

**Redbridge Safeguarding
Children Partnership (RSCP)**

Are you worried about a child?

**How to access early help, and
thresholds for referral to children's
social care**

September 2018

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Introduction

This document sets out the “thresholds for referral” which [Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership \(RSCP\)](#) has agreed for use by all agencies and professionals who are worried or concerned about a child’s safety or welfare. It reflects the importance of the need for agencies to work together to safeguard children in line with the [HM Government Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, July 2018](#).

It describes the ‘levels of need’ which will be applied to determine whether the child and family can be appropriately and safely helped by early intervention and family support services, or whether the level of need and risk is such that statutory social care involvement is required. It describes how to access services for children with different levels of need, and what kind of response can be expected. A child whose level of need is identified as Level 2, 3 or 4 should also be able to access the services and support as described in the lower levels, as appropriate.

It must be emphasised that these threshold criteria can only be indicative. They give examples of what is meant by different levels of need, but are in no way intended to be exhaustive. They cannot describe every issue or combination of issues which may arise. They do not replace professional judgement, either on the part of referrers or of those considering the appropriate response to a referral. They are intended to provide helpful guidance for those wishing to share a concern about a child or young person and to progress the provision of services to the child or young person and family, and to give some clarity about what response can be expected.

The RSCP has adopted, in common with all London boroughs, the Pan London Child Protection Procedures agreed by the London Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) - [London Child Protection \(CP\) Procedures and Guidance, 5th Edition, 2017](#).

This guidance includes further very helpful information on indicators of different levels of need and risk in these specific areas and a useful [‘quick referral flowchart’](#).

In this threshold document four different levels of need are identified (see **page 4**).

Levels of Need

Level 1: Children with no additional needs

Children with no additional needs are children whose health and developmental needs will be met by good parental care and the universal services available to all children (health services, education etc.). Information about other resources available to families can be through the [Redbridge Family Services Directory FIND](#).

Level 2: Children with additional needs

Children with additional needs are children who require additional support to ensure their health and developmental needs are met. They may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect, but often their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. Additional support may be provided by a single agency or by a number of different agencies working together, with a lead professional co-ordinating the work. Additional services from providers such as family support services, parenting programmes and children's centres may be required. This kind of support is described as 'early help' or 'early intervention', as it seeks to provide help and support to children, young people and their families in the early stages when concerns are identified, and to avoid those concerns escalating. However, the level of need or risk is not such that involvement by statutory children's social care services is required.

