



Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership

Working Together in Redbridge

Supporting Families and Keeping Children Safe: Guidance for Professionals



April 2026



Foreword

Safeguarding children is not just a statutory duty – it is a shared moral responsibility that binds us together as professionals, families and communities. Every child deserves to grow up safe, supported and surrounded by people who care. This guide is more than just a document - it is a call for all to work together with purpose and compassion.

Our aim is to intervene at the earliest opportunity when risks and challenges are identified by professionals or by children and families, with targeted early help. Targeted early help is most effective when agencies seamlessly work together. No single agency or professional can meet all the needs of a child and family in isolation.

By sharing expertise, resources and information concerns can be identified early and coordinated support provided to prevent an escalation. Multiagency collaboration ensures that families receive holistic and timely interventions tailored to their unique circumstances. This approach will develop trust, reduce duplication and place the child at the centre of every decision.

This document sets out a clear and consistent approach to identify needs early and responding effectively. It reflects national reforms and best practice, but its success depends on multiagency collaboration, listening to families and keeping the voice of the child central to decision-making.



Partnership is powerful. By respecting each other's expertise and embracing family led solutions, we can build a system that is proactive rather than reactive. This is how we make difference not in isolation but as a network promoting the welfare of children.

Thank you for your dedication and being part of the collective effort, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in Redbridge.

Eileen Mills
Independent Scrutineer
Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership
(RSCP)



Contents

Foreword 3

Introduction 5

Principles 5

Redbridge Children Services & Families First 6

Levels of Need and Services 10

Consent and Information Sharing 22

Contact Information..... 25

London Threshold – Continuum of Need Matrix..... 26

Glossary of Key Terms..... 27

Introduction

This guidance offers a clear framework to help professionals identify when children and families may need extra support to achieve their potential or remain safe. The document assists practitioners in determining whether to work with families directly, coordinate with other agencies, or make a request for support or protection to Redbridge Children services.

It highlights key indicators of need and risk, reflecting current best practice and recent changes, including updates from statutory guidance [UK Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) and the [Department for Education \(DfE\) Families First Programme](#). The guidance prioritises early intervention, consistent multi-agency responses, and clear professional judgement, ensuring all children in Redbridge have the opportunity to thrive within supportive family and community networks.

Families First strives to empower families and their networks, so children grow up and grow old with a strong loving network of people around them. Extended family, friends and community are key to supporting children’s sense of identity and belonging and professionals are enablers to achieve this vision.

Principles

Support should be offered as early as possible to families by those working with them. Early help can prevent problems from becoming more serious. It is important for professionals to work together with other agencies to provide the best possible support. This guidance is intended to support professional judgement, not to replace it. All professionals should follow the [London Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) and the [London Threshold Document: Continuum of Help and Support](#) to ensure a consistent approach across London.



Redbridge Children Services & Families First

Redbridge was selected as one of seven local authorities in the country to deliver the Families First for Children (FFC) Pathfinder Programme (2nd wave). The Pathfinder's programme is part of the government's response to the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care \(2022\)](#) which called for modernisation reforms across the whole of the children's social care system.

[The Families First Partnership \(FFP\) Programme Guide](#) and [UK Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) sets out the rollout of the national reforms which will be underpinned by the [Childrens and Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#).

The guidance and legislation require children services to incorporate four key pillars into delivery of services:

1. There is a Single Front Door, which acts as the main contact point for all requests for support and protection.
2. Family Help Services combine early intervention and statutory support.
3. The Multi-Agency Child Protection Team is responsible for managing child protection cases.
4. Family Group Decision Making empowers families to find their own solutions.

The Family Help model is designed to provide a seamless service for families, ensuring that support is offered promptly and proportionately.

Family Help Front Door

Family Help Front Door is a single point of contact for all requests for support, protection and information sharing. The redesigned Family Help Front Door provides robust screening, to contacts ensuring; only those where there is a duty progress, families can access support at point of contact, addressing immediate need to avoid crisis and preventing problems escalating.

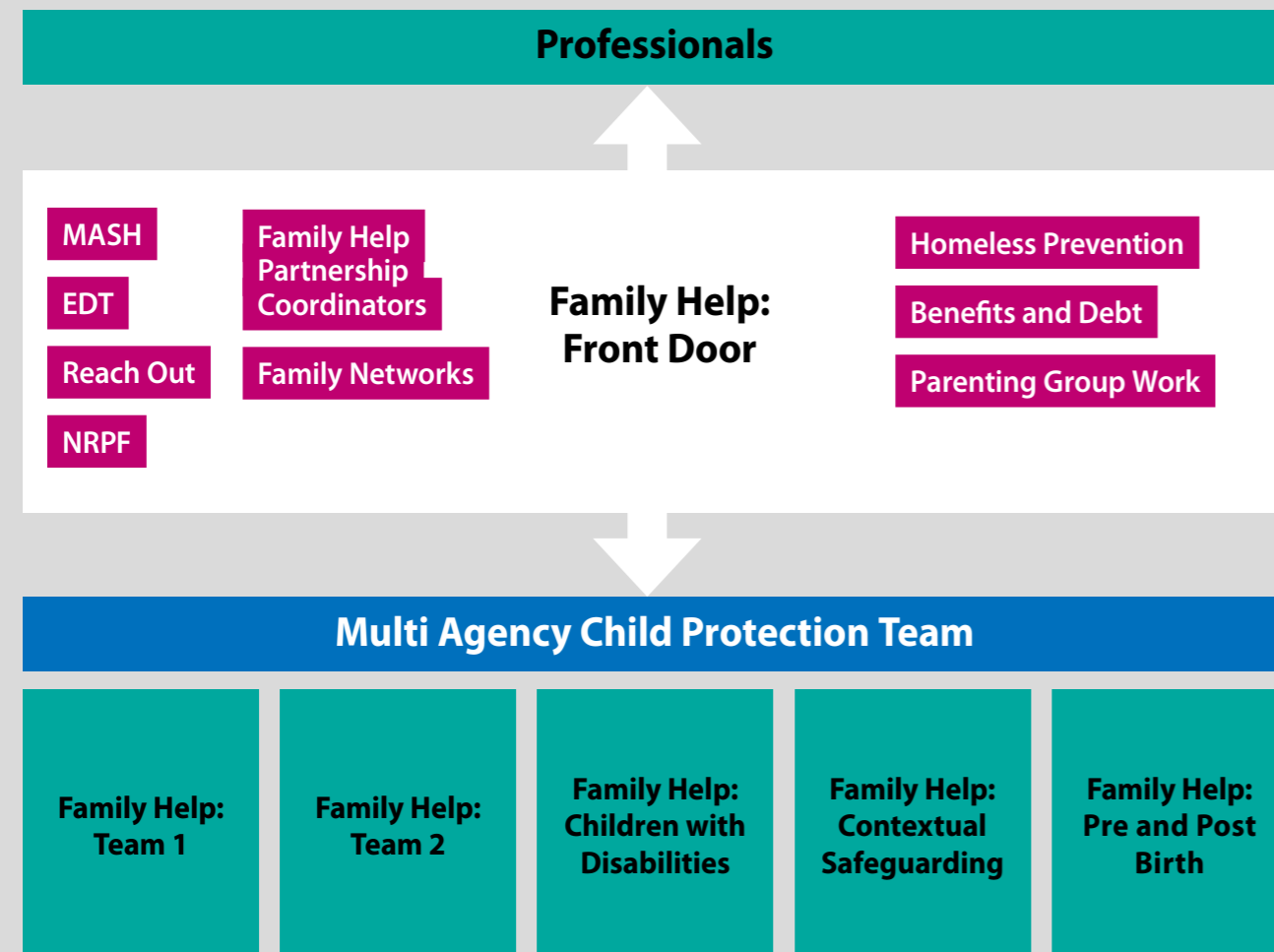
Family Help Front Door includes the Childrens Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), 4 Borough Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and Family Help Resource Service.

