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## **Services provided by The Voice of the Child (VOTC)**

### **Section 32 ‘Voice of the Child’ Reports.**

When parents have a child they expect that they will raise, parent and support their child together until the child becomes an adult. However things change for some families and for whatever reason communication between parents break down. This at times can result in parents having difficulties and agreeing on issues that affect their child such as child visitation (child spending time with the parent they are not living with).

In situations like this we, at the Court’s request, will meet with the family (including the child) to try and get an insight into what the issues are. We will listen to what everyone has to say with particular interest into what the child has to say around their situation and issues that affect their lives. We will report back to court (1) the presenting issues, (2) the child’s views and wishes about their situation thus letting the court hear ‘The voice of the Child’ (Age appropriate) We will also make recommendations to the court for the future in the best interest of the child and to help support the family situation. *(Parents do not meet during this process)*

There is a referral form outlining the Terms and Conditions and details of costs etc available on [www.thevoiceofthechild.ie](http://www.thevoiceofthechild.ie) referrals come from Solicitors only

### **Create a child visitation plan with a family who do not wish to attend court**

We will meet with the family (including the child) to try and negotiate an agreeable child visitation plan for the family. *(Parents do not meet during this process)*

There is a referral form outlining Terms and Conditions along with details of costs etc available on [www.thevoiceofthechild.ie](http://www.thevoiceofthechild.ie)

### **Agency and Interagency work**

We will work with any other agency to help establish services that will enhance the quality of life, health and safety for the child and their families. Such as setting up a Children’s Visitation Support Service etc

To prevent children from travelling long distances to see their birth parents we will provide visitation sessions for Tusla or any agency for children in areas around Cavan, Westmeath, Dublin and beyond. Please contact Loreto on [loreto@thevoiceofthechild.ie](mailto:loreto@thevoiceofthechild.ie)

### **Children’s Visitation Support Service**

We will coordinate a Child’s Visitation Support Service for any family/agency that requests this in the Kells Family Resource, Centre (KFRC).

To prevent children from travelling we will recommend they attend the Children’s access service in Navan if the child lives in that area.

## **Training for professionals and groups:**

### **Understanding child abuse a practical guide**

- Thoughts a child may have at the time of abuse.
- The impact abuse may have on a child at the time of abuse including depression and being actively suicidal.
- The lasting impact of abuse into adulthood including depression and being actively suicidal.
- How to learn to integrate childhood abuse into their adult lives.
- The impact of how repeated reporting of abuse is handled by Media.
- There is hope for the future and with the correct supports people can have a good quality of life with no and or reduced flashbacks.

### **Setting up an access service a practical guide**

- Experience as an agency of setting up and providing a child's visitation service
- Details that Solicitors/Courts need to check out with the service before making a Court Ordered child visitation plan etc.
- How the service works with the family once they are referred for the visitation service. Issues that may arise with the family, the child and how the child is supported if they agree to avail of the service etc.
- What the child visitation service can provide for children/families during the visitation meetings etc
- What the services aim to observe during the child visitation meetings etc
- What happens if a child refuses to come into a visitation meeting with their parent etc

### **Presentations for school – overcoming adversities in life**

- We can facilitate age appropriate presentations to students in secondary schools. The presentation will explore modern family dynamics, with a focus on the types/effects of abuse - depression/feeling/helpless and isolated in the family home. These talks will highlight the importance of talking, finding their voice in life, moving forward and getting support from the appropriate adults in their lives. We will also speak about empowerment after adversity.

For further information contact Loreto at 0851821350 [loreto@thevoiceofthechild.ie](mailto:loreto@thevoiceofthechild.ie)