

Who are Relate NI?

Relate NI is a charity with a mission to make expert information and support for healthy relationships available for everyone. We have been supporting people and their relationships across Northern Ireland for 75 years.

We provide a range of counselling services across Northern Ireland, therapeutic training, and community and education programmes including Sustaining Healthy Relationships, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Golden Threads.

It doesn't matter if you're single, married, living together, separated, younger, older, parenting apart, parenting alone, gay, bisexual, straight or transgender – we're here to support you!

Contact Us

If you would like more information on how we can help you, or your child(ren) with our Co-Parenting service, please visit our website:

www.relateni.org/relateni-services/co-parenting/

Or contact us at:

Email: office@relateni.org

Phone: 028 9032 3454

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FAQs

Can Relate NI help with us with children's routines / schedules?

The focus of the co-parenting work is therapeutic, which means counsellors would not be involved in the children's daily activities or routines. Over time, the therapeutic work can support co-parents to agree and negotiate; this could include schedules and routines, which can have a positive impact on the child / children and wider family.

We cannot sit in a room together normally, how will this work?

Once a self-referral is made, you will be invited in for an assessment to check if the service is suitable for you. This may be an individual session for both parties, or if appropriate a joint session. Our counsellors are skilled and qualified in delivering relationship support, and will assess each case individually. The counsellor will support both parties in agreeing the structure of ongoing work after the assessment session. Counsellors are also able to recognize when Relate NI may not be the right service and can support you further with signposting or onwards referrals to more suitable services.

What will happen if we do not agree?

Relate NI recognize that parenting can, at times, be a difficult job, especially after conflict or separation. Our counsellors are highly skilled in relationship support, and even if you do not agree, taking part in co-parenting counselling could have long lasting benefits for the child / children involved. Co-parenting counselling can offer a space where agreement, respect and negotiation can be explored in a safe space.

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Co-Parenting



Relate NI

Why does Relate NI offer a Co-Parenting service?

Relate NI believe children who grow up with parents who have low parental conflict, whether together or separated, enjoy better physical & mental health & emotional wellbeing, higher educational attainment & a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour.



Struggling with Co-Parenting? We can Relate.

This self-referral co-parenting counselling service is for parents who are co-parenting or for children and young people (CYP) impacted by co-parenting in their family set ups or separated and/or blended families who:

- Are finding agreement on their co-parenting strategies difficult.
- Are considering separation.
- Have recently separated.
- Separated some time ago.

We can provide parents and children with one 50 minute One at a Time Therapy session to address your co-parenting issues. If further support is required after this one session, we can discuss this further and provide support that suits your situation best.

When would families benefit from Relate NI's Co-Parenting service?

Families may benefit from support when experiencing one or more of the following life transition points:

- Leaving home – partner/older children
- Relationship breakdown in couple relationship
- Separation or Divorce
- Encountering changes in a couple or family relationship
- Leaving a job / changing career/ changing school
- Becoming a parent/ child leaving home
- Retirement or redundancy
- Adapting to a serious illness or disability
- Bereavement
- Moving on after a major life experience
- Changes to family structure such as new siblings/blended families



“ My son attended Relate to help him deal with issues around his parents separation. He was relieved to be heard, to have space to talk and learn tools which he could implement when he feels frustrated or upset. ”

FAQs

Will the counsellor take sides?

No, our counsellors do not take sides. Co-parenting counselling is confidential and non-judgmental. Counsellors remain neutral and focused on desired outcomes of both parties. Counsellors may offer gentle challenges to both parties, in the interest of meeting desired outcomes and desired improvements for the child / children involved.

Does Relate NI provide reports for solicitors / courts?

The service is confidential and carried out within strict professional boundaries. We keep brief, factual records stored securely for a period of time, then destroyed.

While confidentiality is protected there are certain exceptional circumstances in which a counsellor may be under legal or ethical duty to disclose information. These exceptional circumstances are in place to ensure client safety, the safety of others and to comply with legislation. Relate NI are aware of these responsibilities and will disclose information in these circumstances to the relevant bodies.

What if there is already supervised contact, will this affect this arrangement?

No, Relate NI are not a statutory service. Taking part in Co-parenting counselling has no legal impact on any court / contact orders that might be in place.

What if the children refuse to be co-parented? Relate NI want the best outcome for the child / children involved, and the co-parents. Counsellor will provide a supportive environment to facilitate open and honest conversations about what is best for the child.