

Volunteer Policy

Adopted by the Management Committee October 2014

Last Updated June 2017 – see management committee meeting minutes for details

Last Reviewed September 2021

New Dawn Child Contact Centre offers a facility where children of separated families can enjoy contact in a neutral meeting place with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members, in a safe and comfortable environment. In order to offer this service, volunteers are needed to:

- co-ordinate the service* (*if the Co-ordinator is voluntary)
- keep attendance records
- serve refreshments
- prepare and clear up the Centre on the day
- ensure that the Centre is secure and safe
- be on hand to assist the families using the Centre

Recruitment

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. The applicant will be interviewed by the Co-ordinator or Assistant Co-Ordinator, and if this is successful the two references asked for will be taken up.

An enhanced level criminal records Disclosure with the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made for every volunteer working in a Child Contact Centre.

Induction and training

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the Co-ordinator or Team leader.

This will include:

- The role of the volunteer
- A list of all staff members and volunteers
- A list of Management Committee members and sub-committees
- Copies of all the Child Contact Centre policies including this Volunteer policy and those on Child Protection, Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Domestic Violence and Conflict Management
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, rota etc
- Details of ongoing training
- Information about NACCC and its Values and National Standards
- Other information as appropriate

There will be a trial period of 3 months to give the Child Contact Centre and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All pre-agreed out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to the centre co-ordinator.

Support

The Co-ordinator, team leaders and other volunteers will offer support to the volunteers. There will be a briefing session at the beginning and a de-briefing at the end of each Child Contact Centre session.

If a volunteer feels they need additional support they can approach their Team Leader or Co-ordinator.

The Co-ordinator (whether paid or un-paid) will receive support and regular supervision sessions from the Chair of the Management Committee (or from another named committee member).

Insurance

The Child Contact Centre has a valid insurance policy which you are advised to read.

Confidentiality

The contact process requires an explicit confidentiality policy, which all Centre workers, which includes Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are obliged to observe.

Resolving Problems

The relationship between the Child Contact Centre and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that the Child Contact Centre is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the children, families and referrers who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the Child Contact Centre's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

1. Initially with a meeting with the co-ordinator who will explain the concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee will be convened.
3. If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using your services.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your work you should:

1. Initially explain your dissatisfaction with the Team Leader
2. If that does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Co-ordinator should be convened
3. If that does not resolve the issue then a formal meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee should follow.
4. If after this, your dissatisfaction remains unresolved, and we are unable to resolve your grievance, then it would be inappropriate for you to continue to be a volunteer.

At all times you will be able to state your case and can have a someone to accompany you.

Pregnant Employees' Rights (Taken from Gov.Uk Guidance as of 1 March 2017)

Pregnant employees have 4 main legal rights:

- paid time off for antenatal care
- maternity leave
- maternity pay or maternity allowance
- protection against unfair treatment, discrimination or dismissal

'Antenatal care' isn't just medical appointments - it can also include antenatal or parenting classes if they've been recommended by a doctor or midwife.

Employers can't change a pregnant employee's contract terms and conditions without agreement - if they do they are in breach of contract.

Employers must give pregnant employees time off for antenatal care and pay their normal rate for this time off. The father or pregnant woman's partner has the right to unpaid time off work to go to 2 antenatal appointments.

Pregnancy-related illnesses

Maternity leave and Statutory Maternity Pay will start automatically if the employee is off work for a pregnancy-related illness in the 4 weeks before the baby is due - it doesn't matter what has been previously agreed.

Compulsory maternity leave

If the employee isn't taking Statutory Maternity Leave, they must take 2 weeks off after the baby is born - or 4 weeks if they work in a factory.

Telling the employer about the pregnancy

Employees must tell their employer about the pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the beginning of the week the baby is due.

If this isn't possible (eg because they didn't know they were pregnant) the employer must be told as soon as possible.

Employees must also tell the employer when they want to start their [Statutory Maternity Leave](#) and [Statutory Maternity Pay](#).

Employees can't take time off for antenatal appointments until they've told the employer about the pregnancy.

Health and Safety For Pregnant Employees

When the employee tells her employer she's pregnant, the employer should assess the risks to the woman and her baby.

Risks could be caused by:

- heavy lifting or carrying
- standing or sitting for long periods without adequate breaks
- exposure to toxic substances
- long working hours

Where there are risks, the employer should take reasonable steps to remove them, eg by offering the employee or volunteer different work or changing their hours.

The employer should [suspend the employee on full pay](#) if they can't remove any risks, eg by offering suitable alternative work.

For [full details about the regulations](#) see the Health and Safety Executive website.

Pregnant employees who think they're at risk but their employer disagrees should talk to their health and safety or trade union representative. If your employer still refuses to do anything, talk to your doctor or contact the [Health and Safety Executive](#).

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis to adapt or improve it.

End of Volunteer Policy