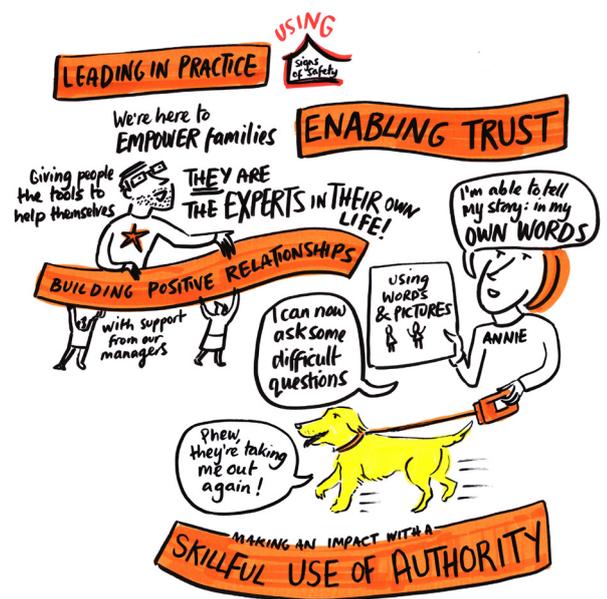




Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. (Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People)



Effective Support for Children, Young People and Families in Bexley

Shared guidance to help all practitioners working with children, young people, families and carers to provide additional and early help, intensive and specialist support.

February 2020

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Preface



Effective Support for Children, Young People and Families in Bexley

In June 2018, the Government published revised statutory guidance, '**Working Together to Safeguard Children**: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'.

It sets out the legal requirements that health professionals, social workers, police, education professionals and others working with children must follow. It emphasises that safeguarding is the responsibility of all professionals working with children and it provides advice in support of Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 where the primary duties for all agencies are set out.

This guide to effective support in Bexley explains the criteria for providing help to children, young people, families and carers. It should be considered as the local 'threshold document' required by Working Together 2018 and should be read in parallel to the guidance.

Working Together is defined as statutory guidance and therefore all professionals working with children, young people and families should make time to read the document. Local arrangements to implement the requirements should be prioritised by leaders and senior managers in every agency with responsibilities for children, young people, families and carers to enable them to safeguard children and to act in their best interests.



1. Introduction



This guidance is for everyone who works with children, young people, their families and carers in Bexley. It is about the way we all work together, share information and make sure that children and families are always our main focus and concern when we are providing effective support to them. This advice is to help us to help families to become stronger and more resilient so that they can identify what is difficult and find solutions before their difficulties become so complex that specialist statutory social work help is required.

The advice should be read alongside statutory guidance and the framework for supporting children in need as outlined in the [London child protection procedures](#), published and updated by the London safeguarding children board . These procedures are more detailed and provide practice guidance about expectations for safeguarding practice across London and between boroughs.

All children and young people will receive or be able to access **Universal services**, such as maternity services at birth; health visiting and children's centre support in their early years; school and youth services for older children. Universal services seek, together with parents and families, to meet all the needs of children and young people so that they are happy and healthy, able to learn and develop securely.

However, some children, either because of their own additional needs or because of difficult circumstances at home, will need extra help to be healthy and safe and to achieve their potential. In Bexley, we want to offer help and support to these children and to their families at an early point, and with the consent of their parents.

A significant amount of public money is invested in services for children and families in Bexley. This guidance offers a framework for us to work together so that we use our resources more effectively and bring about positive changes for children, young people, their families and carers. To do this we need to work collaboratively and honestly with the child and their family or carer to identify strengths and needs, to find practical and achievable solutions, and to provide the right amount of information, advice and support.

We agree to work with children and families to prevent their needs escalating to a higher level and we will actively seek not to refer to services at a higher level unless and until we have done everything possible to meet their needs at the current level.

In this guidance we explain four levels of need and help: **Universal, Additional, Intensive and Specialist**. Services for children with additional and intensive needs are sometimes known as targeted services, such as behaviour support or additional help with learning in school, extra support to parents in early years or targeted help to involve young people in youth services.

Children with **Additional** needs are best supported by those who already work with them, such as children's centres or schools, providing additional support with local partners as needed.

For children whose needs are **Intensive**, a co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach is usually best, involving a **Family Wellbeing Assessment (FWBA)** and a **family keyworker** to work closely with the child and family to ensure they receive all the support they require.

Specialist services are necessary when the needs of the child are so complex that statutory and/or specialist intervention is required to keep them safe, protect them from harm or to ensure their continued development. Examples of specialist services include children's social care, child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) tier 3 & 4 or the youth offending service.

By working together effectively with children with additional needs and by providing co-ordinated multi-disciplinary/agency support and services for those with intensive needs, we seek to prevent more children and young people requiring statutory interventions and specialist services.

'Effective support for children and families' should also be read by staff working in other service areas such as adult mental health, community health, adult social care, housing and leisure. This guidance sits alongside the Bexley corporate plan which prioritises strong and resilient communities and families.

2. Our vision for effective support in Bexley



In Bexley we believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe children should grow and achieve within their own families when it is in their best interests and is safe for them to do so. By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children and families' needs.

Schools and colleges are an important part of our safeguarding system in Bexley. They have responsibility to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating. All our schools and colleges have designated safeguarding leads who meet regularly to discuss local issues. Bexley primary and secondary heads associations meet regularly with senior social care and education leads to explore and resolve safeguarding issues.

Bexley Police are fully committed to safeguarding and protecting children consistently and effectively. The safety of children and young people is a borough policing priority and an area of constant focus and scrutiny. The police have significant contact with young people and strive to make them safer by diverting them from crime and protecting them from harm wherever possible. Locally there is innovative partnership working between the police and local strategic partners and a commitment to train and develop the workforce so that they are sufficiently focused on the needs and experiences of children and young people.

Local children and families also receive services from a number of health agencies. Their responsibilities include ensuring that those who are vulnerable are identified as early as possible. They do this in a number of ways:

- Universal pathway for 0-19 years which includes health visiting and school nursing to all families through the healthy child programme
- Specialist pathways for children and young people with additional medical and allied health service needs
- Maternity pathway delivered by hospital providers
- Acute pathway.

Wherever possible, health agencies will provide a targeted response in partnership with families who have an expressed or assessed need. This may include working with additional early help services. Health partners acknowledge that integrated early help services and good partnership working are essential to improving outcomes for children, young people, their families and carers.

The London Borough of Bexley and partners have developed the **family wellbeing service** to help families before their difficulties escalate. Family wellbeing keyworkers support children who are living with domestic abuse, the mental ill health of a parent or carer, parental drug or alcohol misuse or the threat of or actual exclusion from school. The family wellbeing service, whilst being accessible only with parental consent, is closely aligned to children's centres where help and support is available from universal services.

Children's social care has also established the **'staying together' team** helping families in crisis to strengthen and to focus on their children's safety and welfare. **Social workers are committed to supporting families in relationships that make change possible.** Where children cannot remain with their families or where children's social care services are working to enable them to return home, the **'back together' specialists** provide intensive help for parents and advocacy for children to support the changes that must happen before reunification is safe.

The **statutory social work service** is available for children who have been harmed or who are at risk of harm or significant harm.

In Bexley, practitioners in all services are committed to the following principles which inform the work with children, young people, their families and carers:

- Wherever possible children and families' needs will be met by universal services
- As soon as any professional is aware that a child has any additional needs he/she will talk to the child and their family and offer advice and support to meet that need
- Families will be encouraged to identify their own difficulties, strengths, needs and solutions. In most cases, outcomes for children will only be improved by supporting and assisting parents and carers to make changes. We use 'Signs of Safety' locally as our practice framework to help us in our work
- We will offer support and services to help families to find their own enduring solutions. Once improvements happen, services will reduce or end so that we do not create dependence on services



- Our aim is always to build resilience in children and their families. We want them to believe in and lead the changes to alleviate their difficulties for the remainder of their lives.



There are several elements that are essential to deliver effective help for children, young people, their families and carers:

An open, honest and respectful approach to supporting children, young people, their families and carers

Parents are usually the best people to understand their child's needs, however parenting can be challenging. Parents themselves deserve support when they request it. Asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility and a strength rather than a parenting failure.

In the majority of cases it should be the decision of the parents when to ask for help or advice, but there are occasions when practitioners may need to engage them actively to help them and to prevent their difficulties from becoming more serious.

