

Supported contact will not be suitable for any situation involving risk to children or adults; supported contact centres do not supervise contact or write reports but offer facilities where a family needs this for a defined period of time. They should only be used where safe and beneficial contact for the child can clearly take place.

Generally, the main differences between supported contact and supervised contact are as follows:

	Supported contact	Supervised contact
Risk levels*	Where the risk is low – perhaps where communication has broken down following divorce or separation.	Where the risk is high – perhaps following domestic abuse.
Description of service	Typically in a contact centre possibly run by volunteers where other families might also be present. The adult having contact is responsible for the child they are spending time with.	Takes place on a one-to-one basis in a contact centre where the staff are within sight and sound of the child at all times. Also in community locations once contact service is satisfied this is safe.
Type of NACCC accreditation	NACCC’s standard accreditation for supported contact.	NACCC’s enhanced accreditation for supervised contact.
Reports	Only dates and times of attendances are recorded. Notes are not made during the session. Safeguarding concerns will be reported to the local authority.	Notes are often made during the session which are used to compile a report following the contact.
Length of service	Short term – can range from a few sessions to around six months. In exceptional circumstances this may be up to 12 months.	Although can be short-term, in some circumstances can be delivered over long periods of time depending on the risk.
Typical progression	Although can be a short-term, in some circumstances can be delivered over long periods of time depending on the risk.	Contact often progresses to handover sessions prior to families moving on from the service.