

# contact

## M A T T E R S

**PASS IT ON**  
Why not leave me  
on your registration desk  
for staff to read?



**MARY'S WOMAN OF  
SUBSTANCE AWARD**  
Page 3



**FAMILY JUSTICE REVIEW  
UPDATE**  
Page 7



**NEW 'MOLLY'S STORY'  
BOOK LAUNCHED**  
Page 10



**COMING SOON - 20  
YEARS CELEBRATORY  
AGM**  
Page 11

## Mediation Mediation Mediation



“Education, education, education” was the mantra of the last government. Judging by recent headlines it could be thought that “mediation, mediation, mediation” is this government’s certainly as far as the family justice system is concerned.

From the 6th April 2011 onwards, any person wanting to start court proceedings concerning a child, divorce or separation or family finances, must consider mediation first. Only when they have a certificate to say they’ve attended a **Mediation Information and Assessment meeting (MIAM)** or are exempt because of a permitted exemption (usually to do with child protection or domestic violence) will they be able to proceed.

It is important to note that mediation itself is not compulsory, but finding out about it is. The MIAM is not necessarily free unless the parties are eligible for legal aid and the suggested cost is £87 or £130 if both parties attend together. If the parties decide to go on to mediation then again, if one is eligible for legal aid then legal aid will pay, but if they aren’t then the cost is variable but seems to vary between £85 and £250 per hour on a sliding scale according to income.

The certificate is only valid if the mediator is authorised and their name published on a list on the Ministry of Justice website. Just as anyone can open a child contact centre but only NACCC can accredit so anyone can call themselves a mediator, but only those whose accreditation is recognised by the Family Mediation Council will be authorised to undertake MIAMs.

At the end of March the Ministry of Justice published the Interim report of the Family Justice Review. This envisages a system whereby mediation would be involved at every stage, from pre-proceedings onwards (as court proceedings would become the last resort not the first port of call). It does seem to suggest full mediation as opposed to a MIAM at least be attempted by the parties.

All this could have a considerable impact on child contact centres. In the short term there is an immediate potential problem for those services offering the Separated Parenting Information Programmes (PIPS), in that currently they can only be utilised as a contact activity once court proceedings commence. There is currently no mechanism for mediators to refer in to these programmes although that is envisaged under the Family Justice Review. If therefore the MIAMs are as successful as the government hopes in diverting families from court into mediation, then referrals to PIPs could decrease significantly or may just be offset by the increased numbers of referrals generally.

*(Continued on page 4)*



# Raising the national profile of child contact services

## Child contact centres and services don't

seem to have a very high profile; we have been very aware of the need to be more active in this area for some time. Now, thanks to a vibrant and ambitious plan from NACCC's PR Sub-Committee – an array of activities is in progress.

Anne Dillon (barrister, mediator, and Vice Chair of NACCC) who chairs the PR Sub-Committee, has also convened the Expert Working Group (EWG). High profile experts in the judiciary, family law and mediation are meeting to make recommendations to NACCC and subsequently government departments, agencies and referrers, on the development and

sustainability of child contact services over the next 5 years.

At the same time, data collected from child contact services will provide evidence for the EWG, to demonstrate our impact and the outcomes for users of child contact services. Previous related research, your annual statistics and any further requests for info will help to consider our role, purpose and priorities based on best evidence.

We want to make sure that we make optimum use of our resources and networks to promote NACCC and child contact, including our online presence for the media and referrers. Do let us know of family members with a personal story to tell. This will be a valuable contribution.

We all feel that this is a crucial year for contact services in a climate of Family Justice Review, potential and actual changes for referrers, local authority cuts and general austerity measures. We are lucky to have the support of influential, busy people who recognise the value of both child contact services and NACCC and are prepared to actively support us.

**Some of the results of this work will be given at this year's high profile AGM and Annual conference – themed 'Raising the profile, raising the flag' – celebrating 20 years of NACCC. Do join us at the Royal Courts of Justice, a privileged setting for our 20th anniversary.**

**Yvonne Kee, Chief Executive**

## Check out the NACCC website – especially your members area

NACCC is on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Please tell everyone to 'follow us'.

Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/NACCCOFFICIAL>  
Why not add your news to share with other centres?  
Twitter - <http://twitter.com/NACCCofficial>  
Keep up to date with the latest discussions  
YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/naccoffice>

### New Video page

We have now made the NACCC video called 'Listen to the Children' available on our website. We have also included videos by the Northern Ireland Network and Relationships Scotland. Why not take a look?  
<http://www.nacc.org.uk/about-us/video>

*Please keep an eye on the members pages – which are regularly updated with news both from you and for you!*

**If you need help, advice or have ideas please let us know – at [contact@nacc.org.uk](mailto:contact@nacc.org.uk)**

## Support and resources factfile 6 (to be continued)



**Maypole Women** is a UK charity supporting women, and their children, before, during and after separation and divorce, established 2010. We offer information, advice, support and advocacy. We specialise in how domestic abuse presents at separation, work to raise awareness of the issues women face, and campaign for safe and fair family law and practice.  
[www.maypole.org.uk](http://www.maypole.org.uk) Email: [ask@maypole.org.uk](mailto:ask@maypole.org.uk)



**Counselling Directory** provides the UK with a huge counselling support network, enabling those in distress to find a counsellor close to them and appropriate for their needs. This is a free, confidential service that will hopefully encourage those in need to seek help. The website allows visitors to search for a counsellor specific to their needs, for example counsellors dealing with children and young people.



