

Good practice: Child Contact Centre

Helping children maintain contact with their parents and other family members in a safe and comfortable environment. Helping to assess safety and care for children whose names are on the Child Protection Register and for children looked after away from home.

What was the identified issue ?

The Council wanted to improve arrangements for children whose contact with family members needs to be supervised. The aim was to ensure children could have safe and enjoyable contact with members of their family on a regular basis.

What have staff in services done together?

The Council has made improvements in partnership working with *Counselling and Family Mediation Western Isles* (CFWWI). This is a voluntary organisation with experience in supporting contact between children and their families at their child-friendly house. Training was provided to help the centre manager supervise contact sessions. The level and type of contact is agreed according to each child's circumstances and plan. Police now help to assess risks before contact takes place to make sure everyone stays safe. Each session is well recorded and information shared with children's social workers.

What are the benefits for children/young people and families?

Children are being helped to maintain contact with their parents, brothers and sisters and other important family members. Children and families are welcomed and treated respectfully in a warm and comfortable setting. There are opportunities for children and families to play together and for parents to prepare meals. Staff and trained volunteers are on hand to help parents and children get on better together. Children gain by having the contact they need, including at weekends. Social workers report that the work of the centre gives them important information to make decisions in children's best interests. Feedback from children and parents is very positive.

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=11850&type=12>