

Camden Children and Families Contact Service

Information for parents and carers



Camden Safeguarding
Children Board

C A M D E N S C B

Introduction

Sometimes families might benefit from extra help from children's social work services or early help services.

All requests and referrals for children's services, whether for early help services or a social work service, now go to the Children and Families Contact Service. This way, we can make sure that children and families get the right sort of help from the start.

What is the Children and Families Contact Service?

The Children and Families Contact Service is a multi-agency team that incorporates the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team and the First Stop Early Help team. The Contact Service is responsible for making decisions on referrals and requests for services to ensure that children and families get the most suitable services and support depending on their level of need.

- If the child has low level needs or the family would benefit from extra help so that the child can achieve good outcomes, the case will be referred to the First Stop Early Help team to identify a suitable early help service.
- If the child needs a social work service to safeguard and promote their welfare because they are a child in need, the case will be referred to Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) for assessment.
- If there are concerns that the child is at risk of harm, the case will be referred to MASH for information sharing and decision-making.

What do Early Help Services do?

Early Help Services provide extra support to children and families where there are low levels of need that do not meet the threshold for a social work service. Camden's early help services include:

Integrated Early Years Services (Children Centre family support services)

Family Services (previously known as Families in Focus)

Youth Early Help

Transformation Team

External community based early help teams.

Referrals for early help are dealt with by the First Stop Early Help team which identifies the most suitable early help service for the family.

What does the MASH do?

The MASH deals with cases where there are concerns that a child is at risk of harm.

The team is made up of representatives from:

CSSW | Camden Police | Health services | Probation | Youth services | Substance misuse services | Domestic abuse services

The purpose of the MASH is to allow agencies to share information they have on a family quickly in order to get a better picture of any risk to the child or difficulties the family are facing. This then helps social workers to make decisions on how best to keep children safe.

On receiving a referral, each agency will check what information they hold on the child and family and share it with the MASH social worker who will decide on what action to take.

Following information sharing, the MASH manager will refer the child on for a suitable service; this may be an early help service or a child in need service or child protection service from CSSW.

Your information: your rights

The Contact Service will:

- only hold information that we need to help families
- only use the information for that reason
- make sure the information is held securely
- only keep the information for as long as it is needed
- only share information on families with other agencies with the consent of the family or where the child is at risk of harm
- keep the information safe at all times.

When cases are referred on to other agencies for services, the Contact Service will only pass on information that is relevant to help that agency provide a service.

If you have been referred to the Children and Families Contact Service...

- You should be informed of any referral to the Contact Service by the professional making the referral and should have been asked for your consent. A referral cannot be made without your permission unless there are concerns about your child's safety.
- Once the Contact Service has made a decision on the referral, the Contact Service manager will be in touch with you to let you know the outcome.
- If you are unhappy with the way the Contact Service has dealt with any referral about your family, you can raise this with the Contact Service manager and he or she will explain how decisions on the case were made.
- If you are still not happy, you can make a complaint using Camden's complaints system or you can contact the Information Commissioner if you are unhappy with the way Camden has used your information.

Camden CSF Complaints

Information and Records Management Team

5th floor

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Phone: **020 7974 6673**

Freephone: **0800 393561**

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Email: **children.complaints@camden.gov.uk**

Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

Phone: **01625 545745**

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Email: **mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk**

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