**Family Action** is a national charity and has been a leading provider of services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families since 1869. We work with over 45,000 vulnerable families and children a year by providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 community-based services, including Separated Parents Information Programmes (PIPs) across England. A further 150,000 people benefit from our educational grants and information service. You can find out more information about Family Action at [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

# Mary Lower – Woman of Substance Award



Mary Lower, NACCC's President, and Co-ordinator of Nottingham Child Contact Centre was named one of the 100 Women of Substance in March – celebrating the centenary of International Women's Day and recognising 100 women in Nottingham who are an inspiration to others in the city.

"I thought Mary Lower would be an excellent candidate for the award and contacted Yvonne Kee at NACCC who thought it an excellent idea.

We didn't tell Mary and the next I knew about it, was a phone call from Mary who had obviously just found out and identified me as one of the co-conspirators. She was surprised and typically very modest and not convinced that she was a woman of substance (not least as she was struggling to keep up her

weight). She asked me to be her guest at the reception. It was a sunny but chilly day in early March when Mary and I joined the queue of chattering ladies on the steps of Nottingham's Council House heading for the ornate Chamber. The presentations were very well organised and Mary continued to remain modest whilst in the company of some very equally inspirational women including an Antarctic explorer, a Hollywood film star and a World record breaking Balloonist. One by one they were presented with a certificate and each of them was given a poster with all their photos on it; a lovely idea.

**I was justifiably proud as Mary went up to the stage, especially when her contribution to the lives of children in Nottingham and wider across the country was**



*Mary Lower, awarded for her valuable contribution to the lives of children across the country.*

**revealed.** After a brief reception, we both made our way to Trent Bridge where we attended a separate event in celebration of Women's Day and we stood with over 120 women, in the sun, holding placards and celebrating a very special day."

**Lynda Clifford, Nottingham Child Contact Centre Volunteer**

## Fiona McCabe



Many of you will remember that at the NACCC AGM last year we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Nottingham Centre's opening. After telling you the story of our origins Alma Kemp our Rota Secretary and an ex-client told us how it had felt to be a "customer". The third person to speak that day was Fiona McCabe, one of the volunteers at Nottingham telling us why she had joined the team

and what were her thoughts about contact and the need for our work. She did in fact take a similar part in the "Brains Trust" session at the first "national workshop day" which resulted in the establishment of NACCC.

What most of you will not have known, because Fiona didn't want it spread abroad, was that early in August 2010 she had had a cancerous kidney removed, an operation which didn't go according to plan. Nevertheless Fiona was determined to come and play her part at the AGM, which was absolutely typical of her, but just in case another member of our team had her notes to read if she felt unable to come, but such was her determination and commitment she joined us. A few weeks later, after another couple of hospital admissions, she was told that the cancer had in fact spread to all her major organs. She declined further treatment and died at home on Sunday 10th January, 2011 surrounded by her family, some of whom had flown

from Australia to be with her.

She is be greatly missed by us all. She had the ability, forged by her previous work as a school teacher in her native Scotland and a housing welfare officer for Rushcliffe Borough Council in Nottingham, to comfort the distressed, understand the worried and play a real part in every organisation which she joined. As an Elder of our Church, a member of our catering committee and an Abbeyfield volunteer she will be greatly missed. She was one of those volunteers who we knew would play a full part in our team – she served on the Contact Centre Committee for some years and was someone who, if we rang her and said we were short handed she would arrive with a smile very soon afterwards and play a full part in the session. Our thoughts are with Hugh, her husband, and her family as they mourn her passing.

**Mary Lower, NACCC President and Co-ordinator Nottingham Child Contact Centre**

# Mediation Mediation Mediation

(continued from page 1)

Some commentators however consider that the requirement for mediation to be paid for (unless a party is legally aided) coupled with the requirement for the respondent to agree to attend MIAM, will mean that the uptake in mediation is not significant after all and people will prefer to have their day in court. Some judges have also expressed reservations about the new procedures because of the inability of the parties to be police checked by CAFCASS unless a court application is made. They may therefore take a quite liberal interpretation of the exemptions applying.

Despite thirty years in the legal field, twenty years running a supported centre, and nine as a regional support manager for NACCC, I realised I knew very little about mediation and had had very few, possibly only two, known referrals to my centre from mediation. I sent out a basic questionnaire to all the mediators I came across within a two-week period; although it was a very small survey it does seem to have been representative and I discovered many things I hadn't realised before:

- Mediation and Counselling are very different
- Anyone can set up as a mediator
- Not all Relate offices offer mediation and it is not one of

their core services

- Mediators are authorised by the Family Mediation Council to which a number of different mediation bodies affiliate.
- Mediators are accredited by their associations.
- Mediators work in both the not for profit and commercial sectors. Solicitor mediators tend to work in commercial companies.
- Accreditation involves a mixture of courses and practical "on the job" training supervised by an accredited mediator.
- Many people have completed the academic side of the training in the past but have not undertaken the supervised practice. There is currently a glut of people requiring supervision and a lack of supervision places.
- At the initial meeting a risk assessment is undertaken to assess suitability, particularly to check whether there is domestic abuse.
- Mediation averages about 3 sessions, longer if it's all issues. Most sessions are either 1 hour or 90 minutes long.
- Some mediators are specially trained to see children alone.
- Mediators do not appear in court under any circumstances
- The only reports they prepare are summaries for the participants and their lawyers
- Mediators do not provide legal information or legal advice.