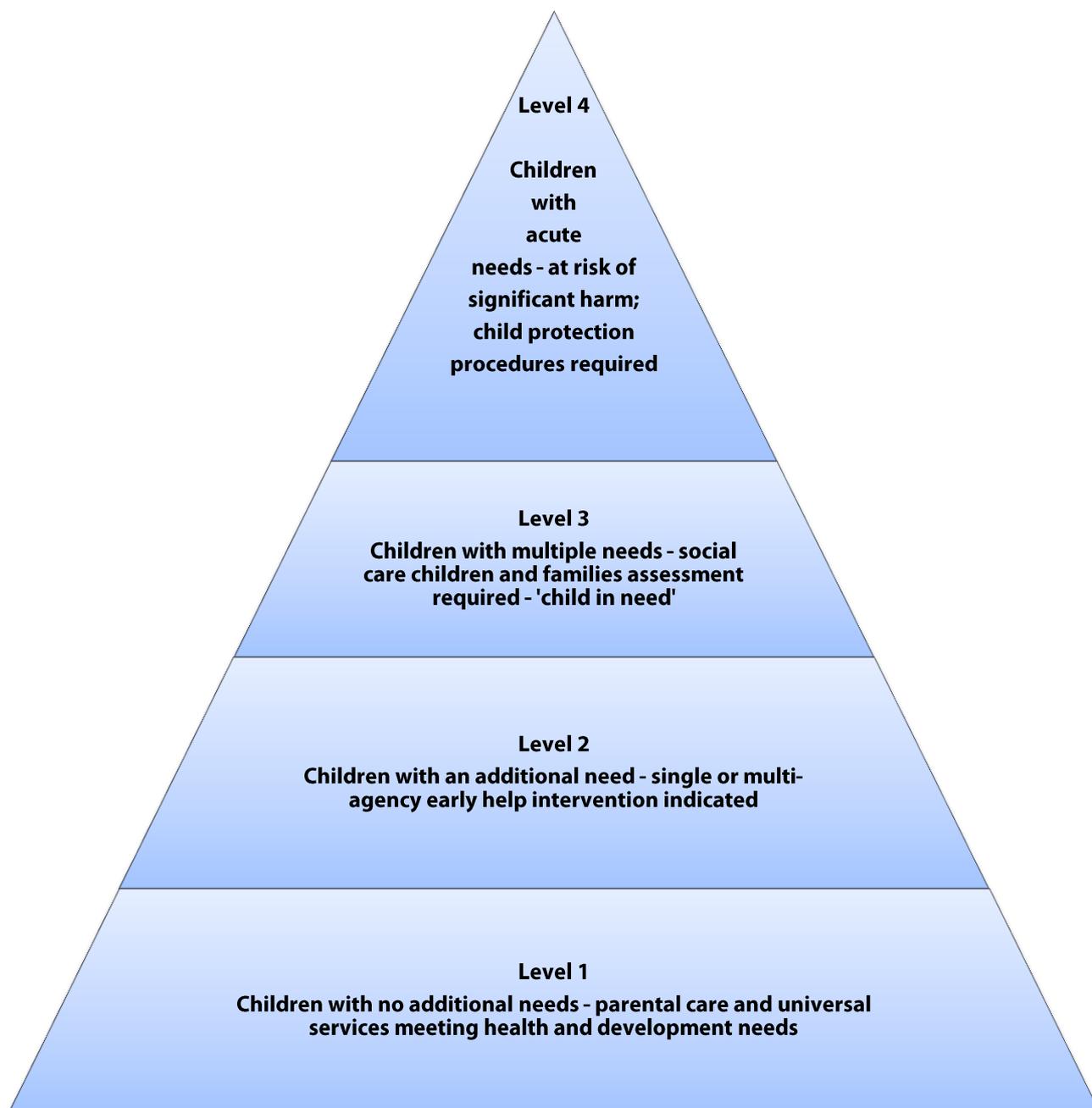
Level 3: Children with complex multiple needs

These children require specialist services to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. This is the threshold for a children and families' assessment led by a qualified social worker under [Section 17 of the Children Act 1989](#), although the assessments and services required may come from a range of provision outside of children's social care. If the conclusion of the assessment is that continued social care involvement is required to prevent impairment of the child's health or suffering, a 'child in need plan' setting out the contribution of all agencies to meeting the child's needs will be drawn up and implemented.

Level 4: Children with acute needs

These are children where there is reasonable cause to suspect they are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. For further discussion of the concept of 'significant harm', you should refer to [London CP Procedures, 1.1](#). Inquiries under [Section 47 of the Children Act 1989](#) will be undertaken, and if necessary emergency action to secure the child's safety will be taken. If the suspicion of significant harm is substantiated, a multi-agency child protection case conference will consider what further action is required to protect the child. This level also includes children in Level 4 health services which are very specialised services in residential, day patient or outpatient settings for children and adolescents with severe and /or complex health problems, and children remanded into custody.

Levels of Need Diagram



How to access services at Levels of Need 2, 3 and 4

Level 2 – children with additional needs

If it appears that the need for support can be met by your agency, discuss with child and family and put agreed support in place.

If it appears that the need for support can be met by another single agency, discuss with child/young person and/or parents or carers. Having obtained consent to do so, an enquiry is to be made to the CAF Administration Team via cafadmin@redbridge.gov.uk, once a reply has been received you can then complete a [Common Assessment Framework \(CAF\)](#), with the young person and family to be able to clearly identify the need, then discuss with and refer to that agency with the completed assessment. The CAF is an assessment that is completed with a child or family to decide what help is needed. Progress is then reviewed through a Single Agency Review (SAR) every 6 to 8 weeks and information passed onto the CAF Team based within the Families Together Hub (previously the Early Intervention and Family Support Service). The CAF Team can assist throughout the process and support the agency in organising their first SAR.

