

Enfield Family Contact Centre

Domestic Abuse & Coercion Policy

Enfield Family Contact Centre believes that everyone has the right to live safely and without the fear of violence and cruelty. We recognise that domestic abuse can take many forms, including:

- Psychological abuse such as name-calling, threats and manipulation.
- Economic abuse through controlling access to money and resources.
- Sexual abuse, which may be physical or psychological.
- Coercive control through using a pattern of behaviour over time to exert power and control.
- Physical abuse, which may include restraint, throwing objects, pinching or shoving as well as hitting.
- Technical abuse, for example sending abusive text messages, using spyware to track someone else's movements or demanding access to their devices and sharing images online.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable. It occurs throughout society, irrespective of class, income, race, culture or religion. Its effects are far-reaching and can impact all members of a family, notably children. We recognise that every child has the right to grow and develop in an environment free of domestic abuse, whether directly as a victim or as a witness of abuse in his/her own home or community.

Enfield Family Contact Centre accepts that some families using its Centre will have experienced varying levels of domestic abuse and we will ensure that they will receive sensitive and appropriate services. We also accept that the Centre needs to be organised and run in a way which allows these families, other Centre users and volunteers to be safe. In order that these requirements are met we will ensure that:

The Centre's referral form will ask questions about domestic abuse and coercion and:

1. No family will be accepted until a referral form has been completed in full and received by the coordinator
2. Any information concerning domestic abuse or the abuse of drugs /alcohol will be treated seriously.
3. 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.
4. Once a family has been accepted, the coordinator will consider their needs and develop a means by which they can be met. These will include:

- Parents being invited separately to a pre-visit interview at the Centre in advance of contact commencing.
- Parents being given clear instructions by the coordinator about staggered times of arrival and departure.
- Ensuring that whilst in the building, parents do not have reason to meet. This includes making refreshments available in the waiting room as well as in the play room.
- During the pre- visit we will reiterate the fact that the non- resident parent has to stay in the centre until the resident parent and children have left the site.
- Ensuring that addresses, telephone numbers and other sensitive information always remain strictly confidential.

5. Any distress to children or adults brought about by bullying or pressure to disclose information will be dealt with promptly and firmly.

6. If an individual or family's behaviour is threatening, causes distress or is disruptive they will be asked to leave and their place withdrawn.

7. If an individual or family refuses to leave the police will be called.

This policy will be reviewed, and if necessary, updated every two years.

Policy implemented	November 2004
Revised	July 2011, July 2012
Reviewed	February 2014, April 2015
Revised	May 2017
Reviewed	September 2018
Revised	September 2021
Revised	September 2023, May 2025