I asked the respondents why they didn't refer to child contact centres very often. Their replies were very

similar: usually the participants or their lawyers do this; we only signpost, as if we referred we'd have to deal with a lot of paperwork and other obligations to the legal services commission if they were legally aided; mediation is about the clients taking ownership of their agreements so they need to make the referral; we thought we had to pay and we couldn't claim this from the legal aid; we don't get paid to complete detailed referral forms; the clients are already attending a centre when they come for mediation.

I also asked how referral rates could be improved and again the suggestions were very similar: the mediation companies need to know where the centres are and how to access them; local centres need to provide their referral forms and leaflets to the mediators so they can give them to their clients; invite mediators to visit the centres so they know what they are like. Centres seem to very rarely refer to mediation too so maybe joint training would help.

**So in summary, mediation looks likely to be a major feature in the family justice system in the future. With the almost inevitable removal of legal aid from family matters and the consequent increase in self referrals, centres will need to make contact with and be known to those organisations, particularly mediation, dealing with families in dispute over contact.**

**Judy Birchall**

Regional Support Manager (North)



**National Family Mediation (NFM)** is a network of Family Mediation Services, which offers help to those affected by separation and divorce. It is the only voluntary sector provider of family mediation in England and Wales.

Tel: 0300 4000 636

Website: [www.nfm.org.uk](http://www.nfm.org.uk)



**Resolution** is an association of family lawyers who sign up to a code of practice, which ensures that they conduct themselves in a constructive and non-confrontational way. Some members are also mediators. To find a Resolution mediator visit [www.resolution.org.uk](http://www.resolution.org.uk) or telephone 01689 820272



The **Family Mediators Association (FMA)**, has over 300 members throughout England and Wales. It is a member organisation of the Family Mediation Council (FMC), the umbrella for professional family mediators.

Tel: 0808 200 0033

Website: [www.thefma.co.uk](http://www.thefma.co.uk)



Thank you again to the many volunteers around the country who help children to keep valuable links with their family. Warm congratulations from all the trustees and staff at NACCC to those volunteers who have served their Centre for many years and have been awarded their bronze (3 years service), silver (5 years service), gold (10 years service), platinum (15 years service) and a new diamond certificate has been launched for 20 years service.