All requests for help, support and protection should be made to the Family Help Front Door, which has been enhanced with specialist practitioners and services, to ensure families receive the correct advice and practical support at point of contact to prevent issues escalating. The Family Help Front Door has representatives from Police, Health, Education, Housing, collocated and long arm support from Probation and Youth Justice.

The team review all requests for support and protection, verifies information, shares multi-agency information to consider the holistic needs and risk of the child / family before applying the London Threshold criteria for access to services.

Depending on the level of need the team will then signpost families to universal services where appropriate. Where there is an immediate response on certain issues, where there are multiple / complex needs, the Family Help Front Door will begin the Family Help process by:

- identifying children and families who need targeted support and those children and families where the threshold for statutory support is met, in line with the [London Threshold criteria](#).
- allocating those cases to the appropriate Family Help team, depending on the referring issue:
 - Family Help: Children with Disabilities
 - Family Help: Contextual Safeguarding
 - Family Help: Pre & Post Birth
 - Family Help: Team 1
 - Family Help: Team 2



Accessing Support

Professionals and families can contact the Family Help Front Door by calling **020 8708 3885** (Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 17:00) for advice, support, or to make a safeguarding referral.

Requests for support can also be made using the online [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#).

Outside of office hours (evenings, weekends and public holidays), the Emergency Duty Team are available via **020 8708 5897**, for concerns that cannot wait until the next working day.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, please contact the Police via **999**.

Further guidance specifically for schools and colleges on when to contact the police is provided by the National Police Chief's Council ([NPCC](#)).

Family Resource Service

In the majority of cases, through engaging families and the professional universal network around the family, need can be met where there is a single issue by the Family Resource Service.

The Family Resource Service is aligned with the Family Help Front Door, enabling MASH social workers and family support workers to make direct referrals of cases, resulting in families accessing immediate advice on debt, benefits, housing issues or parenting programmes where this is the sole key presenting issue, including families who have no recourse to public funds.

The Family Help Partnership Co-ordinators (previously known as CAF Co-ordinators) support professionals from universal services, and manage Team Around the Family Plans (TAF). These co-ordinators are able to join-up specialist advice and support to universal professionals supporting families with a TAF.

Placing the Family Resource Service at the point of contact means families can access immediate support and advice, increasing the opportunity for family-led solutions and preventing cases being allocated to and requiring assessment by Family Help Teams

Family Help

Family Help Teams have been built to enhance the previous targeted early help offer, extending its remit to cases managed as Child in Need (CiN) and Child Protection. By integrating targeted early help and statutory social work, the aim is that Children's Services will be more responsive and flexible in supporting families without the bureaucracy and delays associated with 'step-up/down' and removing repeat referrals and repeat assessments.

The Family Help Teams have a duty system in place, in order to receive and allocate new cases from the Front Door where children's needs range from targeted early help to child protection. A manager will assign a case to a Family Help case holder (Social Worker or Family Support Worker), best placed to meet the needs of the family. The case holder will be the responsible officer from Family Help managing the case.

- The Family Help case holder will bring together the universal professionals already working with the family
- A Family Help assessment will be initiated
- The case holder will remain the same throughout the duration of the case being allocated
- The Family Help case holder, is responsible for driving the family plan

Multi Agency Child Protection Team

The Multi Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) are a central, independent team, overseeing all cases where there are child protection concerns both intra and extra-familial harm.

The role of the MACPT is to consult on, initiate and undertake child protection investigations in order to make an assessment as to whether a child has suffered significant harm. Where the threshold of significant harm is met, the team manages the child protection function, the child protection conference process and supports legal proceedings. The team forensically analyses the multi-agency information, including that provided by Family Help to support the assessment and decision making. Children's Services are represented in the MACPT by the Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs).

The LCPP contributes to decisions on threshold to trigger a strategy discussion, initiate a Child Protection Section 47 investigation, progresses a case to Child Protection Conference. At the point the MACPT agrees the threshold for significant harm has reduced, the LCPP steps away from the team around the family. The Family Help Lead Practitioner can continue to access consultation, advice and support from the MACPT at any stage.

If a case has been allocated to the LCPP previously, the aim will be for them to provide any future consultation or support on that case – providing scrutiny and oversight.

More information for sharing with families about the MACPT and other services within Children's Social Care can be found on the [RSCP website](#).

