

LETTERBOX / INDIRECT SERVICE PRICE LIST (HUDDERSFIELD)

	Cost
Initial Referral Fee - (non refundable) to be sent in along with the referral, to cover assessment and administration. Can be paid by cash, credit/debit card (in person or over the telephone) or bank transfer. Referrals will not be processed until the referral fee has been received.	
Referral fee for Indirect/Letterbox contact	£30.00

Service	Cost
New pricing structure effective from 02/01/2025:	
Electronic letter (sent via email)	£15.00
Indirect letter or card only (sent via 1 st Class standard post)	£15.00 plus postage
Indirect letter or card or gift voucher (sent via specialised/signed for delivery)	£17.50 plus postage
Indirect gifts; includes maximum 3 items and 1 card or letter - additional items charged at £1 per item (sent via specialised/signed for delivery)	£20.00 plus postage
Parties are required to provide us with appropriate packaging (e.g. box, plastic packet, bubble wrap). If packaging is not provided, this will result in a delay to items being sent on. Any packaging purchased by the service will be billed back to the responsible party.	Variable

Process and Guidelines on Indirect Contact

What is a Letterbox or Indirect contact service?

Indirect contact can be also be known as letterbox and can take the form of letters, cards, gifts or emails sent through a third party.

Items are read and checked by the Family Time Service Manager. The manager will assess items and make a judgement on their appropriateness and whether they can be sent on. If any issues arise, the team will communicate with the parent/carer who has provided the items to discussed amendments or revisions.

What happens once a referral is received?

As referral form must be submitted, and a referral fee of £30.00 must be paid a before we can proceed with the service.

Once all the information has been provided, and the referral has been assessed and accepted we will arrange a short introductory telephone or video call with each parent/carer to ensure they are aware of the service fees and guidelines. A copy of this document will also be provided via email.

We will then set up a schedule for indirect contact, the conditions of which are determined by what has been agreed between the parties or what has been ordered by Court.

A copy of the schedule will be sent to both parties and will be updated every time items are received and sent on.

Costs and Payment for the service

- Please see the pricing structure noted above.

We will not pass on any further items until any outstanding invoices have been paid.

Fees can be paid by:

Card	Over the telephone in the week or directly at the reception. Weekdays: Call the main Huddersfield office Reception team 8am-5pm on 01484 519988
Bank Transfer	Please email children-familyservices@freshfutures.org.uk to confirm when a payment has been sent. Fresh Futures (NCC) Sort Code: 53-61-07 Account: 01125419 With "YOUR SURNAME 301" as the reference.

Method of Post

- Standard letters and cards will be sent by 1st Class Post.
- Larger items or items containing money or gift cards will be sent by via specialised/signed for delivery such as Post Office 1st Class Post Signed For, ParcelForce48, ParcelForce24 with a Signature, or DPD depending on which service costs less or how quickly the items needs to be delivered.

****If you wish us to use a different service or send items unrecorded please inform us.**

What happens if I miss or am late for an item deadline?

We expect parties to be responsible for and aware of their schedule. For example - if you have a planned holiday at the time an item is due then we would expect you to send your item to us before you went away and let us know the reason why it is early.

If being late with or not providing indirect items at all is a persistent issue e.g. items not received for several months, then the Family Time Service Manager will assess your case and decide whether we will terminate our service.

How to provide items to us

Please provide items in good time for any deadlines or events such as Birthdays, Eid, Christmas etc. This will support the Family Time team in being able to check send items on in time for these events. We cannot guarantee checking and delivery for items provided at the last minute, particularly at high demand times such as Christmas and Eid.

As part of our service we catalogue and read all letters/cards and check all gifts. Do NOT wrap any gifts or seal any envelopes. Wrapped gifts or sealed envelopes will be opened by us and will not be re-wrapped or re-sealed.

Address: Children & Families Service - Family Time
Fresh Futures
Brian Jackson House
New North Parade
Huddersfield, HD1 5JP

Please ensure that that FULL address is written as above. There are numerous departments in Fresh Futures and agencies based in Brian Jackson House.

You are welcome to post items to us or bring them in person. Any items dropped off in person should have your name and your child/ren's names labelled. If you are planning to come in person

please telephone the Family Time Team **at least 2 days before** so we are aware you are coming and can confirm a member of staff will be available.

Email: children-familyservices@freshfutures.org.uk
Telephone: 01484 519988 option 2
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00am - 4:30pm
Saturday - please call to arrange a time

Packaging

We do not keep a large supply of packaging materials. Our indirect service is only a means of passing on indirect items between parties when it is required that addresses are kept confidential and to ensure the items sent are suitable. If you wish us to pass on numerous items, bulky items, and/or fragile items then we require you to provide the appropriate packaging (i.e. box, plastic packet, bubble wrap) for those items.