### Alkington Child Contact Centre

7 volunteers – 1 bronze, 5 silver & 1 gold = 48 years

### Ballymena Area Children's Contact Centre

20 volunteers – 12 bronze, 8 silver = 76 years

### Bath Child Contact Centre

5 volunteers – 3 diamond, 1 gold & 1 silver = 60 years

### Blackpool Fylde & Wyre Child Contact Centre

22 volunteers – 3 bronze, 9 silver & 10 gold = 154 years

### Camberley & District Family Contact Centre

8 volunteers – 1 bronze, 2 silver & 5 platinum = 88 years

### Cowley Child Contact Centre

8 volunteers – 2 bronze, 3 silver, 2 gold & 1 platinum = 56 years

### Dursley & Cam Child Contact Centres

5 volunteers – 5 bronze = 15 years

### Frome Child Contact Centre

11 volunteer – 3 bronze, 2 silver & 6 gold = 79 years

### Good Shepherd Contact Centre

17 volunteers – 2 bronze, 2 silver & 13 gold = 167 years

### Halifax Contact Centre

1 volunteers – 1 bronze = 3 years

### Halton Child Contact Centre

3 volunteers – 1 gold & 2 platinum = 35 years

### Jimmy's Contact Centre

2 volunteers – 1 bronze & 1 platinum = 18 years

### Knock Child Contact Centre

2 volunteers – 2 bronze = 6 years

### Loughborough Child Contact Centre

34 volunteers – 6 bronze, 9 silver, 5 gold, 5 platinum & 6 diamond = 239 years

### Lower Earley Child Contact Centre

4 volunteers – 2 gold & 2 silver = 30 years

### Muswell Hill Child Contact Centre

1 volunteers – platinum = 20 years

### Newbury Family Contact Centre

1 volunteer – 1 bronze = 3 years

### Norwich Family Contact Centre

9 volunteers – 5 bronze, 1 silver & 3 gold = 50 years

### Pudsey Child Contact Centre

13 volunteers – 1 bronze & 12 silver = 85 years

### Redditch Child Contact Centre

8 volunteers – 7 diamond, 3 gold, 4 silver & 3 bronze = 169 years

### Roberts Child Contact Service

6 volunteers – 4 bronze, 1 silver & 1 gold = 27 years

### South Bristol Child Contact Centre

23 volunteers – 5 bronze, 9 silver, 9 gold = 150 years

### St John Ambulance Child Contact Centre – Skegness

2 volunteers – 2 bronze = 6 years

### St John's Woodley Contact Centre

15 volunteers – 6 bronze, 3 silver, 2 gold & 4 platinum

### Woking Family Contact Centre

7 volunteers – 2 gold & 5 bronze = 35 years

### Uxbridge Child Contact Centre

7 volunteer – 4 platinum, 2 gold & 1 silver = 86 years

### Vale Royal Child Contact Centre

2 volunteers – 2 silver = 10 years

### Tarka Child Contact Centre

9 volunteers – 9 bronze = 27 years

### Tring Child Contact Centre

11 volunteers – 3 silver & 8 gold = 95 years

### West Wilts Child Contact Centre

6 volunteers – 2 silver, 3 gold & 1 platinum = 60 years

## Contact Centre Accreditation and Re-accreditation

**Congratulations...** to all the child contact centres listed below that have achieved accreditation since the last issue of Contact Matters. Well done!

- Wolverhampton Outreach Child Contact Centre
- Didcot Contact Centre

**And to those who have achieved re-accreditation success since the last issue. Well done to you!**

- North Nottingham Child Contact Centre\*
- Meeting Place Child Contact Centre
- St John's Contact Centre
- Hill Top Contact Centre\*
- Salford Child Contact Centre
- St John Ambulance Child Contact Centre – Gainsborough
- South Cheshire Child Contact Centre\*
- Bingley Contact Centre
- St James Child Contact Centre
- St Augustine's Child Contact Centre

## Many congratulations to these centres who have achieved Enhanced Accreditation

**This system gives referrers and families reassurance that supervised child contact services have shown that their service meets the national standards for supervised child contact.**

- The Accord Centre\*
- Carmarthenshire Supervised Contact Centre

List correct at time of press

\* Please note that these centres' details should have been recorded in previous issues of Contact Matters – please accept our apologies

## Accessibility

**Accessibility tips by**  
[www.pia.co.uk](http://www.pia.co.uk)

### Improving accessibility

There are ways in which the accessibility of your original document can be improved without making a large print version. If you'd like to make your documents more accessible, here are some helpful hints.

#### Text

- Choose an accessible typeface such as Univers or Arial
- Avoid using capitals for continuous text, use initial caps and lower case letters
- Set your text to ranged left, ragged right

#### Contrast

- If you are using a background tint, use 30% as a maximum
- Avoid pale and clashing colours
- Avoid text on a patchy background or over an illustration

#### Design

- Don't cram pages - leave space between paragraphs and lines
- Use a contents list with differentiated headings
- When using illustrations, keep the text on the left and place the illustration on the right
- Leave sufficient space for completing forms
- Avoid glossy paper and low paper weight
- For more information, see 'Make it accessible', RNIB's guidance on making publications accessible to people with visual impairment.

## Centres

### NEW! Best Practice Manual for Supervised Contact

This is now complete and can be found on the NACCC website members area (look under the Services heading). It contains standard policies, procedures, sample forms and should hopefully be a useful resource for NACCC's supervised services.

### NEW! Bilingual Parent and Carer leaflet



NACCC has now produced a bi-lingual Welsh/English Parent and Carer leaflet, **£5 for 10 leaflets**. See online shop for further details.

### NACCC accredited services required

Contracts for supervised contact providers in certain parts of the country are now requiring that providers shall be a full member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres and comply with the National Standards for Supervised Child Contact Centres. This is excellent in terms of maintaining safety for children using supervised services around the country and improves the accountability of NACCC's standards and accreditation for supervised services. We assume that this is the case throughout the country but it would be useful to gain feedback from our members and supporters regarding this issue.

### Survey Monkey

NACCC is now using Survey Monkey – an online tool that enables us to quickly get feedback from you about our services and find out specific information – we have already used it to analyse our statistics results and the recent family Justice review questionnaire. You may be sent further questionnaires by email – many thanks for your help with this.

### NACCC Supervised conference (June 2011): Sustainability – Exploring new perspectives and services to meet the challenges ahead

To be held at St Martin in the

Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, this conference will acknowledge the current difficulties in the field of contact services time for many services and will be a useful forum for sharing ideas and business opportunities. An update will appear in the next issue of Contact Matters.

### Goodwill exchange with Singapore child contact services



Duncan Gore (Senior Regional Support Manager) met with Dr Katijah Dawood of the Society of Moral Charities (Centre for Family Harmony) from Singapore on 16th May to exchange information and practice particularly focusing on supervised contact. [www.thkms.org.sg](http://www.thkms.org.sg)

### Barrier Busting

The Communities and Local Government department has launched a new website where individuals, charities and community groups can ask for help in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles to their work. The Barrier Busting website aims to help people setting up or running local community projects submit queries about regulations, such as by-laws or health and safety rules, that hinder them in their work.

<http://barrierbusting.communities.gov.uk/>

### B&Q waste donation scheme

Local voluntary and community organisations can still apply to their local store for materials, through the B&Q Waste Donation Scheme. Waste products such as slightly damaged tins of paint, timber off-cuts, and end of range materials can be donated to community groups, charities and schools. Contact the in-store environmental champion, duty or warehouse manager at your local B&Q.

