

Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

Information for parents and professionals



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1 Introduction

The Children's Safeguarding and Social Work division (CSSW) provides a statutory social work service to support families and help parents to care for their children. We know that bringing up children can be a demanding job, and sometimes parents may need extra help or advice.

We believe that usually, children do better when they live at home, and we aim to work with parents to help them care for their children so that families can stay together.

2 Who can we help?

We have a duty to help any child under the age of 18 years who lives in the borough and who is considered to be 'in need'. This means:

- children who need extra help or services to achieve good levels of health and development
- disabled children
- children who are at risk of harm
- children who, for whatever reason, are unable to live at home.

3 Who is entitled to services?

We have special rules called eligibility criteria which help us to make decisions on who can receive a service. This way support can be given to those children who need it most.

Our eligibility criteria

Level of need

Low: children and families who would benefit from a little extra help and support but are not 'in need'.

Camden's Early Help Service can offer these families support from a wide range of services across the borough such as the Early Years Service, the Family Service and Youth Support.

Medium: children who need extra support so that they can reach a good level of health and development and stay safe.

These children are entitled to receive a 'children in need' social work service and we will carry out an assessment to find out what services would support parents and help them to meet their needs.

Examples of low need

- Children affected by difficult family circumstances, bullying or harassment
- Children with mild disabilities or special educational needs or who need extra support at school
- Children who may be involved in anti-social behaviour
- Families with low incomes.

Examples of medium need

- Children with lifelong disabilities
- Children receiving poor quality care that is affecting their development
- Children whose behaviour causes concern and who are beyond their parents' control
- Children whose care is affected by their parents' use of drugs or alcohol
- Children whose care is affected by their parents' mental or physical illness
- Families facing serious problems and crises
- Pregnant women whose lifestyle may affect the baby's development

Our eligibility criteria continued

Level of need

High: children who need to be protected from harm or who cannot live at home.

At this level, we are under a duty to take any action needed to protect the child or provide them with an alternative home.

Examples of high need

- Children who need to be looked after because there is no-one able to care for them
- Children living with high levels of domestic abuse and violence
- Children who are believed to be being abused or harmed
- Children who are at risk of trafficking, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage or FGM
- Children who are in police protection
- Where it is thought that an unborn child may be at risk of harm.

4 The Early Help Service

Camden's Early Help Service provides support to families who are experiencing difficulties so that they get the help they need before problems become more serious.

Early help covers a wide range of services such as children's centres and youth services that can help support parents with parenting, and help them to meet their child's needs.

- For more information please see our Early Help Services website at: www.camden.gov.uk/early-help-for-children-and-families?inheritRedirect=true

5 Children's Safeguarding and Social Work

CSSW provides a social work service for children aged 0-18 living in the borough who are considered to be in need. The service is made up of the following teams:

i) Social work teams

- The **Brief Intervention team** works with families for a short period of time (up to 6 months) in order to provide support through short-term crises.
- The **Family Intervention teams** provide longer term support for families and carry out child protection work in order to support families and keep children safe.
- The **Children and Young People's Disability Service** provides a service for children and young people with disabilities including a transition team that works young people with disabilities up to the age of 25.

ii) Children in need services

Our **social workers** can work with parents to support them and help them deal with any difficulties that may be affecting the family. This may mean:

- talking to parents and children to find out what the problems are
- working with parents and children to help sort out practical or emotional difficulties
- providing parents with advice and guidance so they can look at ways to make things better themselves
- getting in touch with other agencies to help resolve any problems such as health, education, benefits or housing.

CSSW maintains strong links with the Royal Free Hospital and University College Hospital, providing support for children who have to stay in hospital and for their parents as well as a social care service for pregnant women. Social workers can provide parents with advice and support, act as a link with medical staff, and make sure the child is being properly cared for while in hospital.

The **private fostering service** carries out assessments on private foster carers to support them and the children they care for by providing advice and training for carers, and making sure the child is safe and well cared for. For more information, see the 'Private fostering; information for parents and carers' leaflet available at www.cscb-new.co.uk/?page_id=10332

The **family group conference** service can provide family members with an opportunity to get together and discuss how to solve problems. An independent co-ordinator can help families to organise the meeting, which will give them a chance to agree plans for the future. Many families have found the conference a good way of deciding on how to deal with a crisis. For more information on how to use this service, see the 'Family group conference' leaflet available at www.camden.gov.uk/family-group-conference?inheritRedirect=true

iii) Child protection

Because CSSW has a duty to protect children, we may be asked to look into claims that a child is being harmed. Child protection work is carried out by social workers in all teams.