If at any point in the CAF process it appears that a child or young person meets the Level 3 or Level 4 threshold, the CAF will be referred to Children's Social Care.

If the concerns relate to suspected neglect, use of the [RSCP Neglect Toolkit](#) can support the identification and analysis of any neglect.

If a multi-agency package of support is required, please discuss your concerns with the child/young person and/or parents or carers and seek their consent to share information other agencies to meet their support needs. Once consent is obtained, an enquiry should be made to the CAF Administration Team as with a single agency assessment via cafadmin@redbridge.gov.uk. If there is no current social care involvement and the case is not open to Families Together Hub you will be notified to complete the [Common Assessment Framework \(CAF\)](#) as above. This process ensures there is no duplication of work and all agencies involved work together to provide a clearly defined package of support. Once the CAF is completed, it should be sent to the Redbridge CAF Coordinator via cafadmin@redbridge.gov.uk. They will then arrange a Team around the Child (TAC) Meeting where a professional will be identified to lead on organising support. CAFs can be completed on the Early Help Module (EHM) by those with access, or by downloading the [CAF Form](#). For guidance and support in considering or completing a CAF, contact the CAF Team on 020 8708 3150.

Another route for children and young people with additional needs is via a direct referral to the Early Intervention Panel which can be made by parents or carers, or other agencies so that the case can be discussed by a multi-agency panel and a support package arranged as appropriate. If the referral is sparse, the multi-agency panel may decide further information is required and the referring agency could be requested to complete a CAF to clearly identify the support needs of the child or family being referred before a package of support is agreed. Therefore if a CAF is attached to the referral this will provide a fuller picture for the panel to agree a more robust package for the family. The Early Intervention Panel Referral Form can be accessed on request from the Early.Intervention@redbridge.gov.uk.

The CAF Team is part of the Families Together Hub. The Hub provides a number of services:

- Family Support Workers (FSWs) who assist families in identifying solutions and pathways to resolve difficulties. This may include one to one support, which is targeted and designed to enable families to progress to positive outcomes, as well as to equip them with tools to manage future challenges. Families accessing this Early Help may be less likely to need services in Children's Social Care.
- The Families Together Triage team views all referrals accepted by the Families Together Hub to determine a pathway of support. Often, families just require guidance, advice and to be directed to appropriate agencies to access the services that are best placed to help them. Alongside the family support service previously mentioned, this team works in close partnership with external agencies which may take the lead with supporting families when they are best placed to do so. This type of service can be offered in various locations in the Borough and families will be encouraged to access this support without the need of a family support worker.
- Parenting Team, providing tailored parenting programmes to meet the needs of specific target groups.
- Missing Team, which carries out a 'return home' interview for children and young people who have gone missing from home or care, to help them understand their behaviour and the risks they may have incurred and to develop alternative strategies to deal with the issues they may face.
- The Family Intervention Team (FIT) was launched in April 2018. This consists of two-sub teams, one delivering services to children aged 0-10 and the other to children aged 11-18 with the over-arching aim of preventing children coming into care. The 11-18 Team will also support young people to reunite with their families. The services in the under-11 Team will include: family group conferencing, holistic family assessments, drug and alcohol testing for families with substance misuse problems and evidence based parenting programmes. The Team links into the Families Together Hub and specialisms within the 11-18 Team to ensure a seamless support in every area required.
- Parenting Assessments, carried out following a referral from a Legal Planning Meeting (LPM).