If you have a concern a child is at risk of significant harm, you must contact Family Help Front Door on **020 8708 3885, prior to submitting a referral for safeguarding and protection via the [on-line portal](#).**



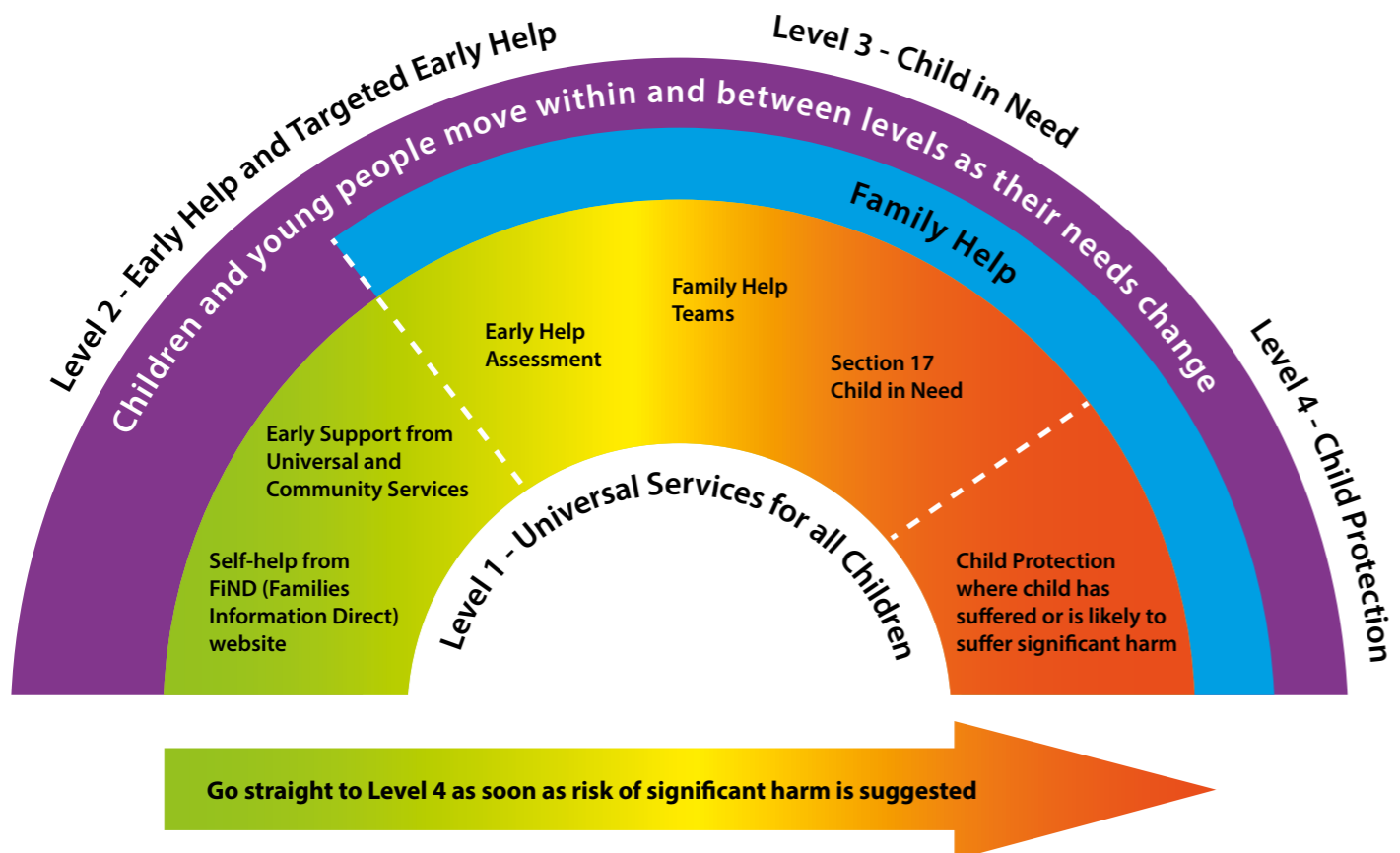
Levels of Need and Services

Universal services can be accessed directly by families through [FiND \(Families Information Direct\)](#) or service websites. For Early Help support, professionals should contact the Family Help Front Door to discuss a TAF approach.

Where a child's needs cannot be met by universal services alone under early help, professionals should complete an [online request for support](#).

For all Level 4 cases, telephone calls to the Family Help Front Door on **020 8708 3885** must be made first, with a written request for protection made subsequently via the [on-line referral form](#).

Redbridge Continuum of Need



Level 1: Universal - Children with no additional needs

Children and young people have needs that are met within universal provision.

Most children reach their full potential through the care of their families and communities. Universal services are provided to all children and their families through community networks such as schools, primary healthcare, leisure services, voluntary and universal groups. Services are the foundation support for families and seek together with parents, carers, and families to meet all the needs of children and young people so that they are happy, healthy, and able to learn and develop securely.

Self-help and information:

There are many resources where children, young people and families can get useful advice and guidance that assists them with finding solutions to situations without requiring referrals to other services. Services may offer advice and guidance to families where there is not the requirement for ongoing support or intervention.

Information about these and other resources available to families can be through the [Redbridge Family Services Directory FIND](#). For health services families can also contact the NELFT 0-19 Universal Services via their website [Redbridge 0-19 Children's Services | NELFT NHS Foundation Trust](#) or 0-19 Central Duty Desk **Tel: 0300 300 1579** Option 1, or email **Redbridge0-19 universaldutydesk@nelft.nhs.uk**.

In relation to child mental health, at a universal level in settings linked to the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), there is an offer of consultation, advice and guidance to education settings in order to support the well-being of the pupil population. Examples of work at this level include staff consultation, training and supervision, parent workshops and webinars, whole class groups and policy development. The MHST offers universal projects available to all schools in Redbridge for example, peer support training and the Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) whole school project. At a borough wide level, the MHST facilitates change through project work such as overcoming Emotionally Based School Avoidance and the Break the Stigma Campaign.



Early Help and Targeted Early Help

Family Help is for children, young people and families whose needs are multiple and/or complex: including those currently eligible for targeted early help or receiving support and services as a child in need, and those subject to child protection enquiries and plans. By multiple and/or complex, we mean that a family's needs are above the level of universal and community based early help, and they are unable to access and navigate support themselves.

Early Help

Early help is the support provided to children, young people and their families as soon as concerns begin to emerge, or when there is a strong likelihood that problems may develop in the future. Its purpose is to prevent issues from escalating, reduce the need for statutory intervention and improve outcomes for children.

