

Domestic Violence Policy

Last Updated January 2018 - See Management Committee Minutes for details of changes
Last Reviewed January 2020

New Dawn Child Contact Centre believes that everyone has the right to live safely and without fear of violence and cruelty. We believe that domestic violence is unacceptable but that it occurs throughout society, irrespective of class, income, race, culture or religion. Its effects are far reaching and impact on others, notably the children. We recognise that every child has the right to grow and develop in an environment free of violence, whether directly as a victim, or indirectly as a witness to violence in the home or community.

New Dawn Child Contact Centre accepts that some families using the Centre will have experienced varying levels of domestic violence 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 that allows these families, other Centre users and volunteers/staff to be safe.

In order to meet these requirements we will ensure that:

1. The Centre's referral form will ask one or more questions about domestic violence.
2. No family will be accepted until a referral form has been completed in full and received by the co-ordinator
3. Any information concerning domestic violence or the abuse of drugs/alcohol will be treated seriously, and reference will be made back to the referral agency for further details.
4. Use of the Centre will be denied to individuals or families where the co-ordinator feels their presence is likely to present a threat to the well being of other Centre users and staff members.
5. Once a family has been accepted the co-ordinator will assess their needs and consider ways in which they may be addressed. These will include the following:
 - a) Both parents must complete a pre-visit to the centre
 - b) Parents will be given clear instructions in writing about which entrances to use and what times to arrive
 - c) One parent will be expected to wait at the end of contact until the other has left the Centre and the area immediately around it.
 - d) Where appropriate resident parents will be asked to explore the possibility that someone other than themselves or their new partner bring the child(ren) to the Centre.
 - e) The contact room and waiting room doors will be kept closed, and separate toilet facilities provided for resident parents, and visiting parents and children.
6. All addresses, telephone numbers and other sensitive information will always remain strictly confidential.
7. Any distress to children or adults brought about by bullying or pressure to disclose information will be dealt with promptly and firmly.
8. If an individual or family's behaviour is threatening, causes distress or is disruptive they will be asked to leave.
9. If an individual or family refuses to leave, the police will be called.
10. There will be a minimum of three staff members on duty at all times and this number may increase if the situation demands it.
11. Staff members will be made aware of the particular needs of each family.
12. Staff members will receive training in the areas of domestic violence, child protection and conflict management.
13. The Centre has a dedicated landline phone and a mobile phone on the premises for use by staff members in case of need.
14. Staff members will be made aware of the Centre's agreed procedure to follow in the event of an incident or an emergency. (See Guidelines and Procedures)

15. The Centre will have a recognised and accessible system of support for staff members who have been involved in stressful or violent incidents
16. Referrers and families using the Centre will be made aware of its policy in relation to domestic violence.
17. Any individual or agency that has concerns about how the Centre is implementing its policy in relation to domestic violence should be referred to the Centre's complaints/compliments procedure.
18. The New Dawn Child Contact Centre's policy in relation to domestic violence will be reviewed and if necessary updated annually.

N.B. Staff members include paid and unpaid staff.

End of Domestic Violence Policy