If suitable packaging is not provided, this will result in a delay to items being sent on. Any packaging purchased by the service will be billed back to the responsible party.

Guidelines for Letters / Emails

Indirect/letterbox arrangements are usually agreed or court ordered to be between a child and their non-resident parent.

Please note: If you are planning to send letters or cards with messages via post, we advise that you email us a copy of what you wish to send first so we can check for appropriateness. Once we have confirmed the message is suitable you can then send in the physical version.

If letters to your child include the following we will speak to you about making appropriate amendments, providing a new version of the card/letter, or the item will not be passed on:

- messages (negative or otherwise) to the parent/carer the child lives with
- negative comments about the other parent/carer or family members
- discussing past negative experiences
- use of profanity, racist, sexist or other derogatory language
- discussing future arrangements that haven't been formalised

Letters containing requests for your child or the resident parent/carer to contact you or containing contact numbers, email addresses or postal addresses will not be passed on unless this has been agreed to by the resident parent/carer or authorised by a Court Order.

If you are uncertain about something you have written, please contact a member of the Family Time Team to discuss this.

***If English is not your first language please contact us to discuss this further.

Guidelines for Gifts

It is important to understand that it is part of our centre policy not to promote violence or inappropriate behaviours. All gifts should be age appropriate and follow the designated age rating for children.

Gifts that will not be accepted include:

- Items that promote violence i.e. model weapons, video games containing violent themes, DVDs containing violent themes
- Over age limit games, DVDs and computer games
- Expensive electronic items such as mobile telephones, tablet computers (iPads, Kindle Fire etc), games consoles (X Box, Nintendo Wii or DS etc)
- Large or heavy items such as bicycles, scooters,
- Cheques for **any** amount and large amounts of cash (£50.00 maximum)

The above is not a definitive list of the items we cannot accept. Items will be accepted and passed on at the service's discretion.

If you are uncertain about a gift you would like to send please contact a member of the Family Time Team to discuss this.

If we feel an item or the content of a letter is not appropriate, we will inform you and explain why we were not able to pass it on. We may also suggest alternatives to items.

Additional Support and Advice for Indirect Arrangements

Not all parents have are able to have face-to-face time with their children but they do remain in contact via an Indirect / Letterbox contact service.

This can take the form of letters, cards, gifts or emails sent through a third party, such as a solicitor, CAFCASS advisor, or a family time/contact centre.

Being limited to indirect arrangements can sometimes feel frustrating, however it is important for the child to maintain some form of contact with their parent and receive consistent form of communication. It may be at this time the best or only thing that you can do for your child.

Benefits of indirect/letterbox arrangements for the child:

- Reassures the child that they are loved and have not been deserted.
- Reassures that the contact parent is still interested in the child's life, interests and hobbies.
- Provides the child with the knowledge that the contact parent is okay, preventing any feelings of guilt the child may hold with regards to not having any direct contact taking place.
- Provides the child with an understanding and full sense of their own identity developed from parents and their cultural backgrounds, religions, personalities and physical features.
- Avoids an unrealistic impression of the contact parent, such as negative fantasies about the contact parent.
- Provides both child and contact parent with the opportunity to resume direct contact sometime in the future. Prior indirect contact can also make the transition to direct contact easier.
- Enables the child to manage a relationship in difficult circumstances and supports how they manage relationships in the future.

Advice on writing letters to your child

- Cater for your audience - consider the age, interests and personality of your child
- Imagine you are holding a conversation with your child, be chatty, talkative and tell stories
- Avoid asking lots of questions, instead, ask one question then also give information to your child by answering it about yourself.
- Consider the way the letter looks; this is what is first 'seen' by the child. For example you could include a range of colours or use stickers for decoration.
- Avoid overly-emotional statements a simple 'I miss you', 'Thinking of you,' or 'Love from...' is enough. Younger children may not understand emotional statements, while older children may misinterpret them and may feel guilt or other negative emotions.

- Your child needs to get to know you - talk about your life, because even the more mundane aspects will be of interest to them.
- On occasion mention your family members, children need to know they have another whole family, but don't confuse them with lots of new information
- An occasional recollection of positive family experiences reminds children that they are loved by both parents.

Indirect arrangements can be difficult if indirect contact is one way or you have limited knowledge around the child's likes, interests or hobbies,. It is important that indirect arrangements are maintained (as outlined in benefits above) so do not give up! Your child needs to know that that you did everything you could maintain contact with them.

Indirect arrangements do not always have to be in the form of letters, they can be creative and imaginative.

Making indirect arrangements interesting:

- Cards or postcards
- Write your child a bedtime story
- Lyrics to a song that reminds you of your child or is your child's favourite song
- Drawings
- Gifts (if permitted)
- Stories using photographs
- Collages using pictures from newspapers or magazines that interest your child or images of the latest cartoon characters or movies in the cinema.