Early help is not a single service but a way of working, delivered primarily through universal and community services, in partnership with families. It is strengths-based, child-centred and focused on building resilience, addressing needs early and supporting families to make sustainable changes.



Targeted Early Help

Targeted early help in Redbridge is delivered through Family Help. Family Help provides a coordinated, multi-agency response for children and families with additional or emerging needs that cannot be met by universal services alone.

Family Help brings together what was previously targeted early help and statutory child in need support into a single, integrated model. It is preventative and relationship-based, offering proportionate support tailored to the child and family's circumstances, while remaining focused on reducing risk and preventing escalation to child protection intervention.

Family Help is led by a named practitioner and delivered through a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach, with a single assessment and plan. It provides continuity for families and clear pathways for stepping support up or down as needs change, ensuring children receive the right help, at the right time, from the right professionals.

Level 2: Early Help and Targeted Early Help

Early Help is everyone's responsibility. The first person to offer early support to a child, young person and their family should be the professional identifying the issue. Every person working with or engaging with children and families, regardless of organisation, status, or position, has a responsibility to support the delivery of early support.

Many children and young people require some additional support. Parents and carers usually access these services for their children by applying directly to them or by asking the relevant universal service to help them. Some services can be accessed directly by young people. Children with additional needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as children and family centres, early years and schools to organise additional support with local partners as needed. This is often delivered through co-ordinating the TAF, particularly where more than one professional is working with the family. Professionals can contact the Family Help Partnership Co-ordinators, if they want support to co-ordinate a TAF.

Where a child's early support needs requires co-ordination of more than one agency and there are multiple early support needs and the TAF is unable to meet the need, a request for support should be made to the Family Help Front Door for allocation to Family Help.

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

If a child, young person, or their family may benefit from a **multi agency package of support**, this should first be discussed with the child/young person and their parent(s) or carer(s). Once consent has been obtained to share information with other relevant agencies, an externally led **Family Help Assessment (FHA)** enquiry should be made by contacting the **Family Help Front Door on 020 8708 3885**.

If there is no current Children's Services involvement, you will be directed to complete an FHA. Support will be provided by a **Family Help Partnership Co-ordinator**, now based within the Family Help Resource Service. The FHA replaces the former **Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Early Help Assessment**. This enquiry process prevents duplication and ensures that all agencies work collaboratively to provide a coordinated package of support known as the **Team Around the Family (TAF)**.

Once the FHA is completed, a Family Help Partnership Co-ordinator will support you in leading and reviewing TAF meetings to ensure that the support plan progresses effectively. For guidance in considering or completing an FHA, please contact the **Family Help Partnership Co-ordinator**. You can obtain their name and contact details by calling the **Family Help Front Door on 020 8708 3885**.

If, at any point during the FHA process, it appears that a child or young person may meet the **Level 3 or Level 4 threshold**, you must complete an online **Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF)** via the professionals' portal on the Local Authority website, selecting the **"Request for Safeguarding & Protection"** option.

If your concerns relate to suspected neglect, the **RSCP Multi Agency Neglect Toolkit** should be used to support assessment and analysis.

Families can also access **single need support** from the **Family Resource Service** by completing a **Request for Service** via the Multi Agency Referral Form on the Local Authority website portal.

In relation to child mental health, the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is an early intervention mental health service that supports schools and colleges. The MHST provides Cognitive Behaviour Therapy based guided self-help for anxiety and depression in adolescence and anxiety and behavioural concerns at primary school age. The MHST also provides early intervention support (within a year of onset) for needs such as OCD, Self-Harm and Tics and Tourettes. In addition, we offer early intervention support for topics such as body image, transition to secondary school and developing emotional literacy and regulation skills.

The MHST works with parents of primary school children and directly with adolescents. Support is offered individually or in groups.

At times the MHST works alongside partner services to support young people who require extensive support. This may involve working with an education setting to support access to appropriate services or supporting school-based adaptations for a young person who is accessing direct intervention elsewhere.

Case Example:

A secondary school teacher notices a pupil has recently become withdrawn and frequently presents as tired and irritable. The young person explains that they are feeling down and struggle to get to sleep at night because of worries. They don't know why but they want to go back to how they used to feel. The teacher raises the young person to the senior mental health lead (SMHL) so discusses the young person anonymously with the MHST to consider suitability. Both MHST and School agree MHST intervention may be helpful. The SMHL Lead then contacts family to discuss support and seek consent for involvement. The MHST provides 8 sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in school to help the young person to understand their mood, engage with the things they enjoy and restore their sleep.

The Family Resource Service also provides the following services:

- **No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)** – provide support and signposting to families with NRPF.
- **Specialist Housing Officers** – provide support to those impacted by housing related issues to prevent homelessness.
- **Benefit and Debt Officers** – provide debt management support, income maximisation options, including eligibility for welfare benefits.
- **Parenting Programmes** – Parenting Practitioners provide a range of accredited evidenced based parenting programmes.
- **Family Group Decision Making Meeting** – a family-led meeting in which the family and/or friends network come together to make a plan for a child to address the identified concerns.
- **Freedom Programme** – for victim survivors of domestic abuse (DA), the Freedom Programme aim, is to help individuals make sense of what has happened to them.

Case Example

A teacher notices that a student is often tired and struggling with homework. The teacher speaks with the parents and learns they are experiencing financial difficulties. The teacher raises the concern with the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who in turn refers the family to the school's pastoral support and suggests they contact the Family Help Front Door for advice on benefits. If the child's needs become more complex, the teacher receives support from Family Help Partnership Co-ordinator to manage a Team Around the Family meeting to share information and coordinate support from other professionals.

Case Example

A child who attends an early years setting (nursery) lives within a family of a single mum and twin siblings aged six months. Attendance is sporadic as mum finds it very difficult to get to the nursery with all three children. There is little or no wider family support. The family live in a small, rented flat with no outside space. The pre-school child at the nursery is increasingly isolated and there are behavioural concerns. A referral is made to the Family Help Partnership Co-ordinator and the nursery manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead receive support to manage a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting and co-ordinate support from other professionals.

