



# Birmingham Child Contact Centre

## Volunteers Policy

### Introduction

Birmingham Child Contact Centre (BCCC) is a registered charity based in Birmingham.

Following family separation and divorce, children benefit from the continued love and support of both parents and other family members. A Contact Centre is a place that helps facilitate relationships between a parent, other family members, and child(ren) they no longer live with. We accept referrals from solicitors, parents, other family members, and other organisations.

Contact Centres provide either Supervised Contact (highest levels of risk where the quality of contact is recorded by trained individuals and companies) or Supported Contact (lower levels of risk). BCCC is accredited by the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) to provide facilities for "Supported Contact." That means we do not supervise contact on a one-to-one basis or write reports for the courts regarding the quality of contact or make recommendations about future arrangements. We provide a safe, friendly and neutral environment where non-resident parents can see their children on a regular basis until more permanent arrangements are agreed.

This document sets out how (BCCC) is organised, what support and experience you can expect and what will be asked of you, as a Volunteer.

### Roles and Functions

The **Management Committee** is made up of volunteers who are committed to running BCCC as effectively and efficiently as possible. To do this they ensure that funding, policies and procedures are in place and that accreditation from NACCC is maintained and developed. After their probationary period, volunteers can apply for membership of BCCC, which entitles them to apply for membership of the Management Committee and contribute to events at Annual General Meetings (AGM). Members are encouraged to contribute to such tasks as budget monitoring, organising training, taking minutes of meetings, fund raising etc. They also elect the officers of Birmingham Child Contact Centre.

### The Volunteer & Families Coordinator is responsible for:

- a) Recruitment, selection and support of Support Volunteers (as opposed to Management Volunteers). The Volunteer Coordinator works with and through Team Leaders, who lead contact sessions each Saturday.
- b) Conducting pre-contact visits to BCCC by parents, together or separately, as required by parents or by Solicitor / Court request. They are also responsible for organising welcome talks and interviews with parents on their first visit to BCCC with their children.

The **Referrals Coordinator** is responsible for liaising with Solicitors, Courts and parents who wish to use BCCC services. They are responsible for populating the Saturday sessions evenly (in collaboration with the Volunteer and Families Coordinator, managing any waiting lists and identifying any concerns, safeguarding issues etc., which Team Leaders and volunteers should be aware of.

The **IT Coordinator** is responsible for maintaining and securing BCCC's electronic systems and for supporting volunteers in understanding and using all IT related systems. Where an IT Coordinator is not appointed, the Management Committee will take responsibility.

All Coordinators support the Management Committee, interpret the Management Committee's policies and requirements to volunteers, identify volunteer concerns and undertake development activities.

BCCC is an equal Opportunities organisation (see BCCC Equal Opportunities Policy) and seeks to recruit volunteers from all parts of the community regardless of race, ethnic background, religion, gender, sexuality or disability.

## **Volunteering with BCCC**

Volunteering can have huge rewards; the knowledge that you have supported someone at a difficult time in their life can bring great personal satisfaction as well as helping you gain new skills and provide practical experience for employment or academic studies. Your legacy is measured in year's not weeks or months, in this regard. We can provide professional references for regular volunteers.

## **What Volunteers can expect from BCCC**

Induction – All new volunteers receive induction training by the Volunteer and Families Coordinator and will be assigned a “buddy” who will act as a mentor to provide guidance on the policies and procedures and how a session runs.

All volunteers receive the following documents:

1. Volunteers Information Pack – containing copies of BCCC's Policy documents and Guidelines
2. Volunteers Rota, Volunteer and Committee Members names and contact details.

**Training** - the Training Coordinator where appointed, and Management Committee maintain safe practices for children and volunteers by arranging training sessions. All new volunteers are expected to attend training to cover Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Health & Safety together with other BCCC policies agreed by the management committee. Training is ongoing and all volunteers are encouraged to identify and discuss areas that they consider need addressing with the Volunteer & Families Coordinator who will liaise with the Management Committee. Training may be delivered in a group or on a one to one basis.

**Support** - the Volunteer & Families Coordinator / Duty Coordinator and Team Leaders provide Support via regular meetings and team briefings before and after each session. The meetings are to support all volunteers to recognise good practice and to discuss any issues that may arise. This is a vital part of BCCC's commitment to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing that might have been affected by an earlier contact session.

**Policies & Procedures** – there are a range of policies and procedures to protect and inform volunteers and everyone who uses the Contact Centre. All are designed to achieve amicable solutions to situations that may arise and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to express their feelings and to be treated fairly. All volunteers are required to agree to work to these procedures.

**Lunch** – for those who attend the Contact Centre for up to two sessions between 09:30 am and approx. 14:30 pm, BCCC provides a basic lunch and drink at no cost to the Volunteer.

**References** - It is the Volunteer & Families Coordinator's responsibility to provide, where appropriate, references for Support Volunteers on behalf of BCCC. References will only be issued after completing a minimum of 6 Saturday contact sessions, this equates to 12 hours.

## **What BCCC expects from Volunteers**

**Application** - All volunteers will complete an application form, attend an informal interview, supply two references and agree to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, formerly CRB) check, to the enhanced level (see DBS/CRB and Rehabilitation of Offenders Policies). This process helps to protect volunteers and all users of BCCC services.

**Probationary Period** - new volunteers serve a three-month probation period. This equates to a minimum of three two hourly sessions, or 6 hours.

**Time Commitment** - all volunteers are expected to attend at least one contact session in every four weeks. Volunteers **must** arrive by 11:30 am (or 9:30 am when two sessions are planned) and leave at approximately 2.30 pm. If volunteers can offer more sessions, they should contact the Volunteer & Families Coordinator / Duty Coordinator. Attendance is expected at Training sessions. These are usually no longer than two hours, with approximately five sessions per year.

**Communication** - volunteers must confirm their attendance at scheduled sessions once the Rota is received. If for any reason they cannot attend a scheduled session, it is essential to contact the Team Leader for that session immediately. Please respond to requests for information as promptly as possible. A WhatsApp group is also in place for this purpose.

**Holidays / Time Off** - All volunteers are able to take time off as they may wish. However, advance notice should be given so that cover can be arranged. The WhatsApp application is extremely useful in this regard. In emergencies, please contact the Team Leader or the Volunteer & Families Coordinator / Duty Coordinator as early as possible.

## **Further Opportunities at BCCC**

### **BCCC Membership**

Following the three-month probationary period, or at Management Committee discretion, Volunteers may apply to become members of Birmingham Child Contact Centre. This enables them to contribute towards the running and management of BCCC, as mentioned earlier.

The current cost of membership is free of charge and whilst ever possible, BCCC will not change this rule.

BCCC's constitution requires that all members re-apply for membership each year, prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Secretary writing to all members four weeks prior to the AGM, requesting them to reapply for membership, achieves this. The Secretary must receive replies no later than one week prior to the AGM. A confirmation email would then be sent by the Secretary, confirming continued membership. Otherwise, membership will lapse.

### **Continuous Improvement**

BCCC is a student of continued improvement, inclusivity and advancement. If, whilst volunteering for BCCC you observe or devise areas where improvements, enhancements or any positive benefits may further the role, procedures, performance or standing, please inform the Management Team. They would be pleased to hear from you.