

FAMILY TIME SERVICE (CHILD CONTACT) INFORMATION

The Fresh Futures' Family Time service provides a warm, safe environment where parents/carers and children can relax and can spend time together.

The service is for parents, grandparents or other family members who are no longer living with their children. A centre such as ours can arrange family time in a safe and secure environment. We provide a range of resources such as toys and games to enable a positive experience.

Family time is not just about allotting time between parents and family members. We believe it is more helpful to think of it as 'time for children' with an emphasis on the quality of that time. The focus should be on meeting your children's needs as best you can to ensure their time with you is of value to them.

Family Time services can help when there are safety considerations, or to help trust and reliability to develop between parents and carers. We can help when parents or carers need time to agree alternative plans or relationships need some time and support to develop.

Types of service offered

Supervised sessions

Where there are more complex issues or concerns as to the safety of children and or adults, we supervise the time together to ensure everybody is safe. Someone will always be in sight and sound of the children and will monitor conversations and provide assistance or intervention if necessary.

Families are supervised on a one to one basis. The behaviour of both parent and child are observed and conversations are monitored. During and after the session, staff will provide feedback and offer support and guidance to parents to enable family time to be a positive experience for their child or children. We also work with the parent the child lives with to address any worries or concerns they may have.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the centre.

A typed summary of each session will be provided to both parties. Parties can then choose to share the records with the Court or professionals such as Cafcass, solicitors, or social workers.

Supported sessions

This is a follow-on service offered after families have attended for supervised or assisted family time. The Supported service is for cases where unsupervised arrangements have not yet been agreed or is not appropriate but there are no concerns about interaction between parents and children, and the main requirement is for a safe, neutral space to spend time together.

There may be up to three families in a session at any one time. Sessions are supported by our well established volunteers. A worker may not always be in sight and sound of the children.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the centre.

No written observations are provided. Verbal feedback is given after each session.

Handover service (pickup and drop off)

When unsupervised arrangements are appropriate but parents do not wish to meet, a handover service can be used, and a contact worker will support the handing over and handing back of children.

Staggered arrival and departure times are set so neither parent has to meet each other when attending the centre.

No written observations are provided. Verbal feedback is given after each session.

Fridays:	4:30pm - for pick up OR drop off only This can be used in combination with our Saturday provision for overnight arrangements
Saturdays:	9:15am - 12:30pm (3.25 hours) 9:15am - 4:30pm (7.25 hours) 12:30pm - 4:30pm (4 hours)

Letterbox / Indirect service

****Items to be sent to the main Huddersfield office****

We can support indirect arrangements by sending on letters, cards and/or gifts either via post or via email. The addresses of both parents remain confidential.

Items received are checked and read to ensure they are appropriate before being sent on. A log is kept of any items received and sent on.

Family time venues

Huddersfield

Fresh Futures
Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade
Huddersfield, HD1 5JP

Telephone - 01484 519988 / Email - children-familyservices@freshfutures.org.uk

How are arrangements made?

Arrangements are by referral. The referral can be made by a social worker, solicitor, family mediator, CAFCASS Family Court Advisor or other appropriate professional. Arrangements will vary depending on which type of family time service is required.

I don't have a solicitor. Can I self-refer?

Yes, we do accept referrals from parents or family members that do not have legal representation, subject to safeguarding checks. For self-referrals we require each parent or carer to complete and sign the referral form. If one referral form cannot be filled in by both parties then we require EACH parent or carer to complete their own separate referral form. Referrals will be accepted at the discretion of the family time service manager.

What happens once a referral is submitted?

When a completed referral form and/or all appropriate paperwork is received, we will request payment of the referral fee. Once the referral fee has been received, the paperwork will be assessed by the Family Time service manager who will confirm if we can accept. We may need to ask some follow-up questions or request further information. If we cannot accept a referral we will explain why and also offer any guidance if we can.

Once a referral is accepted each adult party will be booked in for an introductory meeting

with a family time worker, and a child preparation visit for the child/ren. After the introductory meetings the family time arrangements will be booked in and confirmed.

Are all referrals accepted?

No. Following receipt of the referral form(s) and any other information, we will make a decision as to whether we are able to offer a service. We use the guidelines issued by the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC), in order to make such decisions, and there may be occasions when we are not able to offer a service, such as when there are on-going criminal investigations or pending safeguarding investigations by the Court. Should this be the case we will provide information to the parties as to why this decision is made.

