children and family issues are dealt with such as a retired family court judge, a nanny, asst school head, social work student, Cafcass officer, solicitor etc.

The accreditation assessor met with two of the volunteers who felt that they are prepared well for the families coming into the centre and if there are any issues then they are quickly dealt with by the co-ordinator. They also confirmed that they had regular updates about each family and ongoing training. This allowed them to understand any specific risks with the families they support and how to effectively manage these.

During the accreditation the assessor observed some of the volunteers interacting with some of the parents in the contact room but otherwise they were left to play with their children. Volunteers felt that they had a good rapport with the parents and the assessor observed and overheard some of this as they were booked in and made their way to the kitchen for refreshments. One parent was observed on his phone and this was quickly stopped by the volunteers informing him that it was not allowed and pointed him to the signs around the room.

The main referrals are through the court, but families self-refer, and an initial fee is paid at the point of the pre-visit. On occasions referrals will come via Cafcass and are financed by them. This money is used for the hire of the contact space. The co-ordinator informed me that they also offer a period of mediation to families which has helped to stabilise some of the relationships and also to help families move on when the time is right to contact in the community. This is a paid for service by the families.

Overall this was a positive accreditation with few recommendations for development.

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