All practitioners need to work honestly and openly with families, discuss any concerns with them and ensure that they are involved in decision making about next steps. Parental consent should be the accepted norm unless in gaining their consent to share information and to make enquiries would create risk or further risk of harm to a child. It is important that all practitioners acknowledge and respect the contribution of parents and other family members at all times, listening carefully to what they say and making sure they are clear about and understand what is happening. We must be sure that parents and children have copies of clear correspondence, assessments and plans.

Earlier, solution focused and evidence based help

It is important that any difficulties are identified early so that the child and their family receive appropriate support to strengthen their care and protection of their children.

We will work with families as soon as any difficulties become apparent to help them to identify the things they want to change and the support they need.

The most effective support is tailored to the family's needs and provided at the minimum level necessary to ensure the desirable outcomes are achieved, with as little disruption to family life as possible.

A multi-disciplinary approach to assessment, support and help. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of everyone in Bexley who works or has contact with children, young people, their families and carers.

A multi-disciplinary approach ensures that children and families' needs and experiences are understood by everyone. Partners and professionals who work with children and their families should consult one another, share information and work together to ensure that the child and their family get the most appropriate and effective support.

A confident workforce with a common core of knowledge, a shared framework for practice and a good understanding about children's needs and development

Appropriate, effective and timely support for children and families cannot be achieved without the professional judgement and expertise that all practitioners working with children bring to their role. We will support individuals and organisations in Bexley to develop confident practitioners who can work in an open, collaborative and non-judgemental way with families to enable them to make choices and changes.

3. Understanding need, support and help

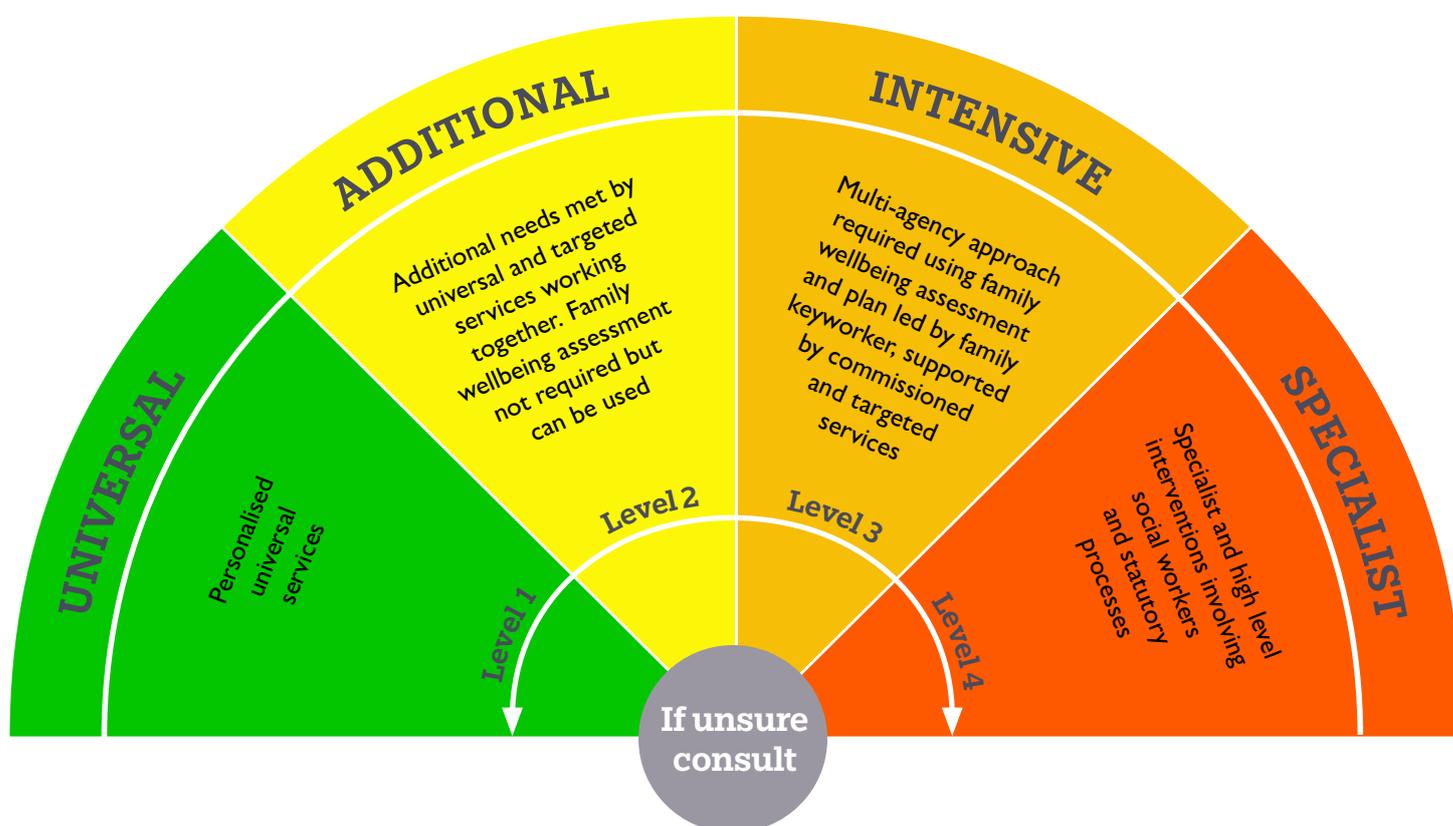


The levels of need in later sections of the document are a means of developing a shared understanding about working locally with families. They also explain the approach we take in Bexley across all our services and partnerships, to enable us to provide the most consistent and effective help. They should be read and understood by all practitioners and managers and should form part of the induction process for new staff in any local agency working with or associated with children, young people, families and carers. The levels of need illustrate how we will respond to the requirements of children and families across **Universal, Additional, Intensive and Specialist services**.

Multi Agency Guidance: Working in partnership to help

All partners working with children, young people, their families and carers will offer support as soon as we are aware of any additional needs. We will always seek to work together to provide support to children, young people, their families and carers at the lowest level possible in accordance with their needs.

As with all guidance and criteria relating to access for help and support for vulnerable people, the most important and complex task is the making of a professional judgement about next steps. This will always be informed by any known evidence, the views of children and their families and the impact that any risk and uncertainty is likely to have on their safety and wellbeing. The criteria in this document are neither exhaustive or weighted. They should be used to guide professional discussions and not to support fixed and inflexible positions. Their core purpose is to help practitioners and managers make a next steps decision about whether and how a family and its associated network are able to protect and promote the welfare of a child or children.





In Bexley, professionals are seeking to work collaboratively and respectfully with the family (or with young people on their own where it is age appropriate) in order to support them to address their needs at the lowest possible level and at the earliest possible time.

We agree to work with children and families to prevent their needs escalating to a higher level and we will actively seek not to refer to services at a higher level unless and until we have done everything possible to meet their needs at the current level.

Section 11 of this document sets out more detailed indicators of need as well as explaining how each tier of service might respond. This guidance seeks to give clear advice to all professionals and the public on the levels of need and thresholds for different services and responses in Bexley.

We recognise however that each child and family member is an individual, each family is unique in its make-up and reaching decisions about levels of need and the best intervention requires discussion, reflection and professional judgement.

‘Signs of Safety’ provides a framework for us to do this together, by considering seven domains in any assessment:

- What is the harm (past and present) that we are worried about in respect of a child?
- What are we worried is going to happen to the child in the future if nothing changes?
- What are the complicating factors in this family?
- What are their strengths and positive attributes?
- Is there any existing safety or protection?
- What needs to happen to keep the child safe now?
- What does the family want to happen?

In Bexley, we are committed to developing collaborative working relationships with families to help us to understand the circumstances of each family, to be professionally curious and rigorous in making judgements and to maintain a clear and relentless focus on safety and protection.

COMPASSION
AUTHORITY & CONVERSATION



4. Consulting with other services, schools and settings



Consultation is the act of sharing information to obtain the perspective of another practitioner. It is not a referral to another service unless, during the consultation, it is decided that a referral would be the best course of action. Consultation may take different forms from a telephone call to a series of meetings between two or more practitioners. Consultation is best undertaken by speaking to each other and not just by email. The principle here is that we want more conversations to help us to offer the right response. This should be instead of spending unhelpful energy on gatekeeping which often means families and children do not get the help or advice they need.

