

**Speech given at Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Regarding withdrawal of funding for the Child Contact Centre**

16th January 2014

Hugo Jenks, Bathampton, Bath.

[hugo.jenks@gmail.com](mailto:hugo.jenks@gmail.com)

**Child Contact Centre**

I wish to raise the matter of funding for the Child Contact Centre in Bath – the cut to its grant.

Child Contact Centres are so vitally important. To allow the absent parent, usually the father, to have time with his child. I know this from first hand experience as my own marriage failed. The Contact Centre where I then lived was brilliant, well organised and the volunteer staff helpful and understanding. I have much to thank them for. All too many children do lose contact with their father, and this is harmful both for the children and for him. It is well researched that children without their father in their life do less well, have a higher risk of criminal activity and drug taking, for girls a higher risk of teenage pregnancy.

How can the BANES Council not find the relatively modest sum of £8,500 per annum to support such an important service? This is a small amount of money in the context of overall Council expenditure.

Congratulations to Linda Wyon for being awarded an OBE. She founded the Bath Child Contact Centre in 1991. Her Majesty recognises the importance of this work, the Council should do too.

The Council is dominated by the Liberal Democrats Party. A slogan of the Liberal Democrats during the last General Election included: 'a fair chance for every child'. Do they really have no concept of how important the Child Contact Centre is?

Children are our future, it is our duty to pass on to them a decent and caring society, and the opportunities to permit them to thrive. Please do not cut the grant to the Contact Centre.