

**WOKING FAMILY CONTACT CENTRE – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**Executive Summary**

The Woking Family Contact Centre has submitted a grant application for the sum of £400 towards core costs such as replacement toys (£48), Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Statement of Compliance (£35), membership of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (£117) and PPE (£200).

The Charity provides a safe space twice a week for families to interact with their children. Families make use of the Centre when there has been a breakdown in trust and / or the communication between parents after separation, which is often very significant. Parents are reminded during separate interviews that the purpose is to provide a stable base from which over time they should endeavour to re-build the family’s communication lines, depending on the situation and the degree of breakdown. Volunteers are careful to remain impartial at all times.

As the sessions could not take place during the Covid-19 period, the Charity had to temporarily close. It re-opened its doors on 17 October 2020 and was able to welcome families back to a Covid secure environment. The re-opening was for a maximum of six families (three within the hall and three for handover arrangements). Following the news of the lockdown period in November, the decision was taken reluctantly to close again so as to maintain safety for volunteers, many of whom are in the high risk age category. Support is now being provided to families remotely via the internet and telephone. The sessions take place at Woking United Reformed Church which provides the Group with room space free of charge. Small donations are requested from participating families.

The Charity only holds a small amount in its bank account and would not have received donations during the period of closure. The Group has applied before, most recently in 2014/15, and has been awarded a contribution of £250. Noting the valued work that the Charity undertakes to help families with children whereby the parents have separated or had a breakdown in trust, it is recommended that a capital grant of £250 be awarded towards the core costs applied for. In addition, the Council has provided the Group with PPE to the value of circa £50.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:	<b>RESOLVE That</b> , subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process, a grant of £250 be awarded from the Community Fund towards core costs.
Reason for Decision	To enable the Charity to purchase items required to create a safe space for families with children who are separated or have had a breakdown in trust.
Legal Authority	S19 (Misc. Provisions) Local Government Act 1976
Confirmation of funding	This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council’s budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council’s overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council’s support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan

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	<p>for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> <p>Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis.</p>
<p>Conditions</p>	<p><b>Accounts.</b> The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p><b>Monitoring Information.</b> The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p><b>Publicity.</b> Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p><b>Joint Working.</b> WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p><b>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</b> Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations are expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.</p>
<p>Performance Indicators</p>	<p><b>Publicity.</b> The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p><b>Statement of Use.</b> The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
<p>Future Support</p>	<p>Due to the impact of Covid-19, the financial pressure on the Council's budgets is higher than ever and is expected to continue in the coming years. Accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2021/22 does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is extremely unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2022/23 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2022. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.</p>

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**The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.**

### **Background Papers:**

2021/22 Application Form.

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### **Shadow Portfolio Holder:**

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### **Date Published:**

2 December 2020

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<b>1.0 Summary of Application</b>	
1.1 Status and Aims	Woking Family Contact Centre was formed in June 1997. The Charity's aims are to offer a safe, friendly and neutral environment in Woking where children of separated families can spend time with one or both parents or sometimes with other members of their family. It is open on the first and third Saturday afternoons of the month for previously arranged families to meet up for two hours.
1.2 Employees	None.
1.3 Volunteers	22. The volunteers are available to help the family enjoy their time together by providing support in the meeting between parent and child and ensuring a safe and secure environment.
1.4 Clients/Users	27, comprising: 15 male 12 female 1 disabled 11 ethnic minority 27 resident in Woking 8 aged 0-5 3 aged 6-10 6 aged 19-65 There is no user charge, however donations are encouraged.
1.5 Members	22, comprising: 5 male 17 female 0 disabled 1 ethnic minority 22 resident in Woking 12 aged 19-65 10 aged 65+ There is no membership charge.
1.6 Sum Requested	£400 (Capital)
1.7 Project	The organisation has requested funds towards core costs such as replacement toys, Information Commissioner's Office Statement of Compliance, PPE and membership costs of the National Association of Child Contact Centres.
1.8 Cost breakdown:	NACC Membership - £117 Information Commissioner's Office Statement of Compliance (required