Whenever consultation takes place it is important that practitioners follow the principles of information sharing and confidentiality. If the consultation is internal (between practitioners in the same organisation) practitioners should ensure that they follow their own agency procedure for information sharing.

If the consultation is external (between practitioners from different organisations), the guidance **Government advice on information sharing**¹ should be used to decide whether information should be shared. In most cases, unless the child would be at significant risk, the child and their family should be aware that the consultation is taking place and where appropriate, be given the opportunity to be involved.

Principles of consultation

- Consultation should be open to all agencies who work with children, young people and their families
- Consultation should take place when there is a clear benefit to the child or young person and their family
- Consultation is an important part of helping agencies and practitioners to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people

- Consultation is a two way process and demonstrates an acknowledgement of different but equally valid knowledge and expertise
- You should be able to explain to the family why you feel it would be helpful to consult with other agencies. Families should whenever possible be aware of and involved in consultations and informed of the outcomes and decisions taken as a result
- Information should be shared in the spirit of openness, transparency and honesty between practitioners, the child and their family. However it is important that you have due regard for the principles of confidentiality
- All consultations should be recorded to ensure clarity and to enable you to evidence any decisions that have been made.

Children's social care consultation

If you have concerns about a child and want an opportunity to talk these through with children's social care before deciding the best course of action, please contact the MASH on **020 3045 5440** and ask for a consultation with a social worker in the MASH team.

Whatever the outcomes or decisions, the consultation must always be recorded by the MASH team. The names of the professionals having the consultation must be included. If, following a consultation, a professional wishes to make a formal referral, they should do this separately.

At any time when a family is being offered support and help from any agency, it is important that practitioners feel they can ask for help and advice and draw on the expertise of others. All practitioners, services, schools and settings who work with families should feel able to consult with one another at any time before deciding on a course of action or way forward.

¹ There is also London Safeguarding Guidance Hyperlink is now: https://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sharing_info.html

5. Levels of need and help

See Appendix 1 for directory of Bexley services



Levels and Referral Routes	Needs	Services (examples)	Outcome
Level 1 Universal Open access to provision	All children and families who live in the area have core needs such as parenting, health and education	Early years, education, primary health care, maternity services, housing, community health care, youth centres, children's centres and leisure services. Children are supported by their family and in universal services to meet all of their needs	Children and young people make good progress in most areas of development
Level 2 Additional Two or three services work together to meet child and family needs, co-ordinated by a service and/or people who know the child/family best It may be helpful for these professionals to work out a plan with a review timeline to make sure that the help on offer is making a difference. This would be a plan established and managed by the leading agency and not the local authority	Children and families with additional needs who would benefit from or who require extra help to improve education, parenting and/or behaviour, or to meet specific health or emotional needs or to improve their material situation	Parenting support School holiday and short breaks provision for disabled children Extra health support for family members; behavioural support Housing support Additional learning support CAMHS tier 2 support to schools (usually via the CHeWS service) SEN support and help to find education and employment Speech and language therapy Children's centres Targeted youth work Services provided on a voluntary basis to families (these may be offered by volunteers and/or commissioned through a voluntary organisation)	The life chances of children and families will be improved by offering additional support
Level 3 Intensive <u>Access requires a referral form</u> A family wellbeing assessment and plan with an allocated family key worker to lead the shared professional approach Support from the special educational needs and disability service	Vulnerable children and their families with multiple needs or whose needs are more complex, such as children and families who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a disability resulting in complex needs • exhibit anti-social or challenging behaviour, including the expression of radicalised thoughts or intentions. • suffer some neglect or poor family relationships • have poor engagement with key services such as school and health • are not in education or work long-term 	Due to the complexity of needs, especially around behaviour and parenting, a shared professional and co-ordinated plan is developed with the family. The assessment and plan is led by a family keyworker and the service is provided ONLY with the consent of the parents/carers A wide range of services might be involved in meeting the family's needs, eg CAMHS tier 3, adult mental health or drug/alcohol team Families needing substantial support to care for a disabled child, usually with the help of a social worker from the children with disability service	Life chances will be significantly impaired without co-ordinated multi-agency support
Level 4 Specialist <u>Access requires a referral form</u> Children's social care Child protection Care proceedings Children in need Youth treatment orders/ custody Tier 4 CAMHS Hospital or hospice in-patient	Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. This will include children at high risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and also those at high risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) Children with significant impairment of function/learning and/or life limiting illness Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them Families involved in crime/misuse of drugs at a significant level Families with significant mental or physical health needs	Children's social care, youth offending service Criminal justice system, tier 3 and 4 CAMHS In-patient and continuing health care Fostering and residential care Health care for children with life limiting illness Services for children with profound and enduring disability Referrals have to be made to services with the power to undertake statutory non-voluntary intervention and services with specialist skills	Children and /or family members are likely to suffer significant harm/ removal from home/ serious and lasting impairment without the intervention of specialist services, very often using their statutory powers

6. Children in special circumstances

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

All early years settings and schools have a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) or inclusion manager. It is their responsibility to coordinate support for children in their setting and to liaise with other professionals to ensure children's needs are met and set out in a plan if that is required.

All schools receive additional funding to enable them to set up a range of provision to meet children's special educational needs. Colleges and other higher education settings have the same responsibility towards any young people up to the age of 25 with a special educational need or disability and who attends their provision.

A statutory assessment of education, health and care is a coordinated multi-disciplinary assessment carried out for children and young people age 0-25 with severe and complex special educational needs. The assessment is conducted in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014. The co-ordinated assessment determines whether an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is needed. An EHC plan is a legal document setting out the education, health and care needs of the child, the outcomes expected, and the education, health and care provision required to achieve those outcomes. EHC plans replace statements of special educational need (SEN) and learning difficulty assessments. For more information about special educational needs and disability support in Bexley please visit www.bexleylocaloffer.uk

Referrals about children with a disability including those who also have a statement of SEN or an EHC plan follow the same path as any other set out in this guide. If any person has concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child, they should contact the MASH who will discuss those concerns with the person making the referral. If the concerns are about a child who is already known to and has an allocated social worker in the children with disability service, then the information will be immediately shared with that worker and the service manager. For children, who have a disability or special educational need and who do not have an allocated social worker, the referral will be managed in the usual way through the MASH and referral and assessment teams.

The London safeguarding children board guidance on children with disabilities can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/disabled_ch.html and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Young carers

Young carers are children who have daily care responsibilities for a family member with a disability (physical or mental), long-term illness or who misuse drugs and/or alcohol.

These children are particularly vulnerable often because the extent of their caring responsibilities is not known. In addition, some families are frightened of the consequences of professional intervention, fearing that children may be removed or families separated. Many children will not even tell a teacher or a friend.

Being a young carer can have a profound effect on the life of a child. Their health might be affected due to lack of sleep, the volume of household chores and intensity of physical care they have to provide. Young carers can also face challenges in respect of their education and social and emotional wellbeing. Their lives outside of school may be very different to their peers and they may feel lonely and isolated and in some cases suffer verbal taunts and abuse at school.

In Bexley, the local authority has a commissioned partner, Imago, who identify and support young carers.

If a referral is made to children's social care, the question as to whether a child is a young carer is always asked. When children are identified as young carers, they are automatically referred to Imago who will undertake an assessment of their needs in conjunction with a family wellbeing worker from the Council's early help service.

The London safeguarding children board guidance on young carers can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/young_carers.html and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Assessments will ascertain why a child is caring and what needs to change in order to prevent them from having excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities which could impact adversely on their wellbeing, education, or social and emotional development. This duty of care has

been adopted in addition to responsibilities placed on the local authority set out in the Children Act 1989 (and amended by the Children and Families Act 2014).

Any professional who comes into contact with a young carer should offer the young carer and their family the opportunity of having an assessment through Imago. If there are immediate concerns about the safety and/or wellbeing of a young carer, professionals should make a referral to the MASH who will give advice and progress the referral appropriately.

Children involved in the youth justice system and serious youth violence

Children involved in the youth justice system will be known to the youth offending team (YOT) who undertake a range of work to reduce the risk of these children reoffending.