Redbridge Children's Centres

Redbridge Children's Centres are part of the Borough's Early Years' and Childcare Service. They are here for pregnant mothers, their partners and families with young children who live in the Redbridge. This includes families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRTPF) and who have refugee status. The Centres are places where families can go and meet up with other parents and carers to access information, advice and support during tough times; sessions and training courses on child development and parenting; volunteering opportunities and much more. They are here also to give ideas and tips on things families can do at home to help them to give their child the best start in life. Families can attend any of the Centres. All Centres offer support for new mums, and the same core activities and courses with lots of inside and outside universal play sessions for the little ones. Some Centres have additional activities too.

Children's Centres can help and support families with:

- infant feeding and breast feeding advice;
- signposting for financial support;
- bonding and attachment with their child;
- improving children and parents'/carers' well-being, and making new friends;
- their child's happy and healthy development;
- parenting such as potty training, routine and positive behaviour;
- accessing volunteering opportunities;
- and much more.

To attend a service in a [Children's Centre](#), the family must first register using the Registration Form. They only need to register once and let the service know of any changes, for example, to their contact details, or birth of a new baby.

Each day there is a range of activities and courses available from the Children's Centres, with the timetables available on the FiND website. Families are advised to book in advance online, alternatively they can drop-in to a Children's Centre and the friendly staff will help them to book.

Domestic Abuse

Redbridge has created a practice framework for domestic abuse which sets out the way children's social care will respond to domestic abuse cases. Redbridge has adopted the Safe & Together Model in its approach to domestic abuse. The model supports child protection professionals to:

- keep the child/ren safe and together with the victim/survivor
- partner with the victim/survivor as a default position
- intervene with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child It is essential that our work is domestic abuse-informed, and that we challenge 'victim-blaming' and 'failure to protect' attitudes.

The Safe & Together Model has been recognised as best practice by the [Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#) in 'Victims in their own right? Babies, children and young people's experience of domestic abuse', April 2025, a significant report on how babies, children and young people experience domestic abuse. It is critical when assessing risk that lead practitioners have a good understanding of the nuances of risk in this area and thoroughly document the harm to the child(ren). Whilst the

history of abuse is a clear indicator to predict future harm and risk, professional judgment is also critical

Domestic abuse can affect children whether it is from an intimate partner, an ex-partner, separated parents', child to parent abuse or an adult family member to parent /sibling abuse. An incident led approach can be an ineffective way of understanding domestic abuse. Coercive control is continual and not episodic. There may be no violence at all yet children living in these households will experience domestic abuse every day and like adult survivors will have their freedom and liberty restricted whereby perpetrators malevolently control their daily activities. It is also important to understand the links between domestic abuse and physically abuse of children. There is also a major overlap between fathers who perpetrate DV and those who sexually abuse their children.

(Data evidenced via - [Understanding coercive control and its impacts on children](#))



Support for domestic abuse can be accessed via the Reach Out Domestic Abuse Service; the one front door for domestic abuse services in Redbridge. [Reach Out domestic abuse service](#)

Children's social care uses the 'Domestic Abuse High Risk Indicators tool' (attached). The tool is based on the SPECSSS assessment. High risk indicators such as non-fatal strangulation, threats to kill, rape and morbid jealousy should all be regarded as Level 4 on the threshold guidance.

Domestic abuse should always be responded to at either level 2, 3 or 4 on the Redbridge threshold guidance. It is possible that Reach Out may be the lead practitioner on the case at Level 2 or that there may also be a children's social care family help practitioner involved. Reach Out will also have significant involvement at level 3 and 4 with both Family Help practitioners and MACPT social workers via case consultation and joint visits.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Most children's special educational needs will be met from Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) (soon to be known as 'Universal Offer') within schools. For those children where their needs are greater, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be necessary. This would include all services who need to contribute and support the child and family. Further information on Redbridge SEND, including the SEND Offer can be found on the [Families Information Direct \(FiND\) website](#).

Further information on safeguarding children with disabilities can be found in the [RSCP Multi-Agency Children with Disabilities Protocol](#).

Early Help Services:

Below is a list of early help services offered to children and families across the Borough.

Children:

- Endorphins – supporting young carers from the age of 8. More information available on [FiND](#) or call **07695 304 532**
- [Free Your Mind](#) – tailored therapy for child victims of Domestic Abuse.
- [Healthy Start](#) – two year funding.
- [NELFT & LB Redbridge Pre and Post-Birth Service](#) – Maternity Mates/cradle in cultures, family nurse practitioner, health visiting.
- [Pre School Home Visiting](#)
- [Redbridge Carers Support Service](#) – support young carers between the ages of 16 to 30. This includes individual support, groups, social activities and training. Tel: **020 8514 6251** or email: office@rcss.org.uk
- [Redbridge Connexions](#) – help with education, employment and training needs. Telephone, on-line and face-to-face appointments are available. Tel: **020 8708 2600** or email Connexions@redbridge.gov.uk
- [Redbridge Youth Hub](#) – information and support for Redbridge residents aged 16 to 24.
- [School Age](#) – see Families Information Direct (FiND)
- SEND Early Years Panel – SEND children who need help and support. Tel: **020 8708 4525** or email pslg@redbridge.gov.uk
- [Special Educational and Advisory Needs Service](#) – works with school when a child has additional needs to prevent escalation to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Email: seatss@redbridge.gov.uk
- [Youth Hub](#) – youth councils and fully funded activities, holiday programmes.
- [Youth Justice](#) – Prevention, 10-18, turn around grant.

Parents/Carers:

- [Community Action Redbridge \(including Social Prescribing\)](#): Community Connector, referrals to social care and voluntary sector/charities.
- [Citizens Advice Redbridge](#): free, confidential, independent and impartial advice and campaign on the issues affecting lives.
- [Engagement Hubs](#): information for parents and families, discuss concerns and issues with Ward Councillors and Metropolitan Police
- [Food Banks](#)
- [Homes 4 Ukraine](#): Migrant Help
- [Hostels and Resettlement Team](#)
- [Poverty – Intervention and Support Team](#)
- _ charity that supports vulnerable migrants to access justice and that provides vital support in moments of individual crisis.
- [Redbridge Educational Wellbeing Team \(REWT\)](#): build skills, knowledge and confidence of school staff, other professionals and members of the community regarding the development of children and young people's emotional well-being.
- [RIASS \(Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service\)](#): Free and impartial advice and support to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents or carers in Redbridge.
- [Special Educational Needs and/or disability' information for families](#)
- [Sycamore Trust](#): support families, educate the community and empower individuals of all ages to flourish and be valued members of society.
- [VIA Redbridge R3](#): support for drug and alcohol problems.
- [Work Redbridge](#) – help into work and training.

