



and

relate
the relationship people

Parenting information programmes for separating parents – a guide to accessing the service

Background From 8th December 2008, Contact Activities and Orders were enacted. Relate Solent were appointed to deliver one of these activities, the Parenting Information Programmes (PIP) across the local CAFCASS region. There are leaflets available from CAFCASS which detail the whole range of contact activities and where they are available from.

What is the PIP? It is a two 2-hour workshop which is aimed at separated parents (or involved extended family) and it aims to:

- Make the parents aware of the effect of separation on the child
- Make it clear that continued conflict over contact is not in the 'best interests of the child'
- Give options and ideas about how to change things for the better by improving communication skills and promoting workable solutions

What is it not? A counselling medium, mediation or an opportunity to meet with the "ex". The courses are delivered to each party separately.

It is also not about parenting a child per se – it is entirely focussed on the issues we all know families face post separation when they are in or likely to enter into conflict over the child(ren).

Does it work? We have been delivering these courses at Relate Solent for over 12 months. Outcomes show changes in parental behaviour, demands, and ability to negotiate. From the Relate perspective what was exciting is that parents appear to shift towards understanding the child's needs rather than their own needs in relation to contact.

Who can attend? Any magistrate or family judge working with contact issues can make an order. It is intended that both parties will be ordered to attend. Parents have to have an order to attend the course – we are unable to offer courses direct to parents.

It is the view of Relate that any parent who has resorted to court action to resolve child contact would benefit from the course. We are keen to have as many parents as possible referred at the first hearing so that we can try and nip the presenting issues in the bud at the earliest opportunity.

If parents have mental health problems, drug or alcohol issues or are known to be extremely violent, then a 4 hour training session is not in all probability going to help.

If clients have special needs – e.g. literacy issues – we will try to meet the client needs. If a client is not able to comply with the order because of capacity or behaviour we will advise the court and ask them to reconsider the Order.

What if they don't attend? The court will be advised and take appropriate action as allowed under the law.

What feedback does the court get? A Certificate of Attendance is issued to those who complete the training, to present in Court. We advise the Court of non attendance. Should there be an issue such as a disclosure of a Safeguarding nature this will be raised and acted upon if appropriate and in line with Relate's policies.

What does it cost? From 1st April 2010, all PIP's will be free to parents who are ordered to attend.

When does it take place? Relate Solent are offering several courses per month for clients to attend in groups. We can also work with parents individually if their needs dictate this.

It is better for parents to meet other parents – applicants and respondents (from other families) will be in the groups so there is an opportunity for one parent to see the impact of a mirror of their behaviour on a peer.

This is one of the most powerful learning mediums for the participants.

How do we refer?

From April 2011 Relate Solent will be delivering the training course on behalf of The Roberts Centre, Portsmouth. All they will need to refer you to the Southampton based course is either a copy of the order – it can be emailed, posted or faxed to the Roberts Centre or a letter of instruction giving the Case details from the Clerk of The Court. The information needs to give details of both parties who need to attend, including address and telephone numbers if possible. The Roberts Centre will then contact the parents quickly to offer them the next available dates.

What if the other party is not local?

Not a problem – there will be a provider in their locality and the order for them should be sent to that provider direct. You can click on the CAFCASS interactive map for details of providers.
www.cafcass.gov.uk

Parenting information programmes are delivered at:

Relate Solent
3 Kings Park Road
Southampton
SO15 2AT

Contact

The Roberts Centre, Portsmouth for next dates
Telephone: 0239 2296919
Website: www.robertscentre.org.uk
Email: katie.walker@robertscentre.org.uk