The team undertake specialist assessments in relation to children referred from the courts, police or other agencies. As part of their work, they will enquire as to whether the child or family is known to children's social care. They will also consider whether the child has specific needs in respect of their safety, welfare and education. If during their work with a child it becomes known or suspected that they have suffered abuse or neglect or are at risk of harm or further harm, they will make a referral to children's social care through the MASH.

The assessment undertaken by the youth offending team also addresses the child's education, training and employment (ETE) status and any special educational needs. The YOT team will liaise with colleagues in schools, colleges and the SEN team where appropriate.

There is a **local memorandum of understanding** for education providers and the local authority to ensure that children and young people who are known to have been involved in sexually harmful behaviours are able to exercise their legal entitlement to education. Its wider purpose is to set out the expectations that the child protection and safeguarding procedures for all pupils are robust, effective and operated in accordance with the statutory guidance updated by the government in September 2018, **Keeping Children Safe in Education**.



Youth violence, serious or otherwise, may be a function of gang activity. However, it could equally represent the behaviour of a child acting individually in response to his or her particular history and circumstances. The metropolitan police service defines serious youth violence as 'any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' (i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm). Youth violence is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.

The factors which influence a child's propensity to initiate violence may include parenting that is cold or uncaring, non-nurturing, neglectful, characterised by harsh discipline, maltreatment, such as physical or sexual abuse in childhood and/or trauma such as domestic abuse. Many parents are aware of the widespread perception that gang related behaviour or membership is a product of poor parenting and they often know the solution lies in assuming responsibility for their children. However, they may feel unable either to control or to protect their children, in which case, professional engagement is inevitable and necessary. The London safeguarding children board guidance on safeguarding children affected by gang activity/serious youth violence can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/gang_activity.html and should be read in conjunction with this advice.

Children who go missing from care, home and education

Children who are missing even for a short period can be vulnerable to significant harm. Children who go missing are often at higher risk of or are already being sexually or criminally exploited. In the case of children who are looked after, this is especially concerning and every agency involved must do all they can to prevent and protect children from such exploitation. Looked after children who are missing will therefore be afforded the highest child protection priority by both children's social care services and the local police.

A child missing from school or education is also an issue of concern and potential risk. In addition to the impact on academic achievement and development, all professionals should consider other risk factors such as a potential forced marriage or planned female genital mutilation (FGM) which may be influencing the absence from school. If any professional is concerned about a child missing from school, care or education, they should use this guidance as advice and discuss their concerns with the MASH who will give advice and progress the referral appropriately.

The London safeguarding children board guidance on children missing from care, home and education can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/ch_miss_care_home_sch.html and should be read in conjunction with this local guidance.

Children at risk of sexual exploitation or who have been exploited

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves abusive situations, contexts and relationships whereby a child or someone close to them receives a 'reward' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection,

money, gifts) in exchange for performing sexual acts. There is an established link between children who are regularly missing and sexual exploitation. The abuse can occur through the use of technology including social media without the child's immediate recognition (e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones).

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common aspects of CSE. Often the child does not recognise the coercive nature of an exploitative relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation. They might believe their abuser is in a genuine relationship with them and loves them. They may be unwilling to say anything that could find the abuser in trouble or cause them to become angry, thereby threatening the continued relationship. In some situations, including those where gangs are involved, there may be a belief that the abuse is normal and a rite of passage. Girls and young women related to or connected with male gang members may be especially vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation.

If any professional in Bexley has concerns about the sexual or criminal exploitation of a child or young person, they should speak immediately to the MASH and local police. The London safeguarding children board's guidance 'Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation' can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_sex_exploit_ch.html

CSE guidance and procedures for Bexley can be found at www.bexley.gov.uk/sites/bexley-cms/files/Missing-CSE-Operating-Procedures_0.pdf and should be read in conjunction with this document.



Safeguarding children at risk of abuse through female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is child abuse and constitutes significant harm. Child protection procedures should be followed when there are concerns that a girl is at risk of, or is already the victim of, FGM.

FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is important to note that the procedure has no health benefits.

FGM has been classified by the world health organisation into four types:

- **Type 1:** circumcision - partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals) and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris)
- **Type 2:** excision (clitoridectomy) - partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are the lips that surround the vagina)
- **Type 3:** infibulation (also called pharaonic circumcision) -this is the most severe form of female genital mutilation. Infibulation often (but not always) involves the complete removal of the clitoris, together with the labia minora and at least the anterior two-thirds and often the whole of the medial part of the labia majora. The vaginal opening is narrowed through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia
- **Type 4:** unclassified - all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area. It is likely that 'labia elongation' would come under the definition of type 4 FGM.

FGM is prevalent in 28 African countries as well as parts of the Middle East and Asia. It is estimated that over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are at high risk of FGM in the UK each year and that 66,000 women in the UK are living with the consequences, although the true extent is unknown due to the hidden nature of the crime.

Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, it is an offence to carry out FGM of any kind in the UK or for a UK national or permanent UK resident to assist in the carrying out of FGM abroad. It is also an offence to assist any female to carry out FGM on herself either in the UK or abroad. **The Mandatory Reporting of FGM Duty came into force on 31st October 2015. This duty requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to personally report to the Police when she/he has either been told by a girl that she has had FGM or has observed a physical sign appearing to show that a girl has had FGM.** In all other cases, where FGM is suspected or a girl is thought to be at risk, professionals should follow the child protection procedures set out in the main body of this document.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies according to their community and culture. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, in the majority of cases, the mutilation is thought to take place between the ages of five and eight years.

Girls of school age who are subjected to FGM overseas are thought to be taken abroad at the start of the school holidays, particularly in the summer holidays, in order for there to be sufficient time for recovery before the new term.

Professionals who have daily contact with children and their families are best placed to raise awareness of the problem and to ensure that families are aware that FGM is illegal at any age and that the authorities are actively tackling the issue. It is not a personal choice – it is an illegal act with serious consequences. This awareness may deter families from having the mutilation performed on their children. The London safeguarding children board guidance on safeguarding children at risk of abuse through FGM can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_ch_risk_fgm.html and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Children at risk of radicalisation and exposure to extremist ideology

Children at risk of harm as a result of involvement or potential involvement in extremist activity should be referred to the MASH who will advise and/or progress according to the risk of harm identified to the child or young person. If the child/young person is at immediate risk of harm, the matter should be reported to the police straight away.

Children and young people can be radicalised in different ways. They can be groomed either online or in person by people seeking to draw them into extremist activity. Older children or young people might be radicalised over the internet or through the influence of their peer network – in this instance their parents might not know about this or feel powerless to stop their child's radicalisation. Children and young people can also be groomed by family members who hold harmful, extreme beliefs; this includes parents/carers and siblings who live with the child and/or person(s) who live outside the family home but who have an influence over the child's life. They may be exposed to violent, anti-social, extremist imagery, rhetoric and writings which can lead to the development of a distorted world view in which extremist ideology seems reasonable.

A common feature of radicalisation is that the child or young person does not recognise the exploitative nature of what is happening and does not see themselves as a victim of grooming or exploitation. The harm children and young people can experience ranges from a child adopting or complying with extreme views which limits their social interaction and full engagement with their education, to young children being taken to war zones and older children being groomed for involvement in violence. Radicalisation happens when people come to support extreme ideologies based on the teachings of political, social and religious groups. In some cases, those with extremist views will specifically target children because they believe them to be more impressionable and willing to follow their teachings. A child may be more willing to join an extreme group because it may give them a sense of identity and 'belonging'.

It is important to recognise the early signs of radicalisation in order to agree the best and most effective support to protect and help the child or young person. This will mean working together with parents/carers and the child's school. Advice around specific cases can be provided by local 'Prevent' leads, local authority Prevent coordinators or police Prevent officers. The names and contact details of these professionals can be obtained from Bexley MASH.

The London safeguarding children board guidance on safeguarding children exposed to extremist ideology can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_ch_extremist.html and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Private fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately by parents (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if the child is disabled) and by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Private foster carers may be members of the child's extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. A person who is recognised as a close relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent is not considered to be a private foster carer.



A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous (although an occasional short break would not constitute a break in continuity).

Local authorities do not formally approve or register private foster carers. However, it is their duty to ensure that they are satisfied the welfare of children who are privately fostered is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. Private foster carers and those with parental responsibility are required to notify the local authority of their intention to privately foster or to have a child privately fostered or where a child has been privately fostered in an emergency.