Level 3: Children in Need – 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 Child and Family Assessment led by a Family Help Practitioner 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.

You should discuss your concerns with the child or young person's parents or carers and seek their consent to share information, which is good practice, **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 DfE publication [Information Sharing – Advice for practitioner providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers, May 2024](#).

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 Family Help via an on-line [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#), or call **020 8708 3885 without delay**. If, following consideration of all the information available, including multi-agency information obtained via the MASH, the referral is judged to meet the Level 3 threshold, a Family Help Practitioner will undertake a children and families' assessment under Section 17 of

the Children Act 1989. You should receive an immediate automatic receipt of your submission to the on-line portal. Then within 24 working hours, you should receive feedback on the outcome of your referral. If you do not receive this, it is the referrer's responsibility to follow up 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 a [SafeLives DASH risk checklist: young people](#) and [MARAC Referral Form](#) to the MARAC Coordinator, via marac@redbridge.gov.uk. Support with the referral can be obtained via **020 8708 5082**.

Case example:

A social worker is contacted because a child has missed several medical appointments and is not attending school regularly. The child's parent has mental health difficulties, and the family is struggling to cope. The social worker completes an assessment and develops a Child in Need plan, involving health services, education, and family support to address the child's needs.

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

Guidance on safeguarding children and young people who may be at risk from of being radicalised can be provided by calling the Prevent Team via **020 8708 5971** or emailing to the Prevent mailbox (Prevent@redbridge.gov.uk). Referrals relating to the risk of radicalisation should be made using the [National Referral Form \(NRF\)](#). An assessment will then be undertaken to establish if the threshold is met for presentation to the [Channel Panel](#) for the provision of support.

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](#), available following attendance on a relevant [training course](#), can help with identification and decision making.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

You may wish to consider a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) which in Redbridge is provided by NELFT. CAMHS, is the 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 but not limited to anxiety disorders, depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The service also offers specialist assessments for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

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). CAMHS works in a variety of ways, which includes face to face,

telephone and video assessments, individual face to face talking therapies, family therapy and group work with CAMHS clinicians. 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.

CAMHS works with children and young people as early on as possible experiencing difficulties to turn the situation around. The resource page on the CAMHS website provides helpful information on a range of mental health topics.

Referrals should be made to the Single Point of Access (SPA) using the referral form, a Word version of which can be downloaded from the RSCP website. The service can also be contacted via SPAreferrals.Redbridge@nelft.nhs.uk or 0300 300 1618 (Option 2).

Case Example:

A school refers a 13-year-old young person who is presenting with a history of worsening mental health difficulties. They experience persistent low mood, heightened anxiety, and significant emotional dysregulation. Parents note there are emerging self-harm behaviours with growing concern around risk. There are also indications of potential underlying neurodevelopmental differences (e.g. difficulties with attention and impulsivity). Functioning is significantly impaired across multiple settings including a drop in school attendance, engagement with learning and peer relationships have deteriorated. At home, there are frequent emotional outbursts, and family relationships are under strain. School-based support has been implemented, alongside early help involvement, but without sustained improvement.

Level 4: Child Protection – 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 Safeguarding Children Core Procedures 1.1. Enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 will be undertaken by the MACPT, 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 physical and/or mental health problems, and children remanded into custody.

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. Please note the DfE guidance [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners and managers providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, May 2024](#).



In the first instance, call Family Help via **020 8708 3885** and follow this with a completed on-line referral via the portal. Additional contact information can be found on page 14 and guidance on making a referral can be found in the [London Safeguarding Children Procedures, 2. Referral and Assessment](#). Outside of office hours i.e. evenings, weekends and public holidays, in an emergency where a case cannot wait, contact should be made with the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) via **020 8708 5897**.

If, following consideration of all the information available, including multi-agency information obtained via the Family Help Front Door, which includes 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 and may be required to participate in future plans to improve outcomes for the child and family.

Case example:

A healthcare professional notices unexplained injuries on a child and suspects abuse. The professional contacts the Family Help Front Door immediately. The Multi-Agency Child Protection Team investigates the situation, holds a strategy meeting, and may take emergency action to protect the child, such as arranging for the child to stay with a safe relative or in foster care.

Private Fostering

Private fostering refers to a situation where a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if the child has a disability) lives with someone who is not a close relative for more than 28 days. It's important to note that cousins, great aunts or uncles, family friends, or host families for overseas students are not considered close relatives in this context. A private foster carer might be a friend of the family, a parent of the child's friend, or even someone the child's family does not know personally.

It is a legal requirement for private foster carers to notify their local authority. If someone plans to privately foster a child for more than 28 days, they must inform the local authority at least six weeks in advance, or immediately if the arrangement happens unexpectedly. Once notified, a member of our team will visit both the child and the carer to carry out the necessary checks, ensuring the child's safety and that an appropriate standard of care can be provided.

To tell us about a private fostering arrangement call **020 8708 3885** or complete a form on the online portal.



Consent and Information Sharing

Consent

Seeking informed consent from families is best practice when engaging with services or sharing information about them. Practitioners should aim to obtain consent at the earliest opportunity, ensuring families understand what information will be shared, with whom, and why. Building positive relationships with families can facilitate this process.

However, in line with Working Together, consent is not required where there is a lawful basis to share information for safeguarding purposes. This includes situations where seeking consent is not possible, cannot reasonably be expected, or where doing so would place a child at risk of significant harm. In such cases, practitioners must clearly document when consent is withheld, the steps taken to seek it, and the rationale for sharing information without consent.

Information Sharing

Effective and timely sharing of information is essential for identifying needs early, assessing risk, and providing the right support to keep children safe. Practitioners should be proactive in sharing information with relevant organisations and agencies, especially where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare. This includes sharing information about adults in contact with the child and patterns of behaviour that may indicate risk.

