

VOLUNTEER POLICY & PROCEDURES

Knock Child Contact Centre (KCCC) offers a facility where children of separated families can enjoy contact in a neutral meeting place with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members, in a safe and comfortable environment.

KCCC values the involvement of volunteers in our work. They help reflect the interests, needs and resources of the community we aim to serve, and bring a unique perspective on all our work. We recognise volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff.

In order to offer this service, we need volunteers to:

- prepare and clear up the Centre on the day;
- register families on arrival/departure;
- be on hand to assist the families using the Centre; and
- provide refreshments.

It is hoped that it will not be necessary to ask volunteers to be on duty more often than once in four weeks – unless mutually agreed.

All volunteers are provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of their role. The Centre endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles.

Recruitment

We strive to create a diverse and inclusive organisation within a diverse and inclusive community. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.

We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account our commitment to the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policies. We will endeavour to make recruitment and selection materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request. Furthermore, KCCC regularly reviews the makeup of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).

All potential volunteers will go through an appropriate recruitment and selection process, including application forms, references and informal chats / interviews.

An **enhanced level of criminal record disclosure with Access NI** will be carried out in line with current Child Protection Legislation. A prior criminal conviction may not prevent you from volunteering at KCCC, but failure to disclose relevant convictions in full will result in immediate suspension pending investigation.

In relation to **Health & Safety**, it is important that we know if there are any aspects of volunteering at our Centre that you may not be able to manage. An impairment or

health problem does not necessarily exclude you from volunteering at the Centre. All information given will be treated with the strictest confidence.

KCCC benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers and we recognise that volunteering is a two way process. We believe these contributions should be valued and recognised, and volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to providing a safe and enjoyable placement, and seek to ensure that both the needs of the organisation, as well as the needs of the volunteers are met. We do this through: Induction & Training / Expenses / Support / Communication etc (see below)

Induction and training:

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by the Coordinator.

This will include:

- The role of the volunteer;
- A list of all staff members and volunteers;
- A list of Management Committee members
- Copies of all KCCC policies including this Volunteer policy and those on Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Domestic Violence and Conflict Management;
- Essential procedures i.e. timekeeping, rota etc.;
- Induction training and details of ongoing training;
- Information about NACCC and its Values and National Standards; and
- Other information as appropriate.

Volunteers are provided with a written letter of welcome, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and the KCCC. This agreement may be reviewed at any time with the consent of the volunteer and the Co-ordinator, including during the initial review meeting at the end of the settling in period.

The process is conducted by appropriately briefed/trained staff and aims to allow both parties to give and receive sufficient information to assess whether the volunteer opportunities available match the potential volunteer's skills, qualities and interests.

There will be a trial period of 6 months to give the Child Contact Centre and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end.

If unsuccessful, individuals will be offered an opportunity to discuss the outcome and identify possible volunteering alternatives outside of the Centres.

Expenses:

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed e.g. expenses for travel.

Claims are to be submitted on a standard Expenses Claim Form, accompanied by proof of expenditure, and given to the Coordinator at least every three months. All claims must be up to date before 30 March each year.

Support:

The Co-ordinator is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or grievance relating to volunteers. The Co-ordinator can provide day-to-day help and guidance on any issue related to the voluntary work, and identifies ongoing training requirements, countersigns expenses claims etc.

The Board of Directors and other volunteers are also available for support. There will be a briefing session at the beginning and a de-briefing at the end of each session. The Co-ordinator will also have regular meetings with the volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise.

Communication:

KCCC recognises the core role that volunteers fulfil within the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways.

We also recognise the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions at regular intervals and conduct an annual volunteer survey. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome and any volunteer may make representations to the Board of Directors.

References:

References can be provided following a satisfactory period of 6 months, or when a minimum of 6 sessions have been attended as a volunteer.

Insurance:

Volunteers are fully protected by the organisation's public liability and personal accident insurance. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

Confidentiality:

The contact process requires an explicit confidentiality policy, which all Centre workers, which includes Management Committee, volunteers and staff, are obliged to observe. A copy of this confidentiality policy will be given at training and is accessible from the coordinator at any time

Resolving problems/Complaints:

The relationship between KCCC and its volunteer workers is binding in honour only. However, it is important that the KCCC is able to maintain its agreed standards of

service to the children, families and referrers who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

If your role as a volunteer does not meet with the KCCC's standards, here is how it will be dealt with:

1. Initially with a meeting with the Co-ordinator who will explain the concerns.
2. If this does not resolve the concern then a meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee will be convened.
3. If your work still does not meet with our standards then we shall have to stop using your services.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of your work you should:

1. Initially explain your dissatisfaction to the Co-ordinator.
2. If that does not resolve the issue then a formal meeting with the Chair of the Management Committee should follow.
3. At all times you will be freely able to state your case and can have a friend to accompany you.

However, we recognise our duty to protect the wellbeing and interests of all who attend the Centres, and therefore operate a formal complaints procedure in the case of more serious complaints. In the case of particularly serious offences, this process may be bypassed and/or the subject of the complaint asked to leave e.g. if a volunteer is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the police.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed annually and updated as required.