



Cafcass Cymru Expectation Statement

Supervised Child Contact Centres

Supervised child contact centres are child centred environments that offer safe, friendly and neutral places for children to spend time with parents or other people who are important to them.

They support parents to help them prioritise the needs of their children post separation so that long-term solutions can be found to keep children in touch with both parents and wider family where it is safe to do so.

Referrals to supervised contact centres are made by Cafcass Cymru where there is need for contact to be provided in a safe environment and to help assess if ongoing contact is in the best interest of the child. Contact Centres are a short-term option before considering if and how arrangements can continue out of the contact centre.

PLEASE NOTE:

where there is no identified risk contact can be referred to supported contact centres:

Supported Contact Centres Expectation document

Cafcass Cymru will make a referral to a supervised child contact centre for face-to-face or remote contact and fund this contact where:

- It has been court ordered at a First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment (FHDR) after consultation with the Family Court Advisor (FCA) or Family Court Social Worker (FCSW) on court duty and agreed with both parties.

or

- Where it is part of a FCA or FCSW court report recommendation and / or where Cafcass Cymru has active and on-going case involvement.

Outside of this, parents, parties and / or legal representatives need to make their own referral direct to a contact centre and cover any funding implications.

Any contact referral made by the court without consultation with Cafcass Cymru should be challenged by the area Practice Manager on duty.

Remote supervised contact referrals must only be made if they are assessed and considered suitable for remote supervised contact by an FCA / FCSW. The practitioner must have discussions with both parties and the court (where appropriate) to ensure everyone understands the limitations to the service to be offered, discuss any potential safeguarding issues and give clear feedback to all if they do not think remote contact is safe or appropriate.

How many sessions?

- A total of 6 (1 hour) sessions is the maximum per referral.
- There can be flexibility as to the duration of the sessions as long as the total number of hours per referral does not exceed 6. For example, it may be necessary to have 2 hour sessions particularly where a family member lives some distance away. Therefore, the maximum number of sessions for this referral would be 3.





Referrals to Supervised Child Contact Centres

- Centres are responsible for assessing if the referred party is suitable for supervised contact and does not represent a risk to the child, parent or contact centre worker(s).
- Centres are responsible for notifying the Commissioned Services Team within 10 working days from receipt of referral if they plan to accept the referral.
- Centres are required to complete the Cafcass Cymru Record of Observed Contact after each session, the final Record of Observed Contact should be sent within 5 days of contact ceasing.
- The FCA/FCSW can visit parties at the venue (or alternative venue) for occasional observational visits when considered to be in the best interest of the child / children and where any health and safety requirements have been adhered to. Alternatively, where possible, observation may be via remote means.
- Centres will ensure each session is only attended by parties identified on the Cafcass Cymru referral form, however, can include interpreters where this has been identified as a need.
- Centres are responsible for directly informing the police / social services of any immediate child protection / safeguarding concerns.
- Centres are responsible for reporting any violent, threatening, abusive or anti-discriminatory behaviour, involving adults or children to Cafcass Cymru within one working day and following up in writing.

All contact centres used by Cafcass Cymru are subject to accreditation by the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC).

How is a Cafcass Cymru referral progressed?

- The FCA / FCSW must complete a contact service referral case recording on IRIS.
- Allocation of referrals will be made by the commissioned services team to a Cafcass Cymru approved provider of supervised contact services within the area that the child resides.
- All referrals **must**:
 - Be supported by a robust risk assessment particularly where there are current and / or past safeguarding issues – alleged or proven
 - Follow the guidelines on length and number of sessions
 - Indicate which is the preferred centre for supervised contact to take place.
- The Cafcass Cymru Commissioned Services Team will arrange for the referral to be sent to the contact centre via secure portal and will contact the service users in order to confirm that the referral has been made and to provide details of the contact centre to which they have been referred.
- The child contact centres will notify the Commissioned Services Team to accept the referral within 10 working days from receipt of referral and when contact has concluded in order for the necessary monitoring requirements to be met.
- The Commissioned Services Team will inform the court and close the referral if parents fail to engage with contact centre, or centre has made 3 attempts to arrange pre-contact meeting in a 4-week period.
- If a contact session is cancelled on more than 1 occasion, contact will be suspended and the court and FCA will be informed about the difficulties being experienced by the contact centre.

Contact Details

Phone – 0300 062 8855

Email – CafcassCymru.CommissionedServices@gov.wales