For more information on child protection services in Camden, see the Camden Safeguarding Children Board website www.cscb-new.co.uk/

iv) Services for looked after children and care leavers

We look after some children because they cannot live at home with their parents. We will only look after children if:

- their parents are ill or unable to look after their child for some reason
- the child has no parents or anyone else to care for them
- there are serious concerns about the way the child is being cared for by their parents.

All children who are looked after have an allocated social worker from the **Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service** who makes sure they are being properly cared for and attending school while they are living away from home. Children with disabilities who are looked after will have an allocated social worker from the Children and Young People's Disability Service. The social worker also works with parents to make it possible for the child to return home.

When a child cannot live at home, it is often best if they are looked after by someone they know, rather than a foster carer. Social workers can help parents to make arrangements with a friend or relative to look after their child. For more information, see the 'Family and Friends care in Camden' leaflet.

If children need to live with a foster carer, the **fostering team** will find a foster carer to look after the child, while CSSW and parents work together so the child is able to return home. If a child is not able to return to their parents, the **adoption team** will find the child a permanent home with another carer.

The **Leaving Care team** works with young people from the age of 18 to support them while they move on to living independently. The team works with young people in different ways to help them gain the confidence and skills they need to live independently.

The team deals with all care leavers including unaccompanied asylum seeking children from abroad.

6 Contact us

If you want to talk to a social worker about any help or support your child or family needs, or if you wish to report concerns about a child, you can contact the Children and Families Contact team on 020 7974 3317.

If you want to talk to someone about private fostering:

You can call 020 7974 6783 or email fostering@camden.gov.uk

If you want to talk to someone about family and friends care:

You can call 020 7974 3082 or email fostering@camden.gov.uk

Complaints and suggestions

We want to make sure we provide you with the best possible service. If you are using or planning to use our service and are unhappy with any aspect of our service or a decision we make, you can make a complaint.

Most people don't like to complain but sometimes things do go wrong, or you may feel there is a better way of doing them. If you tell us about it, we can try to put things right.

It is the responsibility of all staff and their managers to try and put right any concerns that you may have. Your comments and suggestions are therefore very important to us.

If things do go wrong, talk to the social worker or a manager or head of department, as soon as you can.

Or if you prefer you can contact the Children's Complaints Unit to receive advice about making a complaint using the Department's three stage complaints procedure.

Complaints team Information and records management service

FREEPOST RSLT-RJBR-TXAA

Town Hall

Judd Street

London WC1H 9JE

Telephone: 0800393 561

If you would like Children's Safeguarding and Social Work services: information for parents and professionals in large print or braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact **020 7974 5181**.

Nëse e dëshironi fletushkën rreth shërbimeve të Përkujdesit dhe Kujdesit Social: informatat për prindërit dhe profesionistët në shtyp të madh, Braille, audiokasetë apo në gjuhën shqipe, ju lusim kontaktoni **020 7974 5181**.

إذا أردت كتيب حماية الخدمات الاجتماعية: معلومات للأهالي والمحترفين بالطبعة الكبيرة أو بلغة بريل أو على الشريط أو بلغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال مع رقم: **020 7974 5181**.

আপনি যদি সৈফলাজি অ্যান্ড সোশাল কেয়ার পরিষেবা প্রচলকপত্রের : বাবা-মা এবং পেশাদার ব্যক্তিদের জন্য তথ্য বড় ছপার অক্ষরে অথবা ব্রেইলে, অডিওট্যেপ অথবা অন্য ভাষায় চান,তহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **020 7974 5181**. নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Pour obtenir la brochure Children's Safeguarding and Social Work services: information for parents and professionals (protection et services d'assistance sociale : informations pour les parents et les professionnels) en gros caractères, en braille, sur support audio ou dans une autre langue, veuillez contacter le **020 7974 5181**.

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in warqad-wareedka yar ee Badbaado-ilaalinta iyo Adeegyada Daryeelka Bulshada: warbixinaha waaliddiinta loogu talo galay, lagaaga sameeyo daabacaad weyn ama qoraalada ay dadka indhoolayaasha ah akhriyaan (braille), cajiladdaha maqalka ama in luuqad kale laguugu turjumo, fadlan la xidhiidh **020 7974 5181**.

En caso de que desee el folleto «Servicios de Salvaguarda y Asistencia Social: información para padres y profesionales», en tipo grande o Braille, audio cassette o en otro idioma, no dude en contactar con el número **020 7974 5181**.

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Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE
Telephone: 020 7974 5181