

Sample Helpline Call 3

Call from a survivor regarding child contact

A woman phoned the helpline regarding problems she was having with her ex-partner. They had one young son together. The woman had previously fled her ex after he had threatened to kill her and had raped her, for which he was never convicted as the police did not have enough evidence.

After ending the relationship the woman stopped contact between her son and his father. Her ex then went through the courts to obtain a Child Arrangement Order. As her ex had not been convicted for any of the previous incidents, he was granted access for the son to have unsupervised contact for one night a week.

During contact, the son was allowed to stay up late at night playing violent video games, and the woman suspected that her ex was leaving him unattended at night to go out. The perpetrator regularly told his son that he shouldn't trust his mum; belittling her and calling her names. The son had recently started having nightmares and had been struggling at school and socially with his peers.

The woman wanted advice on how she could support her son and some advice around child contact. She was open to the idea of returning to the court to get the Child Arrangement Order changed. The helpline worker passed over some numbers for the woman to get some legal advice, and the number for her local domestic abuse service to give her some ongoing practical and emotional support. The local service also provided a children's service, so the helpline worker encouraged the woman to ask them what exactly that was and if they may be able to support her son.

The helpline worker was able to suggest some ways in which she could support her son for the time being, for example; providing extra reassurance, maintaining boundaries and giving him a healthy outlet for any aggression. The woman understood that there was only so much she could do whilst her son was still having contact with his father, but at least she could provide a space for him with her where he could feel safe and loved.

The woman stated she would call the numbers given to her for legal advice and ongoing support, as well as contacting social services to discuss her concerns.

Call duration: 42 minutes