**Website:**

<http://tinyurl.com/2wccga5>

## Fatherhood Institute resources (Why Dads Matter toolkits)

At a time of cuts in children's services, when many dedicated father workers across the country face losing their jobs, it might be tempting for children's services to forget dads. Our Dads Included Toolkit for Developing Father-Inclusive Services, available now (presented as a series of 12 pull-out cards in a sturdy wallet), costs just £15 plus postage. This key resource outlines how to make your service work for dads as well as mums – and, most importantly, for children, for whom a good relationship with dads is so important.

[www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)  
0845 634 1328

## Insurance

A supported centre recently asked about their insurance cover if a child was abducted from their premises. NACCC contacted Methodist Insurance on their behalf and received the following response – “they were not able to give an overall opinion as they say individual centres will have individual policies linked to their own requirements. Centres can call Mr Tom Carter on 0161 833

7784 if they wish further advice.” Obviously those centres whose insurance is with companies other than Methodist Insurance will need to contact their own provider.

## Funding

The **Greggs Foundation**, which has been a major funder in the North East of England, now has a **regional grants programme** across England, Scotland and Wales administered by volunteers from its shops, bakeries and offices. Small grants can be given to local not for profit organisations that **help people in need in their local area**. Greggs will also provide Greggs (bakery) products for community events and activities.

[www.greggsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk)

## Legal

Co-operatives UK have produced a guide to the various legal structures which exist for voluntary sector organisations. You can view the guide at: <http://tinyurl.com/689ez9s>

## Volunteering

### Value of volunteers

Judy Birchall (Regional Support Manager – North) set up Altrincham Child Contact Centre and has shared her experience on the Children's Workforce Development Council's 'Share Street' website explaining how volunteers at the centre bring families together. Her centre's volunteers include professionals such as magistrates, social workers and insurance brokers, and are therefore also able to contribute their knowledge and expertise in other ways to help the organisation to develop. Without the volunteers, there would not be a centre and so many of these children would not have a relationship with these members of their family.

<https://sharestreet.cwdcouncil.org.uk/CaseStudyDocument-717.aspx>

### Student volunteering

Volunteering England's website has some useful factsheets on recruiting student volunteers and making this sustainable.

**For more information go to [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)**

# Family Justice Review



The Family Justice Review is a review of the Family Justice System commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Education, and the Welsh Assembly Government.

It is the intention of the Review to improve the current Family

Justice System so that it is quicker, simpler, more cost-effective and fairer whilst continuing to protect children and vulnerable adults from risk of harm. At present, the Family Justice System is under strain, with a rise in the number of cases and each case taking longer to deal with. The cost to the State is now around £1.5 billion each year. Long and complicated legal processes are emotionally and financially draining for parents and distressing for children. Fathers and grandparents regularly tell us that they do not feel well served by the current system.

The role of Family Justice Review is to examine the effectiveness of the family justice system and the outcomes it delivers. Most importantly it will make

recommendations for reform. The review is:

- examining both public and private law cases
- exploring if better use can be made of mediation and how best to support contact between children and non-resident parents or grandparents
- examining the processes (but not the law) involved in granting divorces and awarding ancillary relief, and
- looking at how the different parts of the family justice system are organised and managed.

*(continued on page 9)*

# Special Interest Groups

## Addressing funding and training priorities for services in Wales

### Welsh Network

Wales is a very vast and rugged area so it can be difficult for centres to get together regularly. We do however try to meet at least twice a year as the Welsh Network as we appreciate the support we can gain from each other and the chance to discuss ideas with other centres in Wales. We had a Welsh network meeting and NACCC training for supported contact centre co-ordinators in April and I would like to thank those that attended and for your input into the discussions. The network needs to move forward and develop in order to raise the profile of Welsh centres within Wales and with the Welsh assembly Government. Carol Peeke and I will be visiting the Northern Ireland Network in May to look at how they are running and developing and will bring back new ideas and ways of developing our constitution from the meeting. We are hoping through the Welsh Network we can have joint training sessions, provide support to each other, raise the profile of centres in Wales and generate funding as an all Wales organisation.

As the Chair of the Welsh Network and Trustee for Wales with NACCC I want to ensure that all centres within Wales are getting the help and support they need. Therefore I am aiming to visit all centres in Wales this year. We have 23 centres in Wales. So far I have visited 9 of them and am hoping to visit more during May and June. I will be in touch shortly to arrange these visits. In the meantime if any centres have anything they wish to discuss or you would like me to address with NACCC you can email me at [allanthomas23@aol.com](mailto:allanthomas23@aol.com)  
Allan Thomas on behalf of the Welsh Network

## Rise in young volunteers and enhanced accreditation focus

### Northern Ireland Network

Since our last update in October 2010, Knock Child Contact Centre was very pleased to have local MP Naomi Long as a speaker at their AGM and to hear her endorse the work of child contact centres. On Christmas Eve, Foyle child contact centre held a Christmas Carol Celebration between their sessions for the contact parents. Resident parents were able to observe and the event was very successful. In February, Liz McCorkell, Coordinator of Foyle, was invited to attend Magee University Careers Convention to talk to law students about volunteering as a professional development opportunity. The centres in Northern Ireland have noticed a rise in interest by young volunteers eg those on law courses or social work courses or people wanting to get on to such courses and needing relevant work experience.