Private fostering includes:

- Children living with a friend, or the family of girlfriend/boyfriend
- Children who have come to the country for medical treatment, exchange holidays or language courses
- Children being cared for while a parent is in prison or hospital.

Professionals who work with children often come across private fostering arrangements as part of their day-to-day work. If any professional in Bexley identifies a private fostering arrangement, they should contact the MASH directly.

When the local authority becomes aware of a privately fostered child, it has a duty to assess the suitability of the arrangement and to make regular visits to the child and the private foster carer. Children should be seen alone unless this is inappropriate and the parent should also be visited where possible. Contact with the parent should always be made. All children who are privately fostered will be given the contact details of the social worker who will be visiting him/her while s/he is being privately fostered.

The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 and the amended s67 of the Children Act 1989 strengthens the duties upon local authorities in relation to private fostering by requiring them to:

- Satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are privately fostered within their area is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted
- Ensure that such advice as appears to be required is given to private foster carers
- Visit privately fostered children at regular six weekly intervals in the first year and 12 weekly in subsequent years
- Satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the private foster carer, and the private foster carer's household and accommodation. The local authority has the power to impose requirements on the foster carer or, if there are serious concerns about the arrangement, to prohibit it
- Promote awareness in the local authority area of the requirement to notify, advertise services to private foster carers and ensure that relevant advice is given to privately fostered children and their carers
- Monitor their own compliance with all the duties and functions in relation to private fostering, and to appoint an officer for this purpose.

The London safeguarding children board procedures on private fostering can be found at www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/ch_living_away.html#private_fost and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.



7. Access to level 2 services - Additional

Practitioners are expected to work together to meet the child or young person's additional needs and they may need to engage with other services to do so.

Practitioners should access services at Level 2 Additional using their own service specific form/letter.²

The Bexley referral form has been developed for use when professionals think that a child and/or family need intensive or specialist help. Partners may use this form if they choose to access support at level 2 as well as at level 3. The referral should have the consent section completed (which parents should sign to give consent to the referral and to information sharing) noting that the referral is for level 2 – additional need services only.

We should also ask young people who demonstrate Fraser competency especially those aged over 15, to give their consent. Fraser competence is a term used to describe a child under 16 who is considered to be of sufficient age and understanding to be competent to receive contraceptive advice without parental consent or knowledge. It is a narrower definition than the Gillick competence which often refers to children being capable of giving consent to other matters requiring their decision.

The family wellbeing assessment is led by a family key worker from the family wellbeing service (FWS) and is used to discuss and record the family's views, their needs, strengths and the goals that they identify, leading to the production of a plan to support them.

Where the difficulties or needs are more complex, practitioners should consider making a referral with the family, for the Bexley FWS.



Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)

The MASH is a multi-agency professional team, based at 2 Watling Street, Bexleyheath (the London Borough of Bexley's civic offices) that has capacity to share information and to use that information appropriately to consider the risk of harm to children, young people and families. Children's social care, the police, health, probation, housing, education, Solace (who provide Bexley's domestic abuse service) and a youth offending officer are co-located as part of a multi-professional team to ensure that the best possible analysis is made following a referral to maximise the opportunities locally to make the right response. The level of information sharing by MASH professionals is proportionate to the level of risk/uncertainty/harm that is suspected or known.

The MASH in Bexley will always offer advice, guidance and support about help for families who have additional and intensive needs (levels 2 and 3) because often this is not clear and it requires regular discussion and review to make the best decision. See Appendix 2 - What happens when you make a referral to the local authority about a child?

² This refers to any form in use by any agency to enable families to be referred to or have access to an additional service

8. Access to level 3 services - Intensive

Prior to requesting services at level 3, **Intensive**, practitioners are expected to have worked together to meet the **Additional** needs of the child and their family. Where practitioners identify that a child and their family would benefit from a more intensive multi-disciplinary response than they can provide, they should discuss this with the family and **complete the Bexley referral form**. The referral should be sent to the MASH, who will record on the database and pass to the local **family wellbeing team** or other appropriate level 3 services (see Appendix 1).

Full details about this service can be found at www.bexley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/services-children-young-people-and-families/family

Email: Childrensocialcare.admin@bexley.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 3045 5440

Appendix 3 to this document shows the family wellbeing offer in diagrammatic form.

A family wellbeing assessment (FWBA) will be used when there are concerns and/or issues within a family that have not been resolved by additional support from universal services or by referral to another agency.

The **assessment** is used when a shared and co-ordinated professional response and a more intensive engagement with the family is needed. The **family wellbeing** service (FWS) will use the **assessment**, or build on an existing **assessment** as a means of identifying and recording their needs and the needs of each family member.

The family wellbeing assessment is designed to maximise engagement with families who must consent to have help at this level. The assessment assists families to identify their own strengths and solutions, supporting them to tell their own stories in their own words and being central to planning, implementing and sustaining the changes they need to make.

Once the **family wellbeing assessment** is complete, a family wellbeing plan is developed with the family with clear goals, actions, timescales and review dates. The family keyworker will work with the family and relevant partners to implement and review the plan.

The completed **family wellbeing assessment** remains the responsibility of the FWS to retain, update and provide copies and access to the family and key partners. The **assessment and plan** should be entered on the early help database administered by the **FWS**. **A copy of the completed assessment and plan must always be given to all family members involved, including children and young people, age and understanding permitting.**

Family wellbeing services and partners will work with families for three months, at which point a key review will take place to oversee the changes and progress, and may lead to a further three month's support in exceptional circumstances.

The service supports families with the following difficulties:

- Families affected by domestic abuse
- Families living with drug and alcohol misuse
- Families where children have previously been in need and in receipt of a more specialist service
- Families with one or more member (including children) of the household with (tier 2) mental health needs
- Families where a child or children are at risk of or have already been excluded from school
- Families where there is low level neglect and/or a parent with a learning need.

The team includes professionals with a range of different backgrounds who will provide the family key worker role. Qualified and experienced social workers lead the teams and the service manager is also a qualified and highly experienced social work manager.

The early help system in Bexley, holds a database of all the **family wellbeing assessments that are undertaken** in Bexley.

The MASH functions as the entry point into FWS where there are experienced practitioners who will screen the referral to ensure that the appropriate level of information is provided to enable the FWS to engage quickly and effectively.

The FWS is offered to families on a voluntary and consensual basis where children and young people are unlikely to suffer significant harm. It is a strengths-based and solution-identifying service.

The thresholds between early help at this level (intensive) and formal social work support (specialist) are critically important to review regularly. The FWS team managers and service manager are expected to spend a lot of time providing oversight and supervision to all cases with this level of need. This is the means by which we review and consider the safety of local arrangements. An audit framework is also in place to

provide additional reassurance and the head of service (child protection, family support and family wellbeing) and the deputy director for children's social care are also expected to carry out regular audits on the application of this threshold and the effectiveness of early support to families.

The weekly case transfer panel is the enabler for children and families to access more or less intensive support. There is a clear process in place for this to happen and if there are concerns that a child is at risk of harm or significant harm or has been harmed, the service manager will work immediately and closely with the service manager for referral and assessment services within children's social care to arrange for an immediate strategy meeting. At that stage, depending on the presenting risk or uncertainty for the child, a children and families assessment or child protection (section 47) enquiry will commence with timescales agreed by managers commensurate with the presenting danger.



9. Access to level 4 services - specialist children's social care

The **family wellbeing assessment** should not delay any action if a professional is concerned that a child is, or may be, suffering significant harm. In such cases, the professional should make a referral to Bexley MASH, based at 2 Watling Street (civic offices).

Telephone: 020 3045 5440

Email: Childrensocialcare.admin@bexley.gov.uk

Where there is doubt about the most appropriate response, anyone concerned about the welfare of a child should consult with their own manager and/or designated member of staff and, where they remain unsure, contact the MASH and ask for a **consultation with a MASH social worker**.

New referrals (including cases that are no longer open) should be made using **[Bexley's referral form](#)**.

