



# Central Belfast Child Contact Centre

## Coordinator's Report AGM 1st October 2018

Central Belfast Child Contact Centre provides a safe, friendly and neutral space for children to meet with non resident parents and other family members in a setting which is supportive, welcoming and non threatening.

The aim of the contact centre is to establish or re-establish and develop contact to a point where the centre is no longer required to facilitate contact.

Some families attend only for a short time although there are a few families who have attended for a much longer term.

The majority of referrals to the centre are from solicitors but during the last year there has been an increasing number of referrals from Social Services. Any such referrals are private law cases rather than public law.

The centre is generally busy and lively, although during the summer period, attendance numbers usually dip. This is due in part to families being on holiday and to contact moving beyond the centre.

The week to week work of the centre does not change greatly. There are minor upsets and disputes but generally these can be resolved.

Since September 2017 there have been approximately 150 children referred to the contact centre.

There are currently 74 children using the centre to have contact with mothers, fathers, grandparents and sometimes siblings.

Two fathers travel from England for contact once per month and one father travels from Donegal each week for contact.

There are currently 40 volunteers at the centre.

At the beginning of the year Belfast Live promoted an article about the contact centre needing more volunteers. The response was very encouraging and the centre gained twelve new volunteers who we have been very pleased to welcome as part of the team.

As always a few volunteers have stood down. Mr Billy Miskimmin has tendered his 'retirement' from the centre. We will all be sad to lose Billy but thank him sincerely for his many years of commitment to the contact centre and wish him all the best for his 'retirement'.

The centre could not function without the support, skills and experience of the volunteers and the coordinator would like to thank all of them for their commitment to the centre and support to her throughout the year.

Juney Johnston continues to receive referrals and provide administrative support . The coordinator would like to thank Juney for all her work and support.

Paul Cahoon, caretaker of Small Wonders Daycare, is in attendance each week to organise the rooms and move furniture and equipment if required. Paul's help is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Norma Bell provides supervision for the coordinator which is excellent professional and personal support.

The coordinator would also like to express her thanks to the Management Committee for their support and assistance during the last year.

Margaret Yarr

October 2018