On 4 April 2011, Ann-Marie Stubbs and Judy Birchall (NACCC) came over to Northern Ireland to provide an information day on Supervised Contact and NACCC's enhanced accreditation. Eleven Centres were represented. Of these, some centres are actively interested in providing supervised contact while others felt it was important to understand what was involved and the implications. Following the AGM of the Northern Ireland Network of Child Contact Centres, we were very pleased that Richard Marshall (Committee member of Ballymena Area Child Contact Services) agreed to take over the role of Chair. Richard has been very involved in promoting the work of the Network in Northern Ireland, particularly with regard to the PR campaign in 2009 funded by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety.

Muriel Orr on behalf of the Northern Ireland Network of Child Contact Centres



### CEPREP Update

CEPREP now has one extra member as Germany has joined last month. In June we are holding our AGM at the principal registry in Holborn, London. I am glad to say that we will have guests from Australia and Ireland. In addition Karen Kiernan from One Family (Eire) will be attending and doing a presentation on her study tour to Sweden and Denmark. Charlene Kelly from Relationship Scotland will be also present the work of her federation as well as presenting her new book on Contact. The conference will be attended by delegates from France, Belgium (both Flemish and Wallone), the two Spanish delegations, Italy, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England. The conference will be formally opened by Anne Dillon and Yvonne Kee will be present.  
Louis Ruddlesden, President of CEPREP & Regional Support Manager (South West & Wales)

## Focus on preparation for contact

Following on from our Winter issue article on this subject it was felt that we should continue to raise the profile of this important and essential part of the contact process.



**It is all about "risk" in its widest sense. Practical, physical, emotional on the understanding that no system is ever perfect and some risk is inevitable when dealing with people**

Preparation for contact (PFC) has been mandatory for the last two years. Every family referred to a child contact centre must be assessed for risk before any contact commences including a properly completed referral form, meetings with everybody involved in the contact, reference to reports and court orders and where appropriate, contact with other agencies.

The Judicial protocol endorsed by the President of the Family Division states "Supported contact takes place in a variety of neutral community venues where... no risk to the child or those around the child, unmanageable by the centre, has been identified during an intake procedure."

The PFC is used to try to establish a number of facts and it is also an opportunity for the centre to gauge the willingness of the parents to work with or against the centre in achieving safe enjoyable contact for the child. Some parents in person are so hostile to the notion of attending a centre that despite the referral form showing no particular issues, the centre may decide they will be too disruptive to the running of the centre or the enjoyment of the other families who will be present that the contact place will be refused. Likewise, a referral form that shows issues may in fact be due to both parties' willingness to cooperate. Perhaps if they don't have to meet, very worthwhile

contact can be undertaken.

Model pre visit forms are in the NACCC Guidance Manual, which can be used or adapted by centres as required and are available to download from the NACCC website members area.

**A practical example** – an autistic child needs contact with parent who has little experience in dealing with them. Centre A is a very large noisy centre with many families together in a large hall and 6 teams of volunteers i.e. change every week. Centre B is a much smaller set up with smaller rooms and two coordinators one of whom is always on duty and a volunteer who works with autistic children and will give some basic guidelines to the others. Attending centre A may not be in the best interests of the child, attending centre B could be.

**Judy Birchall, Regional Support Manager, North**

## Family Justice Review

*(continued from page 7)*

**The aim is to produce a system, which allows families to reach easy, simple and efficient agreements which are in the best interests of children whilst protecting children and vulnerable adults from risk of harm.**

The agencies and professionals directly involved in the family justice system are all in scope for the Review, including courts, local authorities, Cafcass and CAF/CASS Cymru, family lawyers, mediators, and the Legal Services Commission.

The review will also consider their relationship with agencies and professionals indirectly involved in the family justice system such as children's centres, health services and the voluntary sector. That of course means child contact centres.

The first stage of the review was to carry out intensive fact-finding activity and formal evidence hearing sessions over the summer months. This started with a 'call for evidence', which ran from June to September 2010. This call for evidence stage enabled the review to take evidence from everyone involved in the family justice system: parents and children, families, professionals and representative bodies, regardless of their level of expertise.

Over 600 individuals and organisations submitted evidence to the review during, and following, the call for evidence. The responses received were used to inform the panel's interim report, which is now the subject of a three-month public consultation.

NACCC was one of the organisations that submitted a response to the review last year. We are now, through an

independent Expert Working Group established by NACCC and comprising among others Judiciary, barristers, solicitors and mediators as well as those with expertise in running contact centres, in the process of submitting a detailed response providing detailed evidence about the role of child contact centres and the crucial role they play in the family justice system.

You will have seen and hopefully completed a questionnaire that was sent to all centres. The results of this and the data we have collected from the annual returns will be combined with evidence from questionnaires sent legal representatives, Judges and mediators asking for their views about child contact centres, will form the basis of our response which is due on 23rd June 2011.