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	<p>for NACCC membership) - £35</p> <p>Toys - £48</p> <p>PPE - £200</p> <p>Total - £400</p>
1.9 Community Benefit	The number of families at each session can vary from 2 to 12, meaning up to 36 people at each session.
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	<p>Since March 2020, the Charity has been forced to temporarily close. Its venue, the Woking United Reformed Church, has been closed. The Charity is currently working through arrangements for re-opening the centre as and when circumstances allow.</p> <p>Support and guidance has continued to be offered via the website and telephone. Enquiries have continued to be received which has created valuable support for the users. The central costs relating to the telephone and website have continued,</p>

<b>2.0 Financial Background</b>	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £797 in the bank. The Centre has no predictable or recurring income and consequently has a policy of holding between six and twelve months' expenditure.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2021/22 which shows an anticipated income of £1,100 against an anticipated expenditure of £1,245, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £165.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Grants (£1,000) and Donations (£100). Items of expenditure include Insurance (£420), Training (£400), PPE (£210) and Phone Costs (£210).</p>
2.2 Accounts	The Group has submitted accounts to December 2019 which show an income of £1,854 (£1,092 in 2018/19) against expenditure of £1,427 (£1,975 in 2018/19), resulting in a surplus of £427 (a deficit of £883 in 2018/19). The sum of £2,005 was carried forward at the end of the 2019 year.
2.3 Support over the past five years	2014/15 – £250

<b>3.0 Assessment of Application</b>		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constitution</li> <li>○ Registered Charity</li> <li>○ VAT Registered</li> <li>○ Equal Opportunities Policy</li> <li>○ Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>○ Reserves Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quality Mark</li> <li>○ Other funding sources pursued</li> <li>○ Other support by the Council</li> <li>○ Fundraising</li> <li>○ Two quotes</li> <li>○ Regular monitoring provided previously</li> </ul>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>3.2 Consultee Comments</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>3.3 Assessment</p>	<p>Woking Family Contact Centre has submitted a grant application towards core costs such as Information Commissioner's Office Statement of Compliance (£35), replacement toys (£48) and membership of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (£117) and PPE (£200).</p> <p>The Charity provides a safe space twice a week for families to interact with their children. As the meetings could not take place during the Covid-19 period, the Charity had to temporarily close and is now providing support to families remotely via the internet and telephone. It was able to re-open for a maximum of six families between mid October and the start of the new lockdown in November 2020.</p> <p>Families make use of the Centre when there has been a breakdown in trust and / or the communication between parents after separation, which is often very significant. Parents are reminded during separate interviews that the purpose is to provide a stable base from which over time they should endeavour to re-build the family's communication lines, depending on the situation and the degree of breakdown. Volunteers are careful to remain impartial at all times.</p> <p>The Charity works with the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS), Social Services, legal courts and independent families. The Centre is one of 400 throughout England and Wales which is a member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres, which reviews members every three years to ensure compliance with the national standards laid down. The Centre's re-accreditation process was due to begin in March 2020 and has been deferred until such a time that it is safe to resume.</p> <p>This year, the Charity has applied to CAFCASS for grant support but has yet to be notified whether the application has been successful or the level of any award. Support is also received from Woking United Reformed Church which generously provides exclusive room space free of charge. Small donations are received from participating families.</p> <p>The Charity only holds a small amount in its bank account and would not have received donations during the period of closure. The Group has applied before, most recently in 2014/15, and has been awarded a contribution of £250. Noting the valued work that the Charity undertakes to help families with children whereby the parents have separated or had a breakdown in trust, it is recommended that a capital grant of £250 be awarded towards the core costs applied for. In addition, the Council has provided the Group with PPE to the value of circa £50.</p>	

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