

Memorandum of Understanding
Between
Cafcass and National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC)

March 2018

1. Background

Cafcass and NACCC both work within the Family Justice Service to ensure that children from separated families can maintain safe and beneficial contact with non-resident parents. Cafcass works with cases that have made applications to the Family Court, assesses for risk and advises, or refers, to supported contact centres or Cafcass commissioned supervised contact services as part of planned work. NACCC is the membership and accreditation body for the contact services sector 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.

2. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understanding between Cafcass and NACCC to support the maintenance of safe service delivery at accredited Child Contact Centres and Services, including information sharing about referral needs (children's views and safety).

Cafcass and NACCC will cooperate to deliver services that safeguard children from risk. This will be accomplished as follows;

2.1 Accreditation

- 2.1.1 NACCC will maintain the accreditation systems for supported and supervised contact, delivered through centres and services. Accreditation of services will focus on maintaining centres that can deliver safe and beneficial contact.
- 2.1.2 Cafcass will only refer to, and commission, NACCC accredited centres and services. Cafcass will endeavour to inform NACCC when it becomes aware of a centre or service which is not accredited and will encourage any non-accredited centres to gain accreditation. Cafcass will not advise any parent to attend a non-accredited centre or use non-accredited services.
- 2.1.3 NACCC will maintain the up to date list of centres and notify Cafcass promptly where a centre's accreditation lapses and/or where evidence comes to light that a centre is not working to the accreditation standards.

- 2.1.4 Cafcass will alert NACCC where concerns arise about compliance with the accreditation standards.

2.2 Safeguarding and Safe Practice

- 2.2.1 NACCC will use its best endeavours in ensuring that Centres have the required training and procedures in place, including safeguarding, and have access to support in decision making and where risk may be present.
- 2.2.2 NACCC will design and maintain the training curriculum for contact centre staff, including safeguarding children and domestic abuse. NACCC will offer some of this training direct where there is a need for specialist input.
- 2.2.3 Cafcass will ensure that their local teams have access to information about safe practice and that this is incorporated into induction procedures for new staff.
- 2.2.4 Cafcass will endeavour to only make referrals for supported contact centres where no significant risk to the child or those around the child have been identified.
- 2.2.5 Cafcass will make referrals to commissioned supervised contact centres when there is potential or actual risk to a child during contact, or a need to offer practical help to a family to reduce conflict.
- 2.2.6 Cafcass will ensure families are aware of contact centre referrals. All necessary and permitted case information will be sent direct to the centre on making referrals for either supported or supervised child contact interventions. Cafcass expects most parents to self-refer to supported centres and services.
- 2.2.7 NACCC will use its best endeavours to ensure that centres have access to referral systems that support safe contact.

2.3 Information Sharing

- 2.3.1 Cafcass and NACCC will share data about safeguarding issues in line with Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

All data shared and held must be maintained in line with the conditions set out by the Information Commissioner, and reflect the good practice required by the General Data Protection Regulations. Cafcass will disclose information where the court has given permission to do so.

- 2.3.2 For information in respect of referrals via the Safe Referral System (SRS) in the first instance Cafcass Call Centre (open 09:00 - 17:00 Mon – Thursday and 09:00 – 16:30 Friday, excluding bank holidays) should be contacted - Telephone: 0300 456 4000 Email: Telephoneenquiries@cafcass.gov.uk
- 2.3.3 If the case is not known or closed to Cafcass the SRS representative will be informed accordingly and no further information can be shared.
- 2.3.4 If the case is open to Cafcass the contact details of the Family Court Adviser (FCA) will be given for the SRS representative by the Cafcass Call centre to enable NACCC to send a Case Information Sharing Request (see appendix one) to the FCA. The FCA can disclose that a case is known and if there have been risk concerns. The details of the concerns cannot be shared nor can a judgment whether they have any implications for contact Centre attendance.
- 2.3.5 The FCA should record the interaction on EMCS and disclose to the parties and the court the information shared so that it is transparent.

2.4 Other

- 2.4.1 There may be local liaison between Cafcass operational staff and child contact centres and services, on individual cases and Cafcass National Commissioning Team (NCT) will manage the contracted supervised contact services.
- 2.4.2 Cafcass intends to continue to offer funding to NACCC accredited Supported Contact Centres as an annual grant direct to each applying centre. This and the sums available is dependent on the overall funding available to Cafcass.
- 2.4.3 There will be liaison as appropriate between NACCC and Cafcass NCT about any quality concerns in the supported or supervised centres.

3. Reporting

Representatives from NACCC and Cafcass NCT will meet annually to evaluate effectiveness and adherence and review this MOU. These meetings will take place at NACCC Chief Executive and Cafcass National Commissioning Manager level. Any

matters not resolved can be escalated to NACCC Trustees, and Cafcass Assistant Director levels.


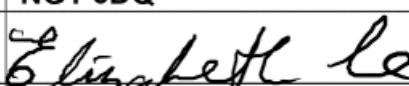
4. Funding

This MOU is not a commitment of funds by either party.

5. Duration

This MOU shall become effective from the date of signature, by the authorised officials from Cafcass and NACCC. It will remain in effect until 36 months after the commencement date. It may be varied or amended by agreement and evidenced in writing by either Cafcass or NACCC or terminated by either Cafcass or NACCC at any stage.

6. Contact Information

Partner Name	Cafcass	NACCC
Name of Partner representative	Mike Coote	Elizabeth Coe
Position	National Commissioning Manager	Chief Executive NACCC
Address	21 Bloomsbury St London WC1B 3HF	Friary Chambers 26-34 Friar Lane Nottingham NG1 6DQ
Signature		
Date	16-04-18	16-04-18

Appendix 1

Case Information Sharing Request from NACCC to Cafcass

DATE

Dear FCA

A referral has been received for supported contact via the NACCC Safe Referral System (SRS).

Please complete this form and return it to SRS email as soon as possible.

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

NACCC to complete	
Name of FCA	Email/Telephone

NACCC to complete		
Name of Child	DOB	Address

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

YES NO

If yes, please answer Q2.

If no, please return the form to the email above.

2. Are you aware of any **current** risk issues that may be detrimental to supported contact?

YES NO

If no, are you aware of any **historic** risk issues that may be detrimental to supported contact?

YES NO

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