**Mike Durrell (NACCC North West Regional Trustee) & Anne Dillon (NACCC Vice Chair)**

## Thanks for all your support! Thank you for...

collecting stamps buying flowers shopping online collecting foreign coins  
reading books keep on collecting stamps keep on buying flowers keep on  
shopping online keep on collecting keep on buying keep on shopping

Since our fundraising initiatives took on a new pace and urgency last year, you've been fantastic and have helped us raise:

- £156.85** through the AGM raffle
- £75.40** through the AGM tombola
- £38.25** through Charity Flowers
- £118.88** by supporting the book club (run by the NACCC office)
- £62.54** by recycling jewellery
- £71.85** by collecting foreign coins
- £410** by supporting the NACCC Spring Fayre

### Thank you

to everyone who is helping raise money to support the work of NACCC – it all helps – and has particularly supported the production of our new children's book Molly's Story (see below).

**Please continue to help in these small but valuable ways!**

### Recycle your toners and mobile phones

We now can raise money by recycling used toners and mobile phones. Please see attached envelope or the NACCC website for further details.

- **No more freepost please**  
Please do not use the Freepost address any more – this is no longer in use as had become a drain on valuable resources – we encourage services to submit forms online and use email as much as possible.

- **Why not run for NACCC?**



Do you know anyone who is up for a challenge and would like to raise money for NACCC in the Robin Hood Full/Half or Mini Marathons? See [www.experianfestivalofrunning.co.uk](http://www.experianfestivalofrunning.co.uk) for further details

- **Raise money online**

NACCC has now registered with **Justgiving.com**. This means it is much easier to make a one-off donation or a regular payment to support NACCC. Click on the NACCC web 'Donate Now' button – this now links you securely to the JustGiving website.

- **Thinking of doing a sponsored something for NACCC?**



You can now (through [Justgiving.com](http://Justgiving.com)) create your own fundraising page for NACCC and collecting the cash is very easy – visit the join us page to find out more.

- **Remember Gift Aid**

Gift Aid is a marvellous way of boosting funds at no extra cost to the donator! The Government currently give 28p for every £1 gift aided by an individual to their chosen charity. Do you know of anyone, perhaps a parent who has in the past, or is currently using one of our centres, and who would like to make a one-off or even a regular donation? If so, why not ask them to complete the attached Gift Aid Form - and return to the NACCC office together with the donator's cheque – alternatively they can donate online (see above).

**Every little helps!  
Keep it up!  
Thank you.**

## New! Molly's Story



Molly hasn't seen her mum for some time and is getting worried. Will using a child contact centre help to solve her problem?

This book in response to feedback from our services and accompanies the popular Ben's and Lily's Story books written by Linda Wyon (Bath Child Contact Centre) and has been written for parents and children to read together before using a supported child contact centre.

*"This story deals sensitively with the experiences of a child whose mum has had to move away from the family and how the child contact centre provides a way forward for them to spend time together again."*

*Our grateful thanks go to Linda Wyon for her immense commitment to this project and to Angela Goodman for her beautiful illustrations".*  
Yvonne Kee, Chief Executive, NACCC

The books will be launched at Bath Child Contact Centre's 20th anniversary celebration on **Tuesday 12th July**. The books can also be viewed on the NACCC website and ordered via the online shop.

**Cost £2.95 Non-members/  
£2.50 members**

## Child contact centres' share corner



Valerie Collard receiving the cheque from Angela at the Aga shop.

One of our volunteers works in the office at Aga in Telford. The staff in the Aga shop raise money for charity and decided to donate this £500 cheque to the Shropshire centres.

Valerie Collard  
Shropshire Child Contact Centres



Volunteer Dennis Bull receiving his 15-year long-service certificate from President June Harrison.

The Derby Child Contact Centre recently held its 20th Birthday Party at St Mary's Parish Centre, attended by past and present volunteers and supporters. The Chairman, Tony Wilmore, was delighted to welcome the centre's patron, His Honour Judge Orrell, and its President, June Harrison, whose proposal to Derby City

Centre Churches in 1990 resulted in the establishment of the centre in Queens Hall.

Geraldine Galloway, Derby Child Contact Centre

### Torquay BBC report and fundraising

Torquay Child Contact Centre featured on the BBC Spotlight programme on Monday, 2 March 2011. This report highlighted the increase in numbers but unfortunately did not show anything about our centre, the volunteers or the fundraising. It does seem to have raised awareness of contact centres generally however.

This report was set up by a local firm of Solicitors who have been very supportive of our fundraising events over the past two years. They held a sponsored walk for us last summer and raised £1,575. Following the increase of referrals to the centre over the past two years or so, when our waiting list increased to three months plus, we obtained planning permission to extend our single room and builders' quotes were obtained. We accepted one of £60K and have been busy ever since running various fundraising events.

This year we were so fortunate to be supported by Yvonne Kee and Louis Ruddleston in an application

to the George Barnes Fund and were granted £5K; we ran a Table Top sale in February which raised £450; a local group of singers put on a Gala Concert of Song for us last Saturday when a brilliant £1,780 was raised and we had good news this week from a local Family Trust who granted us £5K. We are now getting very excited about being close to our target and are continuing to search for further ideas for events.

