

What is contact?

There are lots of reasons why some families do not live together, but none of this is because of you. It's not your fault that this is happening.

The two main reasons why children have contact meetings with their parents are:

Reason 1. It could be because when you live with one parent, it is important that you have a chance to spend time with the one you do not live with. It is not always possible for you to see that parent in their own home and on your own, at least not for a while. When your parents or the court decide that someone should help out with contact visits, we step in and help. It is our job to help family's sort this out.

Reason 2. There might have been some worries about the situation at home and you currently need to be staying somewhere else, usually that would be a foster placement or sometimes a family member or a family friend. You have a social worker and things are being sorted out in court. Because for now you do not live with either of your parents, your social worker has organised for you to have contact with your mum, or dad, or both together.

Our organisation is called AG Family Support Ltd (AGFS for short). AGFS does many things, including running our Child Contact Centres. That is where we help out with contact meetings between young people and their parents or other important family members.

What is AG Contact Centre ?

AG Contact Centres (AGCC for short) are a safe and friendly place, which has lots of toys and things to do. You are also welcome to bring your favourite games if you like.

AGCC is where you can spend time catching up with your Mum or Dad, or sometimes also other family members whom you do not live with. It would be up to you and your parents how you spend your time at the Centre.

AGCC YOUNG PEOPLE'S INFORMATION BOOKLET

Whenever you and your family use AGCC, one or more of our workers would always be there to assist. Our workers would be there to support you and your parents whenever you might need any help or advice. All of our contact workers are friendly and experienced- they will do what they can to help make your time with your parent as fulfilling as it can be. You can always ask our workers any questions and tell them about anything that might worry you. They are there for you! But, as it is your time with your family, our workers would typically just hang around and let you and your parent get on with whatever you all want to do.

But it is also important for everyone to know that our workers will step in and make sure that you are safe, whenever that may be needed.

How long does a contact session last and how often will I be seeing my parent/s?

Well, it is a bit different for everyone, depending on what has been agreed. Some young people see their parent for several hours at a time and others for just an hour or two. Some families stay at the Contact Centre for the duration of their visit, and others go out for activities in the community.

But, most young people would spend about two hours with their family member, at any one time. Please remember that you can always tell our worker about how you feel, if you would like more time or if you think contact is just a bit too long for you. The worker would then have a chat with your parents or your social worker to see if any changes to contact should be made, and when.

You could be having contact just the once, or for many weeks. It all depends on what the court, your parents and/or social workers decide should happen. There would be a plan and someone (your parent or social worker) would normally tell you in advance what that plan is and how long things will go on for. If you are unsure about this, you can speak with one of our workers and we will help.

Can I bring something with me?

Of course! You can bring your favourite food or snacks, games or photos... If there is a game or activity you are interested in but have no access to at AGCC, just tell our workers and we will see what we can do...

Can I come and look round first?

Yes, of course you can. In fact, we feel it is important for young people to come and meet us at the Centre, before things start. You would typically come and visit with the parent you live with, or with your social worker or foster carer.

AGCC YOUNG PEOPLE'S INFORMATION BOOKLET

When you first visit, you would also likely meet the worker who would be assisting your family during your contact visits.

But, we know it is not always possible for social workers to organise for young people in foster care to visit AGCC before they return to meet with their parent there. One way or another, we are looking forward to seeing you there!!

How will I get to the Centre?

Well, it is really up to your parents or social worker. If we are asked to drive you to contact or back, then we will happily do so. All our contact workers have their own cars and are experienced with transporting young people.

What if I am worried about something....

It is normal to be worried about this stuff and we understand this. We also know that the first one or two visits can be a bit tough, especially if you are not used to having them. But please remember that AG Contact Centres are places of safety, where you will always have a chance to speak to friendly and helpful workers- we will do what we can to help you worry less.

Also, it would be a really good idea for you to speak with your parent about how you are feeling and what is on your mind. If you are currently living in a foster placement, you can speak about this with your foster carer and your social worker.

See you soon!



AG Contact Centre Team