The [Children's Centres](#) in Redbridge are part of the Borough's Early Years' Service. They are focused on narrowing the gap for children of targeted disadvantaged and vulnerable families by ensuring access to appropriate universal, targeted or specialist services. They report against a set of outcomes described in an Outcomes Framework that was developed following the [Marmot Review – An Equal Start: Improving outcomes in Children's Centres](#). The services provided by Children's Centres are split into 'universal' and 'targeted' provision and offer a range of core standardised evidence based early help activities and support. They identify families with needs and manage single agency cases using a CAF standard assessment tool, after checking with the Families Together Hub to see whether the family already have an open case. Multi-agency cases are managed using CAF via the CAF Team.

Further information on Early Help in Redbridge is available on the Borough's Children's Services policies and procedures on-line portal – [TriX](#).

Level 3 – children with multiple needs

You should discuss your concerns with the child or young person's parents or carers and seek their consent to share information, **unless you have reasonable cause to believe that to**

do so would place the child at risk of significant harm. Guidance in relation to information sharing is available in the Government publication [Information sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, July 2018](#).

If you believe a child has needs at Level 3, which must be met if the child is to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development, you should refer to children's social care via a [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#) to Redbridge CPAT (Child Protection and Assessment Team) (available on **0208 708 3885**) to CPAT.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk **without delay**. If, following consideration of all the information available, including multi-agency information obtained via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the referral is judged to meet the Level 3 threshold a social worker will undertake a children and families' assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. You will receive a confirmation of receipt of your referral and then within 24 working hours, feedback on the outcome of your referral. If you do not receive this, it is the referrer's responsibility to follow up the referral to ensure it has been received and that appropriate action is being taken. If as a referrer you have concerns about the response to a referral, please refer to the [RSCP Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Policy](#).

You may also consider a referral to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) which is a forum wherein information about high risk domestic abuse victims is shared between agencies and a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan is drawn up to support the victim. To refer, you should send a completed [SafeLives DASH Risk Assessment Form](#) and [MARAC Referral Form](#) to the MARAC Coordinator, via marac@redbridge.gcsx.gov.uk (0208 708 5082).

Following referral, if a case needs to be taken to MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), this will be co-ordinated by CPAT and discussed with the MAPPA Chair.

Referrals relating to the risk of radicalisation should be made into CPAT via a [MARF](#). A discussion will then take place with the Prevent Co-ordinator to ascertain whether a referral needs to be made to Prevent or Channel.

If a situation includes suspected harmful sexual behaviour by a child or young person, such as in peer-on-peer abuse, the [Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool](#) can help with identification and decision making.

You may also consider a referral to the [Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service \(EWMHS\)](#) in Redbridge, provided by NELFT NHS Foundation Trust. The EWMHS, based at The Grove, Chadwell Heath, is Redbridge's area based specialist mental health team providing support to children, young people and their families, from birth to their 18th birthday. The service offers help to children and young people who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties including anxiety disorders, depression, obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and self-harm. Support is offered in a variety of settings such as specialist community clinics, home visits, school visits and support to hospital children's wards and Emergency Departments (EDs). This is offered in a variety of ways, but mainly takes the form of face to face talking therapies with CAMHS professionals or group work. During a child or young person's development, there may be periods when their or their family's ability to cope with difficult emotions or behaviour can put extreme pressures on relationships. The EWMHS wants to work with children and young people as early on as possible during these difficulties to turn the situation around. All referrals should be made to the Single Point of Access (SPA) using this referral form: [Redbridge Specialist Children's Service](#)

[Referral Form.doc](#). The EWMHS can be contacted via nem-tr.rbcypspa@nhs.net or by telephone on 0300 555 1182.

Level 4 – children with acute needs, at risk of significant harm

If the child is at immediate risk, contact the police by calling 999.

You should discuss your concerns with the child or young person's parents or carers and seek their consent to share information, **unless you have reasonable cause to believe that to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm**. If a child is at risk of significant harm information can be shared even if the parent refuses consent. Again, note the Government's July 2018 guidance, [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners and managers providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#).

