



# Empowering Families, building futures



## Advocacy for Parents in Redbridge

Family Help Practitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parental Advocacy - who it is for

This service is for parents who have a child or children who are supported by Redbridge Council Children's Services either under the Child Protection process and/or are involved with the Family Help: Pre & Post Birth Service.

Any parent entering the Child Protection Process or open to the Family Help: Pre & Post Birth Service can access advocacy support. You can ask for advocacy support at any point via your Family Help Practitioner.

Redbridge have a team of Independent Advocates, all of whom have an OCN qualification in Understanding Advocacy.

Alternatively, you can bring a friend or relative to support and help you put your views across during visits and meetings. Personal information about you, your child and other family members will be discussed at the meeting, so please think carefully about who you want to bring.

You can seek legal advice and bring a solicitor to the meeting, however, they cannot contribute to the discussion or decision making of the meeting.

## Why have an advocate?

Having an advocate support you during your involvement with Redbridge Council Children's Services could help strengthen your relationships with professionals, reduce feelings of powerlessness and improve the outcome for your family.

An advocate who is trained in advocacy with a focus on child protection will spend time getting to know you and your family and be able to support you to understand the processes and clarify complex terminology. They will be able to answer questions you have and assist you to share your views with professionals.



## An independent advocate can help you:

- Explain the Child Protection process.
- Help you understand your rights.
- Help you communicate with the professionals involved such as social workers.
- Support you to share your wishes, feelings and views with professionals.
- Help you understand information given to you about your child or children.
- Support you to find and understand information so you can use it to make choices.
- Help you prepare for meetings with professionals.
- Go to Child Protection Conferences and Core Group Meetings with you if you want.
- Support parents to understand and participate in Pre Proceedings. (including support in meetings in non legal capacity).
- Give you information about how to make a complaint about Social Care if you want to.

## An advocate cannot:

- Advise you on what you should do.
- Give legal advice.
- Go to other meetings with you.

## Advocacy for children

When a Child Protection Conference is planned, the law says that it is important for professionals to find out what your child(ren) feels about their situation.

If your child(ren) is aged 10 or over, they have a right to receive the support of their own Advocate to help them to share their views at the conference.

All child(ren) aged 12 or over will be invited to attend a portion of the conference if they wish.

Children and parents have told us how helpful this service is.

The Advocate will arrange to meet your child at school before the conference. If you would like your child to receive this support, let your Family Help Practitioner know as soon as possible and they will make arrangements to visit.

### If you want this support the advocate will:

- Help your child(ren) to understand what is happening.
- Listen to what your child(ren) have to say.
- Help your child(ren) to plan what they want to say and how they want to say it; maybe by writing, drawing or other creative ways.
- The advocate can attend the meeting for your child(ren) and share their views.
- The advocate will make sure that people listen to what your child(ren) have to say.



## Other places to get legal advice and support

### Citizens Advice

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

People rely on CAB because they are totally independent. They can give you advice on the child protection process, including who can attend a child protection conference, what should be in the child protection plan, how to get legal advice and what happens if you move to a different local authority area. They help millions of people every year.

### Coram

[www.coram.org.uk](http://www.coram.org.uk)

The Coram Group run a Child Law Advice Service for legal advice and information about child protection issues. They give initial legal advice via email, webchat and telephone. They publish resources, fact sheets and how to guides on their website. Some services require you to pay a fee, you should always start by asking if there is a fee for the service you want when you contact them.

### Family Rights Group

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

The Family Rights Group aims to ensure that families involved with the child welfare and family justice system are treated fairly, have their rights respected and are able to make informed decisions. They have a free legal and child welfare advice line.

### The Law Society

[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

You can look for a solicitor who specialises in child law by typing in 'how to find a solicitor' on their website. You can seek your own legal advice at any point during the child protection process. You are permitted to take a solicitor to a child protection conference but they cannot speak on your behalf just offer you advice.



## Complaints

Most concerns can be resolved informally by speaking directly with the member of staff who provides the service, or their team manager. You can share your concerns with them, and they will aim to resolve the issue by the end of the next working day.

If your concern is not resolved within that time, you can escalate the matter by making a formal complaint. To do so, please contact the complaints manager using the following details:

**Complaints Manager**  
**Lynton House**  
**4th Floor Front**  
**255-259 High Road**  
**Ilford**  
**IG1 1NN**  
**[icw.childrens@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:icw.childrens@redbridge.gov.uk)**