We can usually accept referrals where there is the following:

- Ongoing court proceedings
- Children looked after by local authorities
- Children adopted or living with family under SGO arrangements (or similar)
- High levels of conflict
- Parental communication breakdown
- Parents building skills and experience caring for their children
- Parents with learning difficulties

Referrals we cannot accept:

- If parties are awaiting a court hearing / Finding of Fact with regards to domestic abuse. We must know the outcome before a referral can be considered
- If one of the parties has a conviction or Finding related to domestic abuse, they must have successfully engaged with appropriate work e.g. Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP), Safer Relationships or similar before a referral can be considered further. Anger manager programmes are not appropriate or accepted in this instance
- Where there is an ongoing police investigation or criminal proceedings
- Adults who have sexually offended against children, regardless of whether legal proceedings have concluded or are ongoing
- Referrals whereby there is a threat/risk of violence to another person (regardless of age)

How long will I have to wait before arrangements begin?

Once a referral and any additional documents or information is received, and the referral fee paid, the referral will be assessed by the family time service manager who will confirm if we can accept. If we cannot accept a referral we will explain why and also offer any guidance if possible.

Once a referral is accepted each adult party will be booked in for an introductory meeting with a family time worker, and a child preparation visit for the child/ren.

Following completion of introductory meetings, and once we are satisfied that it is appropriate to commence contact, we aim to arrange the first session at the first available opportunity. This will be dependent on a number of factors such as centre capacity and parent/carer and child availability.

The referral process could take up to **3 months**, or longer if we have a large waiting list.

Do I have to meet my former partner when I go to the centre?

Not if you don't want to. We implement staggered arrival and departure times and the centre staff will support with the handover of your child so you don't need to meet your former partner.

Does the centre make any reports about us?

During Supervised sessions an observation record is completed by the family time worker. These are typed up and shared with parents. Parents can then choose to share the records with professionals such as a solicitor Cafcass, or Court.

How much will it cost and who pays?

Unfortunately, we are not currently able to offer a subsidised service. It needs to be mutually agreed by the parties as to who will cover the costs.

Referral Fee for Supervised/Supported/Handover service

£100.00 NON-REFUNDABLE

This fee is NON REFUNDABLE. The fee covers initial administration, and our assessment of the referral form and any additional paperwork. If a referral is accepted, this fee also covers introductory meetings for adult parties, and a child preparation visit.

Referral fee for Letterbox service

£50.00 NON-REFUNDABLE

This fee is NON REFUNDABLE. The fee covers initial administration, and our assessment of the referral form and any additional paperwork, and setting up of the file.

Supervised sessions

£100.00 per hour (max 1.5 hours), with 30 minutes chargeable for community visit outside of town centre A typed observation report is provided.

Supported sessions

£45.00 per hour (max 1.5 hours)

Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Handover - for either handing over OR handing back

£15.00

Staggered arrival and departure time is implemented but not charged for. Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Handover - for handing over AND handing back

£30.00

Staggered arrival and departure time is implemented but not charged for. Verbal feedback is provided. A written report is not provided.

Each instance of Indirect/Letterbox contact

- Electronic letter - £15.00 (sent via email)
- Letter or card only - £15.00 plus postage (sent via 1st Class standard post)
- Letter or card or gift voucher - £17.50 plus postage (sent via specialised/signed for delivery)
- Indirect gifts - £20.00 plus postage + includes maximum 3 items and 1 card or letter - additional items charged at £1 per item (sent via specialised/signed for delivery)
- 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.

In some instances, staff, students or volunteers may also facilitate indirect, in-person contact within the contact centre with children as part of the service. This is where support may be required to positively engage children with the indirect. Also, the cost of this service is £45.00 and can last for the duration of one hour where required.

Payment terms and information:

- Each session must be paid for a maximum of 24 hours in advance. Sessions will not go ahead unless payment has been received.
- We can accept cash, credit/debit card and bank transfers.
- In the event of a session being cancelled with less than 24 hours notice, full payment is still required. Failure to pay will result in the remaining sessions being suspended until the outstanding balance is cleared.
- In the event of persistent non-payment (2 sessions) arrangements will be suspended until any outstanding balance is cleared
- If a session is cancelled by Fresh Futures the contact fee will be waived.

All our referral forms and information documents can be downloaded from our webpage:

<https://freshfutures.org.uk/family-time/>

If you have any further queries, please contact us.

children-familyservices@freshfutures.org.uk

01484 519988 option 2 - main Huddersfield office