You should make a referral **without delay** to children's social care via a [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#) to Redbridge CPAT (Child Protection and Assessment Team) (available on **0208 708 3885**) to CPAT.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk. Additional contact information can be found on page 14 and guidance on making a referral can be found in the [London Child Protection Procedures, 2. Referral and Assessment](#).

If, following consideration of all the information available, including multi-agency information obtained via the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#), the referral is judged to meet the Level 4 threshold, a multi-agency strategy meeting will be held to plan an inquiry under [Section 47 of the Children Act 1989](#). Emergency action will be taken if necessary to protect the child. You will receive feedback on the outcome of your referral.

Examples of Levels of Need 2, 3 and 4

Remember – this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. It can only give examples. It should also be borne in mind that if there is a combination of needs at Level Two, that may indicate that overall the need is at Level Three.

LEVEL TWO

Children with additional needs are children who require additional support to ensure that their health and developmental needs are met. This can include children and young people:

- Who have 'young carer' responsibilities.
- Who exhibit low level behavioural problems.
- Living in poor living conditions or with an identified housing need.
- Living in households under chronic financial pressures or without recourse to public funds.
- With intermittent or persistent school absences or lateness.
- With learning support needs.
- Having mild or moderate disability.
- With disabilities whose needs can be met with basic additional support (e.g. aids/adaptations).
- With disabilities whose needs can be met with sign posting to universal services (e.g. [Families Information Direct \(FiND\)](#) or [Redbridge Information and Advice Support Service \(RIASS\)](#), local offer services and short break information).
- At risk of or involved in low level crime/anti-social behaviour.
- Living in households where parenting is compromised by parental illness or disability, mental health, substance abuse or domestic violence, but there are not indications that this is significantly impairing the child's health or development.
- Who are experiencing intimidation or bullying behaviour or are at risk of isolation.
- Who exhibit self-harming behaviour.
- Who send or receive inappropriate sexual material produced by themselves or other young people via digital or social media, considered as peer-on-peer abuse.
- Who sometimes express extreme or intolerant views about those who do not share political or religious views, or who express support for extremist actions.
- Who are involved in low-level substance misuse.
- Who go missing occasionally from home or care.

LEVEL THREE

Children and young people with multiple complex needs may include children and young people:

- Living in households with serious or persistent physical violence, including threats to harm mother or child(ren), stalking and/or harassment, excessive jealousy or possessiveness of abuser. For further indicators, see Level 3 of [Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix](#).
- In respect of whom there is an allegation of physical assault but with no visible or only minor injury (other than to a pre-or non-mobile child), or allegations of serious verbal threats.
- Who experience a series of apparently accidental injuries or a minor non-accidental incident.
- In respect of whom minor concerns are repeatedly expressed from one or more sources.
- With severe and profound disabilities in a range of developmental areas or in one significant area.
- Who have a disability and whose parents or carers are not meeting their developmental needs in areas such as feeding, use of equipment, communication, or engagement with professionals, or respecting their right to dignified and safe care.
- Who are believed to be neglected or emotionally abused, and whose health and development are showing signs of impairment.
- In respect of whom there are suspicions of sexual abuse (e.g. sexualised behaviour, medical concerns or referral by concerned relative, neighbour, or carer).
- Who have no available parent or carer and are in need of accommodation.
- In respect of whom there are concerns that the child is being targeted and groomed for sexual exploitation, and 'warning signs' of exploitation have been identified but there is no evidence at this stage of any offence.
- Who demonstrate strong support for extremist ideologies, which may be encouraged by family or community networks.
- Who are at risk of affiliation with gangs.
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour e.g. accessing violent / exploitative pornography.
- Who undertake intimate personal care for a parent or carer.
- Who are privately fostered.
- Who are at immediate risk of homelessness.
- Who are heavily engaged in substance misuse.
- Who repeatedly go missing from home or care.

- Who are at risk from purported witchcraft or malign spirituality.
- Who are pregnant under the age of 16 with additional vulnerabilities.
- Where there is significant concern about parental ability to care for an unborn child.