Susan Norman, Co-ordinator, Torquay Child Contact Centre

### Chesterfield MP visit



Ruth Dornan, team leader and committee member; Linda Moore, volunteer & chair; Toby Perkins, MP, Yvonne Kee NACCC CEO, Susan Goodwin, volunteer & coordinator; Mike Dornan, NACCC Chair.

Toby Perkins (MP for Chesterfield and Shadow Minister for Children Young People & Families) visited Chesterfield Child Contact Centre. It was a very successful event, also attended by Mike Dornan (NACCC Chair) and Yvonne Kee (NACCC CEO) and helped to raise the profile of the service in Chesterfield.

Linda Moore, Chesterfield Child Contact Centre

Good ideas, funding ideas to share? Please let us know

Celebrate  
20 years  
of NACCC

Coming soon:

## NACCC AGM & Conference 2011

Royal Courts of Justice, London • Saturday 8th October 2011

The programme is still to be finalised and subject to change but we are pleased to announce:

'The importance of child contact centres in the family justice system'  
(Sir Nicholas Wall, President of the Family Division and NACCC Patron)

'The Family Justice Review, and what it means to supported and supervised contact centres'

'Child contact and post-separation violence in the context of domestic violence experience of South Asian and Afro-Caribbean women and children' (Dr Ravi Thiara, Principal Research Fellow, University of Warwick)

There will be opportunities to put questions to the panel and a choice of workshops in the afternoon. Official correspondence relating to the AGM and Conference will be sent out in July. Our website will include money saving ideas for transport/hotels etc to try and help as many of you to attend as possible.



## The NACCC Team

### Patrons

Sir Nicholas Wall – President of the Family Division  
Lord Alton of Liverpool

### President

Mrs Frances Mary Lower MBE

### Vice Presidents

Mrs Prudence Bray  
Mr Ian Daniels  
The Hon Mr Justice Hedley  
Mrs Pauline Lowe

### Trustees

Chair: Dr Mike Dornan  
Vice Chair: Anne Dillon  
Honorary Treasurer: Sue England  
Company Secretary: Claire Bell

### Regional Trustees

North East: Hazel Hedley  
North West: Michael Durell  
Wales: Allan Thomas  
Central: Amanda Page  
East: Samantha Ewing  
South East: Vicky West  
South West: *position vacant*  
London: *position vacant*  
Northern Ireland: Muriel Orr

General Trustee: Fred Devereux  
General Trustee: Adrian Cullen

NACCC office number 0845 4500 280, 0115 948 4557\* \*cheaper from your mobile

### Staff



**Chief Executive: Yvonne Kee** BA Hons, MA  
ykee@nacc.org.uk FIT

### Field team – Regional Support Managers

Role to advise, guide and support Child Contact Centres and assist through the accreditation or re-accreditation process (telephone numbers are available from the NACCC office).



**Senior Regional Support Manager (Central): Duncan Gore**  
d.gore@nacc.org.uk FIT



**Regional Support Manager (North & Wales): Judy Birchall**  
j.birchall@nacc.org.uk FIT



**Regional Support Manager (South West, Wales & Channel Islands): Louis Ruddlesden**  
l.ruddlesden@nacc.org.uk  
FIT (not Mon)



**Regional Support Manager (Greater London & South East): Ann-Marie Stubbs**  
am.stubbs@nacc.org.uk  
FIT Mon, Tues & Weds 9-5, Thurs 11.30-5.30 on flexible basis

### Support Officers

Employed on sessional basis to work with and support centres on accreditation, re-accreditation and new centre support. Contact your regional support manager to access a local support officer.

North England, North Wales & Northern Ireland:

Fiona Jarvie, Peter Nowland, Sue Lightbown

Central England: Russell Collard

Wales: Rebecca King

South England & South Wales: Charmaine Bryant,

Phil Doughty, Margaret Hart

Kent and South East: Linda Underwood

Greater London: Sam Burch, Amy Woods

### Accreditation Assessors

Employed on sessional basis to work with and support centres on achieving enhanced accreditation. Contact Louis Ruddlesden to access an accreditation assessor.

David Angus      Ann Green      Ann-Marie Stubbs  
Tracey Brewer      Carol Peeke      Jill Valenti  
Diane Cain      Joanne Stewart  
Sue Culligan

### Office team



**Office Administrator/PA to the Chief Executive: Katie Lockett**  
(finance, orders, infoline)  
k.lockett@nacc.org.uk FIT



**Administrator: Judith Mewse**  
(infoline, membership, CRB)  
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FIT Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.30-3



**Administrator: Donna Moreland**  
(AGM, CRB, membership, training)  
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FIT Mon-Thurs 10-3



**Finance Officer: Alan Tarr**  
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**Project Administrator: Wendy Hannah**  
(IT, website, publications)  
w.hannah@nacc.org.uk  
FIT Mon, Tues, Weds 8.30-5



**Project Administrator: Ruth Miles**  
(publications, statistics, IT)  
r.miles@nacc.org.uk  
FIT Tues, Weds, Fri 9-5

### Volunteers

Craig Trembirth  
Jackie Ward (jward@nacc.org.uk)

Member of CEPREP (European Confederation of child-Family Contact Centres)



'CONTACT MATTERS' EDITORIAL STAFF MAINTAIN THE RIGHT TO EDIT LETTERS PUBLISHED.  
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