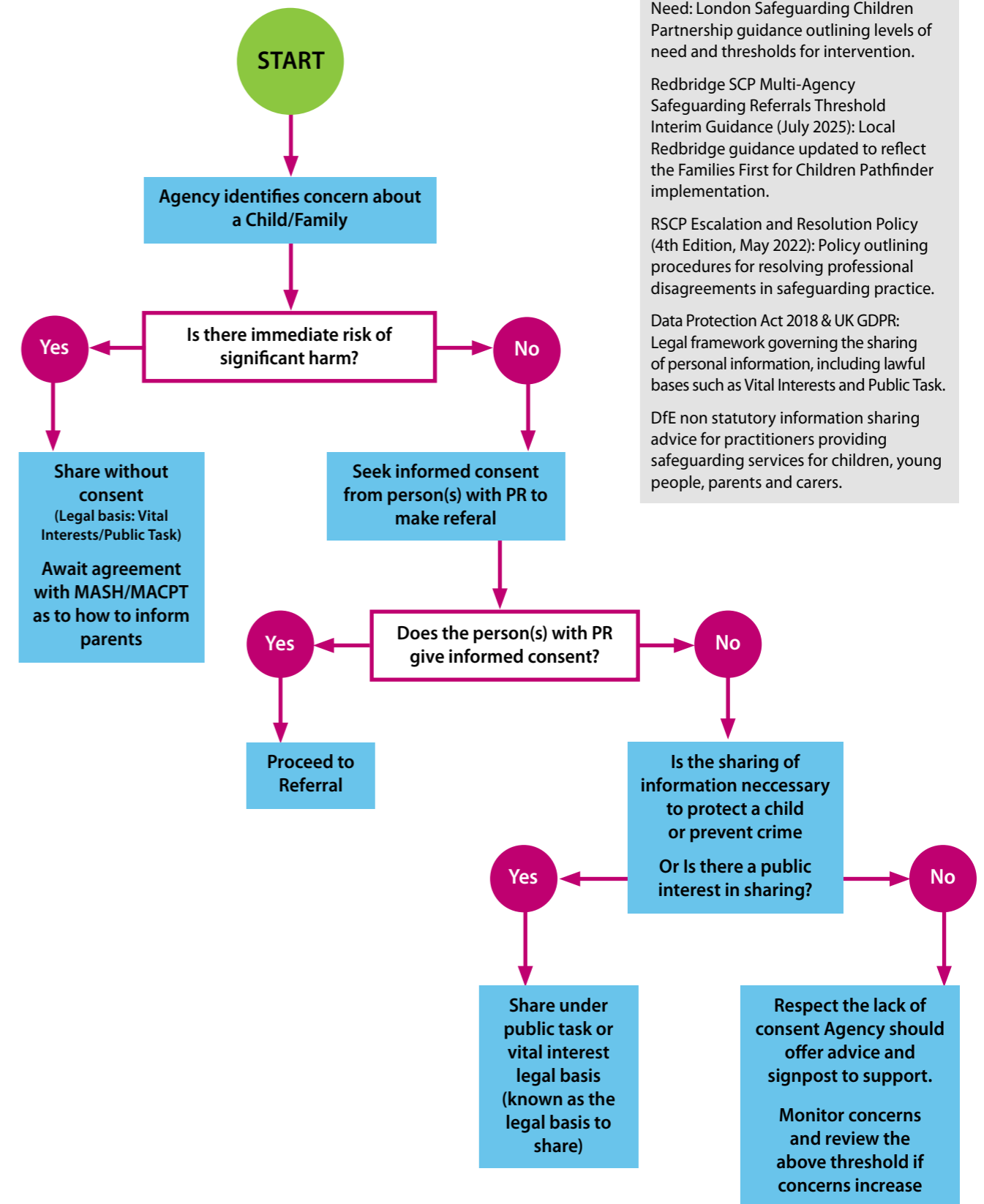
Concerns about data protection must not prevent practitioners from sharing information where necessary to safeguard a child. [The Data Protection Act 2018](#) and [UK GDPR](#) provide a framework that supports information sharing for safeguarding purposes. Practitioners must understand and be confident in applying the legal bases for sharing information, such as "public task" or "legal obligation."

- Practitioners should not assume someone else will pass on information that may be critical for keeping a child safe.
- Consent should be sought wherever possible, but lack of consent must not prevent information being shared if it is necessary to protect a child.
- Information can be shared without consent if obtaining consent is not possible, cannot reasonably be expected, or if seeking consent would place a child at greater risk.

In all cases, practitioners must record their decisions and the reasons for sharing or not sharing information. Professional judgment remains key, and all actions should be guided by the overarching goal of promoting the welfare and safeguarding of children, in accordance with Working Together.

Further guidance on information can be found in [DfE Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers, May 2024](#).

Consent to Referral Flow chart



References and Standards

London SCP Threshold Continuum of Need: London Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance outlining levels of need and thresholds for intervention.

Redbridge SCP Multi-Agency Safeguarding Referrals Threshold Interim Guidance (July 2025): Local Redbridge guidance updated to reflect the Families First for Children Pathfinder implementation.

RSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy (4th Edition, May 2022): Policy outlining procedures for resolving professional disagreements in safeguarding practice.

Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR: Legal framework governing the sharing of personal information, including lawful bases such as Vital Interests and Public Task.

DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers.

Escalation and Resolution

If professional disagreement arises about thresholds or responses, the first response should be to have a discussion with the management team for the Family Help Front Door. If the issue cannot be resolved, practitioners should follow the RSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy. This policy sets out a staged process for resolving disputes, starting with practitioner discussions and escalating to senior managers and the RSCP (Stage 43/4 of the procedure) if necessary.

Support with making a safeguarding referral or a request for a service

If you need guidance or support with making a referral or a request for service, please call **020 8708 3885** (Monday – Friday, 09:00 to 17:00). Example referral documents, from different sectors, can be viewed on the RSCP website. Additionally, there is a monthly multi-agency forum where thresholds and referrals are discussed which is open to professionals from all agencies working in Redbridge. Please contact RedbridgeSCP@redbridge.gov.uk for more information.

A number of example referrals both for safeguarding and protection and requests for services can be viewed on the [RSCP website](#).

Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers

For concerns about a child looked after (under 18), please contact the allocated Social Worker directly. Alternatively, if the contact information is not known, please call Children Looked After Duty on **020 8708 6095**.

For a Care Leaver (over 18), or concerns relating to a return Care Leaver, please call the Leaving Care Duty Line on **020 8708 6807** or email leavingcareduty@redbridge.gov.uk

Safeguarding Adults

Any safeguarding concerns relating to adults living in Redbridge should be reported via the Local Authority [on-line portal](#).