LEVEL FOUR

Children and young people who are suffering or are likely to experience significant harm will include children and young people:

- Where there is any allegation of abuse or any suspicious injury in a pre-mobile or non-mobile child.
- Where there is any allegation of serious physical assault or suspicious injury,
- Where there are two or more minor injuries to pre-mobile or non-verbal babies or children,
- Who have a disability and whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired by parental or carer failure to meet their needs,
- Who live in a household experiencing Level 4 Domestic Violence on the [Barnardo's Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix](#), including threat to kill, attempted strangulation or rape.
- Whose health or development is likely to be seriously impaired by neglect or emotional abuse.
- Who makes an allegation of sexual abuse, or the abuser confesses to such abuse, or an allegation suggests connections between sexually abused children in different families or with more than one abuser.
- Who live in a household with an individual (adult or child) known to pose a risk to children.
- Who is the subject of a current Child Protection (CP) Plan or looked after by a local authority and the subject of suspicious injury or allegation of harm.
- Who has no available parent and the child is vulnerable to significant harm (e.g. an abandoned baby).
- Who is suspected to have suffered or to be at risk of significant harm due to fabricated or induced illness.
- Whose parent or carer has a severe mental illness or substance addiction the impact of which poses a serious risk that the child's health or development will be significantly impaired.
- Who has been sexually exploited, whether the abuse is opportunistic or habitual,
- Who has been trafficked.
- Who lives in a household into which a registered sex offender or convicted violent offender subject to MAPPAs moves.
- Who is sexually active and aged 13 or below (statutory rape).

- Sexually Harmful Behaviour, e.g. forcing other children to take part in sexual acts.
- Who discloses, or is believed to be at risk of, imminent female genital mutilation, or who is at risk of honour based violence or forced marriage.
- Who is at risk of involvement in violent extremist activities, including travelling to or being taken abroad to participate in such activities, or expresses beliefs that are directly threatening to others e.g. the child expresses strongly held beliefs that people should be killed because they have a different view.
- Who is affiliated with gangs.
- Who disclose harm from purported witchcraft or malign spirituality.

Useful Information and Contacts

London Child Protection Procedures, 5 th Edition, 2017 and Quick Referral Flowchart	http://www.londoncp.co.uk/index.html http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/referral_assess.html#quick	
Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722305/Working Together to Safeguard Children - Guide.pdf	
Redbridge Children and Families Policies and Procedures	http://redbridgechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html	
Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) RSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy	http://www.redbridgeSCP.org.uk/ http://www.redbridgeSCP.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Redbridge-RSCP-Escalation-and-Resolution-Policy-3rd-Edition-May-2017.pdf	
Redbridge Early Intervention and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Guidance	http://redbridgechildcare.proceduresonline.com/hub/early.html	
CAF Co-ordinator	Telephone	0208 708 3150
	E-mail	cafadmin@redbridge.gov.uk
Redbridge Child Protection and Assessment Service (CPAT)	Telephone	0208 708 3885 (09:00 – 17:00) 0208 708 5897 (Evenings and weekend)
(*Contact details for the public and professionals to refer if there are concerns about a child or young person)	Email	CPAT.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Coordinator	Telephone	0208 708 5082
(*for professionals only)	Email	marac@redbridge.gcsx.gov.uk
Families Together Hub (<i>previously the Early Intervention and Family Support Service (EI&FSS)</i>) Early Intervention (EI) Panel	Telephone	0208 708 2611
	Email	Early.Intervention@redbridge.gov.uk
Children's Centres		Contact information available via the Families Services Directory .

Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) - NELFT	Address	Redbridge EWMHS The Grove, Grove Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex, RM6 4XH E-mail: nem-tr.rbcypspa@nhs.net
	Telephone	0300 555 1182
	Website	https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-redbridge-camhs-service
Refuge – Redbridge Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service	Telephone	0800 169 7759
	Email	redbridgevawg@refuge.org.uk
Support to women, children and young people experiencing domestic violence via the provision of services, protection, and prevention work.	National Website	http://www.refuge.org.uk/