

Promoting change not just contact



Families Forward is an organisation dedicated to helping parents and children cope with the aftermath of separation and divorce. Our expert team of social workers and experienced contact workers have many years experience in helping children maintain their relationship with the parent who does not live with them.

All our staff are trained in working with parents and keeping them and their children safe. They are highly skilled in helping parents overcome their difficulties and anxieties and helping them help their children through a very difficult period in their lives. No matter how difficult things are we can usually come up with a positive solution. Our prime focus is establishing and maintaining contact, not providing evidence for the Court.

Providing safe, supervised contact for children and families

We offer a range of services to families undergoing stress or experiencing breakdown. Our main service is helping children to cope with the impact of family breakdown, caused by their parents' separation or divorce, and we offer a supervised, supported, handover and indirect contact service to enable children to have contact with a parent in a safe environment.



What is contact?

Contact is the time a child or children, spends with a parent who no longer lives with them. Sometimes contact involves grandparents or other family members. Centres such as ours arrange contact in safe and secure surroundings, with contact taking place in playrooms, filled with a range of

toys and games to make it as pleasurable as possible. Contact can be either supervised or supported and may involve both as contact progresses. At all times our aim is to make contact enjoyable for children and enable them to spend time with the contact parent away from any conflict

What is supervised and supported contact?

Where there are concerns as to the safety of children and/or adults, we supervise the contact to ensure that no-one comes to any harm. We are very aware of the need to ensure safety and initially there may be two supervisors. Contact is arranged so that neither parent sees each other at the beginning or end of the contact session, and the child is accompanied at all times by a member of staff to ensure their safety.

The behaviour of both parent and child is observed and conversations are monitored to ensure that contact takes place without the child being caught up in her/his parent's arguments. During and after contact, staff will make suggestions to the contact parent on how to make contact pleasurable for themselves and their child. We also work with the resident parent to address their concerns and work to try and improve communication between parents. We provide detailed notes of the contact for parents and can provide the Court with reports. For some families this level of supervision is not appropriate and we can arrange contact so that staff are nearby but in the room. This supported contact can often be part of a planned progression of contact.

Other kinds of contact

We understand that resident parents need to feel that their child will be safe when considering whether contact can move on. We work flexibly to adapt contact to allow the contact parent to provide, or make meals for their children and perhaps be accompanied on outside visits. Any changes to contact are always discussed with the parents and with a CAFCASS Family Court Advisor if they are involved.

With all parents, whether they are the resident or contact parents, we offer help with understanding the emotional and developmental needs of their children, how to use appropriate play, dealing with children's distress and basic parenting skills. All children and parents who receive a service are offered further support to deal with the aftermath of an often traumatic and difficult family breakdown.

How much does it cost?

This depends on how the referral is made. Some families will receive a free service for up to six sessions as part of a contract agreement with CAFCASS. After that period, if contact still needs to be supervised, or other work is required, Families Forward will continue to work with parents but there will be a charge. Families not referred as part of our contract will be charged from commencing contact.

Social work training and education

Families Forward is committed to developing best practice and we work in partnerships with Universities to offer high quality work-based placements for social work trainees. For more information on our student training please contact us



Where are we?

Families Forward have centres in Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford. Please see our website for details

Families Forward Helping You ...



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Providing safe, supervised contact for children and families
Social work training and education

Services offered in Wakefield, Leeds and Bradford

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