

Family Services and Social Work

Information for parents and professionals



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1 Introduction

The Family Services and Social Work division provides services 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'.

Our Family Service can offer these families advice and information, support with parenting and projects for children at lots of different locations in the borough.

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 in caring for their child.

Examples of low need

- Children affected by difficult family relationships, bullying or harassment
- Children who need extra support at school
- Children who are not going to school regularly
- Families with low incomes.

Examples of medium need

- Children with disabilities or serious health problems
- Children affected by domestic violence
- Children who are caring for parents with serious health problems
- Children who are beyond their parents' control
- Children involved in criminal activity
- Children with serious behavioural problems
- Children who use drugs
- Children whose care is affected by their parents' use of drugs or alcohol
- Children whose care is affected by their parents' illness
- Families facing serious problems and crises
- Pregnant women whose lifestyle may affect the baby's development
- Children who have to stay in hospital for more than three months.

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 whose parents are not able to look after them
- Children who have no parents
- Children whose behaviour puts them at serious risk
- Children affected by serious domestic violence
- Children who are believed to be being abused or harmed
- Children who may be involved in prostitution
- Children who are in police protection
- Where it is thought that an unborn child may be at risk of harm.

4 The Family Service

The Family Service works with families across a wide level of needs to provide advice and support to help families deal with any problems they may be facing. Family Workers from the service will work directly with families and sometimes alongside social workers where there are complex needs.

The service is based in five offices across Camden and runs father's groups, drop-in sessions, kids clubs, family trips and specialist advice sessions. Some of the programmes are time limited such as parenting programmes, work with the family in the home, and help for children to improve school attendance and behaviour.

5 Social Work Services

Our centres at Caversham Road and the Crowndale Centre provide front-line social work services for children and their families.

Both centres have **duty and assessment teams** that deal with all referrals from members of the public and other professionals. The team responds to emergencies and carries out assessments on families who have been referred for services.

Our Children in Need social work teams provide long term support to children and families and help them to solve any difficulties. There are two Children in Need teams based in each centre.

Each team is made up of a manager, senior practitioners, social workers and family support workers. Duty teams also have workers from a variety of voluntary specialist organisations, including Bengali and Somali community groups.

i) 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.

Family support workers are also based in the teams and can work with families to provide practical help as well as advice so that parents are able to deal with difficulties.

We have **hospital-based social work teams** at University College Hospital and the Royal Free Hospital. These teams provide support for children who have to stay in hospital and for their parents as well as a social care service for pregnant women. The teams 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.

The **FWD drug and alcohol team** provides a service for young people who have a problem with drug or alcohol use or who may be affected by their parent's drug or alcohol use. The team can also provide advice and information on drug and alcohol related problems to both parents and young people.

We can also offer **supported childminding**. This service helps parents to manage through difficult times by providing their child with a childminding place and giving parents a break.

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.

ii) Child protection

Because Family Services and Social Work 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 from both our duty and assessment teams and from our long-term children in need teams.

For more information on child protection services in Camden, see the Camden Safeguarding Children Board leaflet 'Child protection in Camden: information for parents'.

iii) Services for looked after children

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 team** who makes sure they are being properly cared for and attending school while they are living away from home. Disabled children who are looked after will have an allocated social worker from the disabled children's team. 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 Family Services and Social Work 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 **16 plus team** is a specialist team that aims to help young people prepare for leaving care and live independently. The team supports young people in different ways to help them gain the confidence, skills and opportunities they need to live independently. The team deals with all care leavers including unaccompanied asylum seeking children from abroad. The team also has a drop-in centre for care leavers.

6 Contact us

Social Work Services

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 us at your local Family Services and Social Work office.

If you live in:

Hampstead, Gospel Oak, West Hampstead, Swiss Cottage, Highgate or Kilburn

Contact the duty and assessment team at:

Family Services and Social Work

42 Caversham Road

London NW5 2DS

Tel: 020 7974 6600

Kentish Town, Chalk Farm, Camden Town, Regents Park, Somers Town or Holborn

Contact the duty and assessment team at:

Family Services and Social Work

Crowndale Centre

218 Eversholt Street

London NW1 1BD

Tel: 020 7974 4094

The Family Service

If you want to find out about the Family Service, contact the service at the Crowndale Centre on 020 7974 6990 or fax 020 7974 6966.

Or you can contact the local officers directly:

Ampthill Square Tenant's Hall Barnby Street London NW1 2RS Tel: 020 7974 1982 Fax: 020 7974 7620	Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre (KCB) 51 Argyle Street London WC1H 8EF Tel: 020 7974 3298 Fax: 020 7974 8416
Ossulston Street Tenant's Hall 29A Chamberlain House Phoenix Road London NW1 1EU Tel: 020 7974 1960 Fax: 020 7974 0122	North West Site Winchester Project 21 Winchester Road London NW3 3NR Tel: 020 7974 2328 Fax: 020 7586 5938

If you want to talk to someone about private fostering:

Contact Yasmin Iyyaz at:
Crowndale Centre
218 Eversholt Street
London NW1 1BD
Freephone: 08000 281 436

If you want to talk to someone about drug or alcohol related problems:

Contact the FWD Drug and Alcohol Service at:
Vadnie Bish House
33 Caversham Road
London NW5 2DR
Tel: 020 7974 5323

Complaints and suggestions

At Camden Children, Schools and Families 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 Schools & Families Complaints Unit to receive advice about making a complaint using the Department's three stage complaints procedure.

You can contact us on:

Tel: 020 7974 6673

Freephone: 0800 393 561

Fax: 0207 974 1439

Email: children.complaints@camden.gov.uk

Or you can write to the complaints officer at:

Complaints Unit

FREEPOST RRAR-KKUL-RCEZ

London Borough of Camden

Children, Schools and Families

Crowndale Centre

218 Eversholt Street

London NW1 1BD

If you would like Family Services and Social Work services: information for parents and professionals in large print or braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact **020 7974 6649**.

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 6649**.

إذا أردت كتيب حماية الخدمات الاجتماعية: معلومات للأهالي والمحترفين بالطبعة الكبيرة أو بلغة بريدل أو على الشريط أو بلغة أخرى فالرجاء الاتصال مع رقم: **.020 7974 6649**

আপনি যদি সেফল্যাজি অ্যান্ড সোশাল কেয়ার পরিষেবা প্রচলিতদের : বাবা-মা এবং পেশাদার ব্যক্তিদের জন্য তথ্য বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে অথবা ব্রেইলে, অডিও টেপ অথবা অন্য ভাষায় চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **020 7974 6649** নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Pour obtenir la brochure Family Services 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 6649**.

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 6649**.

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 6649**.

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London Borough of Camden, Crowndale Centre
218 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD
Tel: 020 7974 1867

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