Contact Information

Children's Centres	Contact information available via the Families Services Directory .	
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) - NELFT	Email	Redbridge CAMHS E-mail: SPArefferrals.Redbridge@nelft.nhs.uk
	Telephone	0300 300 1618 (Option 2)
	Website	https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-redbridge-camhs-service
Educational Psychology Service	Website	www.redbridge.gov.uk
Family Help Front Door, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Telephone	020 8708 3885 (09:00 – 17:00) 020 8708 5897 (Emergencies during evenings, weekends and Public Holidays)
	Email	CPAT.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk
INTERACT provides help to young people during increased difficult/crisis points in addition to other Mental Health Services. This would usually occur after a young person's admission on to a general hospital ward or a visit to an Emergency Department.	Telephone	0300 555 1156 (Option 3). Call 999 if there is an immediate risk to life.
	Website	Interact NELFT NHS Foundation Trust .
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KSCIE)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2	
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) is involved in the management and oversight of allegations of abuse against people who work with children (see UK Government Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026).	Telephone	020 8708 5350
	E-mail	LADO@redbridge.gov.uk
London Safeguarding Children Policies and Practice Guidance, 7th Edition, 2022	https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/	

Contact Information

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Coordinator (for professionals only)	Telephone	020 8708 5082
	Email	marac@redbridge.gov.uk
Mental Health Support Team Offering universal and early intervention mental health support through schools.	Website	www.redbridge.gov.uk
NHS 111 (Option 2) - mental health crisis or urgent support line, where trained professionals can assess your situation and guide you to the right care (this could include crisis teams, advice, or local services). This is for situations where you need urgent mental health help but it's not an immediate life-threatening emergency.		
Prevent Team PREVENT relates to the legal obligation under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 for specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. (See Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, 2023)	Email	Prevent@redbridge.gov.uk
	Telephone	020 8708 5971
Reach Out is a support service for anyone aged 16 or over in Redbridge who is experiencing domestic abuse. Support is also available for children and young people affected by domestic abuse in the home. The service delivers a behaviour change intervention for perpetrators of abuse who are willing to address their behaviours. Reach Out is Redbridge's front door for domestic abuse and will refer cases on to specialist/by-and-for domestic abuse services where appropriate to do so.	Telephone	0800 145 6410 (Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 17:00)
	Email	reachout@redbridge.gov.uk
	Website	Redbridge – Reach Out Those seeking support out of hours can contact the 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247.
Redbridge Children and Families Policies and Procedures	http://redbridgechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html	
Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)	http://www.redbridgeSCP.org.uk/	
RSCP Escalation and Resolution Policy	https://www.redbridgescp.org.uk/professionals/what-should-you-do-when-there-is-a-professional-disagreement-about-a-child/	
Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2	

London Threshold – Continuum of Need Matrix

The Continuum of Need Matrix, which is part of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures, has been adopted in Redbridge. It can be accessed via this link:

[London Safeguarding Children Procedures](#)

Pages 2 – 10 of the document are It is divided into separate sections for each potential area of concern:

- health
- mental/emotional health
- education
- abuse and neglect
- sexual abuse/activity
- police attention
- harmful practices
- extremism and radicalisation
- drug and substance misuse
- disability
- young carer
- domestic abuse
- social development
- extra-familial harm

Each are of concern is divided up into criteria of different levels of need, with examples, from Level 1 – Level 4. Level 1 reflects Universal Services, required by most children; Level 2 and Level 3 needs are met by the Families First Family Help Teams and Level 4 is Child Protection.

The London Threshold - Continuum of Need Matrix should be used in conjunction with the London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance and the guidance in this document.

Please note that the London Safeguarding Children Procedures, including the Threshold – Continuum of Need Matrix, are revised every six months by the Editorial Team at the London Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP).

Glossary of Key Terms

Additional Needs Circumstances where a child or young person requires support beyond what is provided by universal services, such as extra help at school or support for emotional wellbeing.

Assessment A structured process carried out by professionals to understand a child's needs, risks, and strengths, and to plan appropriate support.

Case Conference A formal meeting where professionals from different agencies come together to discuss concerns about a child's safety and decide on actions to protect the child.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) An area-based specialist mental health team providing support to children, young people and their families, offering help to children and young people who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Child in Need (CiN) A child who requires extra support from specialist services to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or to prevent significant impairment.

Child Protection Actions taken to protect children who are at risk of significant harm, including investigations and emergency interventions.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) A widely used form of psychotherapy that focuses on identifying and changing thought patterns and behaviours that may be unhelpful

Consent Permission given by a parent, carer, or young person for professionals to share information or provide support. Consent should be informed and voluntary.

Contextual Safeguarding An approach to protecting young people from significant harm and abuse that occurs outside the family home. This includes Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

Early Help Support provided to children and families at the earliest opportunity to prevent issues from becoming more serious.

Family Help Front Door The main contact point for professionals and families to request support, protection, or information sharing in Redbridge.

Family Help Practitioner A professional responsible for assessing needs and coordinating support for children and families with complex or multiple needs.

Family Resource Service Teams that provide immediate advice and support for single issues, such as welfare, housing, or parenting, accessed via the family help front door.

INTERACT Provision for young people during increased difficulties or crisis points in addition to other Mental Health Services. This would usually occur after a young person's admission on to a general hospital ward or a visit to ED.

Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) A team of professionals from different agencies who work together to investigate and manage cases where children are at risk of significant harm.

NRTPF (No Resource to Public Funds) can apply to someone who has been granted permission to enter or stay in the UK but with a condition that they have no access to particular benefits.

Referral The process of requesting support or intervention from another service or agency for a child or family.

Safeguarding The process of protecting children from harm, abuse, or neglect and ensuring their wellbeing.

Self-Help Resources Information, advice, or tools that families can use independently to address issues without professional intervention.

Senior Mental Health Lead A member of school leadership who is responsible for implementing the whole school or college approach to wellbeing.

Significant Harm A situation where a child's health or development is seriously affected by abuse, neglect, or other circumstances.

Single Front Door A system that provides one clear route for accessing support, advice, or protection for children and families.

Team Around the Family (TAF) A coordinated approach where professionals from different agencies work together to support a child and their family.

Universal Services Services available to all children and families, such as schools, GPs, and community groups.





Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership