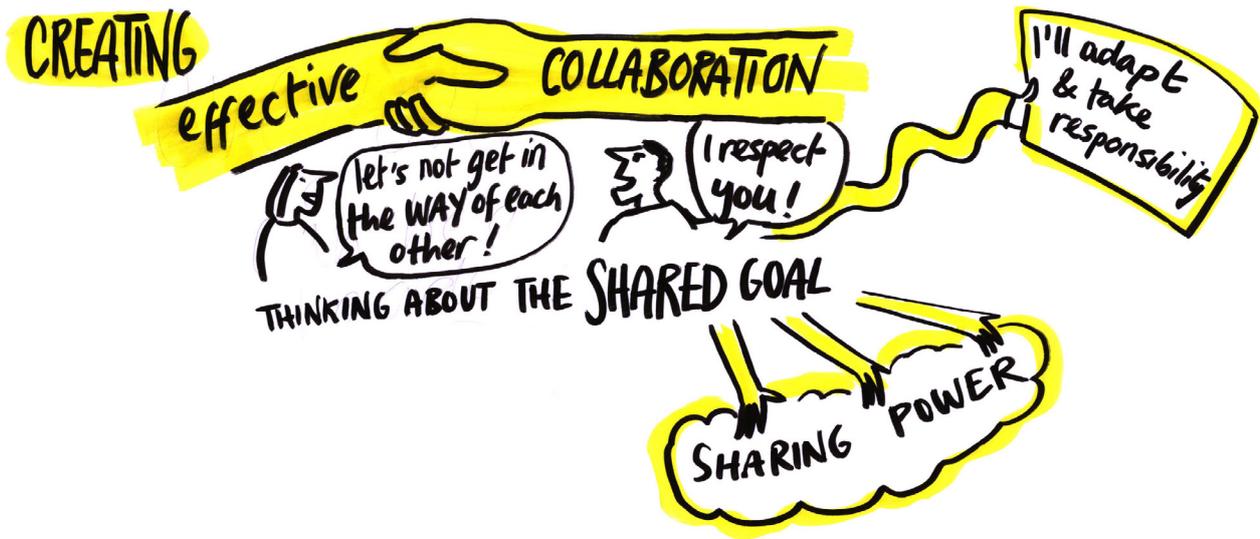
Unless there is immediate risk of significant harm, the family should be consulted by the referrer and informed of the referral unless in so doing, the risk of harm or actual harm to a child would increase. The referrer can always ask to discuss their concerns with a qualified social worker in the MASH if they are uncertain and before they make a referral on the above telephone number.

Children's social care (CSC) has a responsibility to **children in need** under **section 17** of the Children Act 1989 Act. These are children whose development would be significantly impaired if services were not provided. This includes children who have a long lasting and substantial disability which limits their ability to carry out the tasks of daily living.

CSC engagement with children in need is on a voluntary basis. Parents, or young people who are **[Gillick competent](#)**, can refuse some or all such offers of assistance. Often families prefer a lower level of support such as that offered through their school or health centre because this is less stigmatising or intrusive. The family well-being assessments can be a useful way of engaging children in need and their families on a voluntary basis and many difficulties can be resolved this way.

For children in need, referral to CSC is appropriate when more **substantial interventions are needed: where a child's development is being significantly impaired because of the impact of complex parental mental ill health or learning disability or substance misuse, or very challenging behaviour in the home**. A social care referral is also appropriate where parents need practical support and respite at home because of a disabled child's complex care needs. In these situations, CSC will work with families on a voluntary basis, often in partnership with other professionals, to improve the welfare of the children and to prevent difficulties escalating to a point when statutory child protection intervention is needed.





The second area of CSC responsibility is **child protection** – that is where CSC must make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to determine whether **a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm**. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes **significant harm**. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the severity of the emotional and physical impact on the child. **It is important to consider age and context – babies and young children are particularly vulnerable and parental factors such as history of significant domestic abuse, substance misuse or mental ill-health will always be significant in influencing the professional judgements that need to be made.**

Significant harm could occur where there is a single event, such as a violent assault or sexual abuse. More often, significant harm is identified when there have been a number of events which have compromised the child's physical and psychological wellbeing; for example, a child whose health and development is severely impaired through neglect.

Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to refer a child to children's social care when it is believed or suspected that the child:

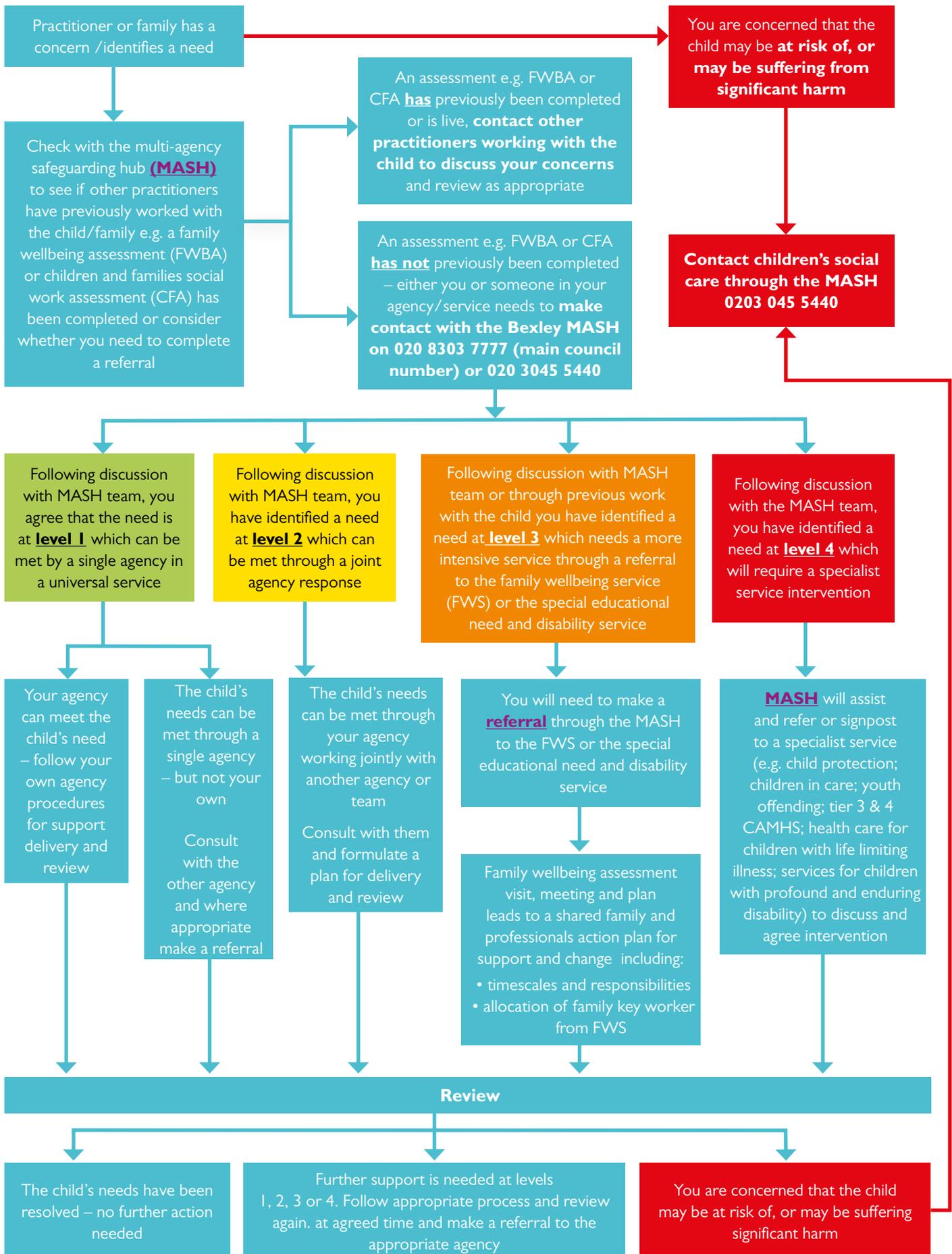
- Has suffered significant harm – child protection
- Is likely to suffer significant harm – child protection
- Has significant developmental or disability needs which are likely only to be met through provision of CSC family support and disability services (with agreement of the child's parent) – children in need.

Additional information or concerns on open cases should be made to the allocated social worker (or in their absence the manager or the duty social worker). If you are unsure who the social worker or team is, you can contact the MASH to find out or to pass on the information.

When CSC undertakes a section 47 child protection enquiry, the **London child protection procedures** are followed.

10. Effective support at a glance

Call 020 8303 7777 (main council number) or Bexley MASH on 020 3045 5440



11. Indicators of possible need

The indicators of possible need listed under each heading are an indication of the likely level of need. Only by talking to children and their family in more detail to explore the context and the factors behind the need,

will the practitioner be able to form a judgement as to the level of support needed. The indicators are a guide and not a pre-determined level of response.

Level 1 - UNIVERSAL

Children and young people who make good overall progress in most areas of development and receive appropriate universal services, such as health care and education. They may also use leisure and play facilities, housing or voluntary services.

Health

- Physically well
- Nutritious diet
- Adequate hygiene and dress
- Developmental and health checks / immunisations up to date
- Developmental milestones and motor skills appropriate
- Sexual activity age-appropriate
- Good mental health.

Emotional development

- Good quality early attachments
- Able to adapt to change
- Able to understand others' feelings.

Behavioural development

- Takes responsibility for behaviour
- Responds appropriately to boundaries and constructive guidance.

Identity and self-esteem

- Can discriminate between safe and unsafe contacts.

Family and social relationships

- Stable and affectionate relationships with family
- Is able to make and maintain friendships.

Learning

- Access to books and toys
- Enjoys and participates in learning activities
- Has experiences of success and achievement
- Sound links between home and school
- Planning for career and adult life.

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Provide for child's physical needs, e.g. food, drink, appropriate clothing, medical and dental care
- Protection from danger or significant harm.

Emotional warmth and stability

- Shows warm regard, praise and encouragement
- Ensures stable relationships.

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Ensure the child can develop a sense of right and wrong
- Child/young person accesses leisure facilities as appropriate to age and interests.

Family functioning and wellbeing

- Good relationships within family, including when parents are separated.

Housing, work and income

- Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities, and can meet family needs
- Managing budget to meet individual needs.

Social and community including education

- Has friendships and is able to access local services and amenities
- Family feels part of the community.

Level 2 - ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Children and young people whose needs require some extra support. A single universal or targeted service or two services are likely to be involved; these services should work together. There is no need for specialist services.

Health

- Missing immunisations/checks
- Child is slow in reaching developmental milestones
- Minor concerns re diet, hygiene, clothing
- Dental difficulties untreated/some decay
- Missing some routine and non-routine health appointments
- Limited or restricted diet e.g. no breakfast, no lunch money
- Concerns about developmental progress: e.g. overweight/underweight, bedwetting/soiling
- Vulnerable to emotional difficulties, perhaps in response to life events such as parental separation e.g. child seems unduly anxious, angry or defiant for their age
- Experimenting with tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs
- Frequent accidents.

Emotional development

- Some difficulties with family relationships
- Some difficulties with peer group relationships and with adults, e.g. 'clingy', anxious or withdrawn
- Some evidence of inappropriate responses and actions
- Limited engagement in play with others/has few or no friends.

Behavioural development

- Not always able to understand how own actions impact on others
- Finds accepting responsibility for own actions difficult
- Responds inappropriately to boundaries/constructive guidance
- Finds positive interaction difficult with peers in unstructured contexts
- Additional needs from CAMHS.

Identity and self-esteem

- Some insecurities around identity expressed e.g. low self-esteem, sexuality, gender identity
- May experience bullying
- May be exhibiting bullying behaviour
- Lack of confidence is incapacitating
- Child/young person provocative in behaviour/appearance e.g. inappropriately dressed for school
- Child subject to persistent discrimination, e.g. racial, sexual or due to disabilities
- Victim of crime or bullying.

Family and social relationships

- Lack of positive role models
- Child has some difficulties sustaining relationships
- Unresolved issues arising from parents' separation, step parenting or bereavement.

Self-care skills and independence

- Disability limits amount of self-care possible
- Periods of inadequate self-care, e.g. poor hygiene
- Child is continually slow to develop age-appropriate self-care skills.

Learning

- Has some identified specific learning needs with targeted support and/or statement of SEN
- Language and communication difficulties
- Regular underachievement or not reaching education potential
- Poor punctuality/pattern of regular school absences
- Not always engaged in play/learning, e.g. poor concentration
- No access to books/toys
- Some fixed term exclusions.

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Basic care is not provided consistently
- Parent/carer requires advice on parenting issues
- Some concerns around child's physical needs being met
- Young, inexperienced parents
- Inappropriate child care arrangements and/or too many carers
- Some exposure to dangerous situations in the home or community
- Unnecessary or frequent visits to doctor/casualty
- Parent/carer stresses starting to affect ability to ensure child's safety.

Emotional warmth and stability

- Inconsistent responses to child/young person by parent/carer
- Parents struggling to have their own emotional needs met
- Child/young person not able to develop other positive relationships
- Starting to show difficulties with attachments.

Family functioning and wellbeing

- A child/young person is taking on a caring role in relation to their parent/carer, or is looking after younger siblings
- No effective support from extended family.

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Parent/carer offers inconsistent boundaries
- Lack of routine in the home
- Child/young person spends considerable time alone, e.g. watching television
- Child/young person is not often exposed to new experiences; has limited access to leisure activities
- Child/young person can behave in an anti-social way in the neighbourhood, e.g. petty crime.

Housing, work and income

- Family seeking asylum or refugees
- Periods of unemployment of parent/carer
- Parents/carers have limited formal education
- Low income
- Financial/debt difficulties
- Poor state of repair, temporary or overcrowded, or unsafe housing
- Intentionally homeless
- Serious debt/poverty impact on ability to have basic needs met
- Rent arrears put family at risk of eviction or proceedings initiated
- Not in education employment or training post-16.

Social and community including education

- Some social exclusion or conflict experiences; low tolerance
- Community characterised by negativity towards children/young people
- Difficulty accessing community facilities.



Level 3 - INTENSIVE

Vulnerable children, including those who have a disability. Children and young people whose needs are more complex. This refers to the range, depth or significance of the needs. A number of these indicators would need to be present to indicate need at a level 3 criteria. More than one service is likely to become involved, with the family wellbeing service using the family wellbeing assessment and other professionals to help. For a child with a complex disability, the special needs and disability service will become involved. Support at this level and access is through the MASH using the referral form.

Health

- Child has some chronic/recurring health difficulties; not treated, or badly managed
- Developmental milestones are not being met due to parental care
- 'Unsafe' sexual activity
- Self-harming behaviours
- Child has significant disability
- Mental health issues emerging e.g. conduct disorder; ADHD; anxiety; depression; eating disorder; self-harming.

Emotional development

- Sexualised behaviour
- Child appears regularly anxious, angry or phobic and demonstrates a mental health condition
- Young carer whose development is being compromised by virtue of having those responsibilities.

Behavioural development

- Challenging at school, possible threat of exclusion and school have been providing support for some time
- Changed behaviour and reference to radicalised thoughts and threats to act
- Additional needs met by CAMHS tier 2
- Prosecution of offences resulting in court orders, custodial sentences or ASBOs or youth offending early intervention.

Identity and self-esteem

- Presentation (including hygiene) significantly impacts on all relationships
- Child/young person experiences persistent discrimination; internalised and reflected in poor self-image
- Distances self from others.

Family and social relationships

- Relationships with carers characterised by unpredictability
- Misses school consistently.

Self-care skills and independence

- Disability prevents self-care in a significant range of tasks
- Child lacks a sense of safety and often puts him/herself in danger.

Learning

- Consistently poor nursery/school attendance and punctuality
- Young child with few, if any, achievements
- Not in education (under 16).

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Domestic abuse in the home
- Parent's mental health difficulties or substance misuse affect care of child/young person
- Child has few positive relationships
- Child has multiple carers, some of whom may have no significant relationship with them.

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

- Parents struggle/refuse to set effective boundaries e.g. too loose/tight/physical chastisement
- Child/young person behaves in anti-social way in the neighbourhood.

Housing, work and income

- Chronic unemployment that has severely affected parents' own identities
- Family unable to gain employment due to significant lack of basic skills or long-term substance misuse.

Family functioning and wellbeing

- Family have physical and mental health difficulties impacting on their child
- Community are hostile to family.

Level 4 - SPECIALIST

Children, young people and families whose needs are complex and enduring and cross many domains. More than one service is normally involved, with all professionals involved on a statutory basis with qualified social workers as the professional leads. It is usually the local authority children's social care service who act as the lead agency.

Health

- Child/young person has severe/chronic health difficulties
- Lack of food and/or failure to thrive
- Refusing medical care endangering life/development
- Seriously obese/seriously underweight
- Serious dental decay through persistent lack of dental care
- Persistent and high risk parental substance misuse
- Dangerous sexual activity and/or early teenage pregnancy
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Evidence of significant harm or neglect
- Non-accidental injury and/or unexplained injuries
- Acute mental health difficulties e.g. severe depression; threat of suicide
- Physical/learning disability requiring constant supervision
- Disclosure of abuse from child/young person
- Disclosure of abuse/physical injury caused by a professional.

Emotional development

- Puts self or others in danger e.g. missing from home
- Persistent disruptive/challenging behaviour at school, home or in the community
- Starting to commit offences/re-offend
- Severe emotional/behavioural challenges
- Puts self or others at risk through behaviour
- Severe emotional/behavioural challenges.

Identity and self-esteem

- Failed education supervision order – 3 prosecutions for non-attendance, family refusing to engage
- Child/young person likely to put self at risk
- Evident mental health needs.

Family and social relationships

- Previously looked after by the local authority
- Relationships with family experienced as negative ('low warmth, high criticism')
- Rejection by a parent/carer; family no longer want to care for - or have abandoned –child/young person
- Family breakdown related to child's behavioural difficulties
- Subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect
- Young person is main carer for family member.

Learning

- No school placement due to parental neglect
- Child/young person is out of school due to parental neglect.

Other indicators

- Professional concerns – but difficulty accessing child/young person
- Unaccompanied refugee/asylum seeker
- Privately fostered
- Abusing other children
- Young sex offenders
- Serious or persistent offending behaviour likely to lead to custody/remand in secure unit/prison.

Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

- Parent/carer's mental health or substance misuse significantly affect care of child
- Parents/carers unable to care for previous children
- Parent/carer is failing to provide adequate care
- Instability and violence in the home continually
- Parents/carers involved in violent or serious crime, or crime against children
- Non-compliance of parents/carers with services
- Child/young person may be subject to neglect
- Parents/carers own needs mean they are unable to keep child/young person safe

- Severe disability – child/young person relies totally on other people to meet care needs
- Chronic and serious domestic abuse involving child/young person
- Disclosure from parent of abuse to child/young person
- Suspected/evidence of fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional warmth and stability

- Parent’s own emotional experiences impacting on their ability to meet child/young person’s needs
- Child has no-one to care for him/her
- Requesting young child be accommodated.

Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

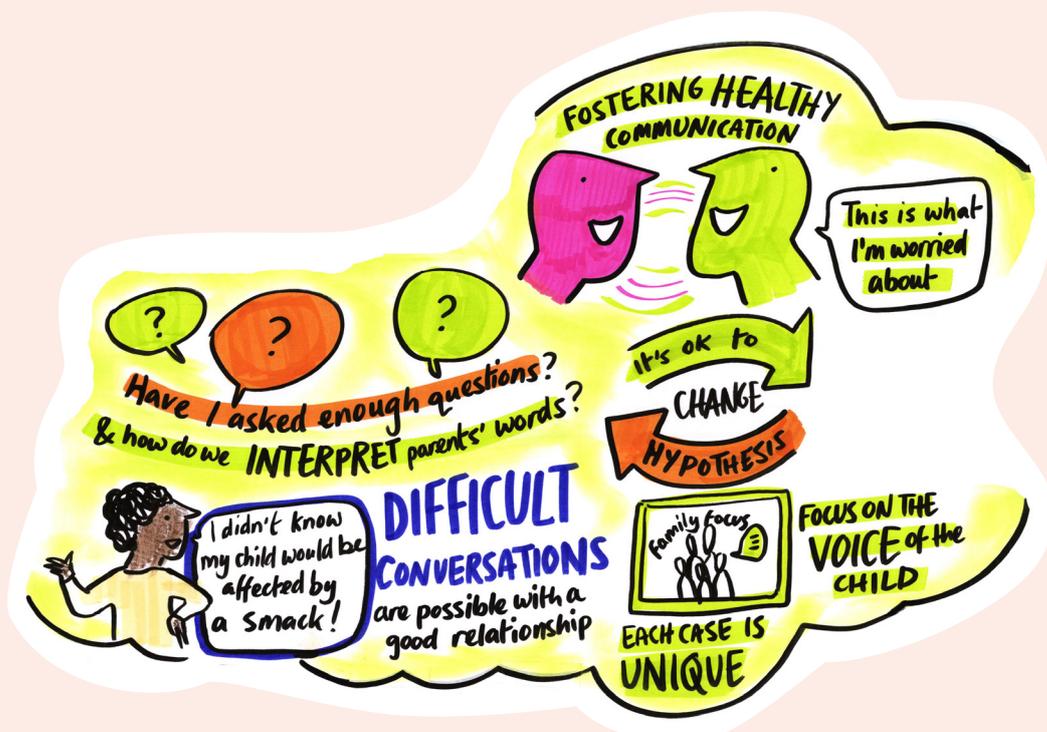
- No effective boundaries set by parents/carers
- Multiple carers
- Child beyond parental control.

Family functioning and wellbeing

- Significant parental/carer discord and persistent domestic abuse and discord between family members
- Child/young person in need where there are child protection concerns
- Individual posing a risk to children in, or known to, household
- Family home used for drug taking, prostitution, illegal activities.

Housing, work and income

- Homeless - or imminent if not accepted by housing department
- Housing dangerous or seriously threatening to health
- Physical accommodation places child in danger
- Extreme poverty/debt impacting on ability to care for child.



Appendices



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ADHD &Me	Monthly local support group in Bexleyheath for parents of children with ADHD. Meets on the 1st Monday of every month	The Danson Centre Brampton Road Bexleyheath DA7 4EZ		Contact Michelle on 07576 884579	adhdandme@icloud.com
Advocacy for all	Working in Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Kent and Sutton, we offer a wide range of One to One Advocacy Services and Self Advocacy Groups. Advocacy is when one person helps another person talk about their needs and wishes. All our one to one advocacy services are free, confidential and independent.	The Civic Centre St Mary's Rd Swanley BR8 7BU	https://www.advocacyforall.org.uk	0345 310 1812	info@advocacyforall.org.uk
Archway Project	A youth club and education centre for young people providing training and support that is accessible to all. The Archway Project Limited is a charity based in Thamesmead supporting young people by offering them guidance and tuition in a variety of subjects including cookery and motorcycle engineering. Attendance at the project can result in a BTEC/AQA award and an added bonus is that those whose participation is sufficient are taught how to ride off-road motorcycles and taken riding.	The Archway Project Ltd, The Link Thamesmead SE2 9BS	http://www.archwayproject.org/	020 8310 1730	binfo@archwayproject.org
BCU Life Skills Centre	Provide services free of charge to those experiencing disadvantage and those who are finding life difficult and who are in need of support. We have a person-centred approach and welcome all members of the community no matter what their circumstances.	Trinity Baptist Church Trinity Place Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7AY	http://www.bculifeskills.org.uk/	020 8301 3187	bculife@btconnect.com
Bexley Accessible Transport (Bats)	Provide accessible, affordable and safe transport for individuals, community and voluntary groups within the London Borough of Bexley.	Office 9 Thames Road Depot Thames Road Crayford DA1 5QJ	http://www.bexleyct.co.uk/	Tel: 01322 311 333	enquiries@bexleyct.co.uk
Bexley Care Hub	Find help, support and services.		https://carehub.bexley.gov.uk		
Bexley Deaf Centre	Here at Bexley Deaf Centre, we aim to provide information, education and support for Deaf people in Bexley enabling them to enjoy the same quality of life as those with unimpaired hearing.	20 Whitehall Lane Slade Green Kent DA8 2DH	https://www.bexleydeafcentre.com	01322 351122	info@bexleydeafcentre.co.uk
Bexley Down's Syndrome Group	The group offers support, information and social activities for members and/or families living in Bexley in addition to family holidays in our caravan situated in the New Forest. The caravan has proved to be very popular providing fun, relaxation, entertainment and a much needed break for all the family.		http://www.bexleydownssyndrome.co.uk/	07708067661	info@BexleyDownsSyndrome.co.uk
Bexley Local Offer	The Bexley Local Offer has been co-produced with the help of parents, professionals and young people and is under continuous development. Our aim is to provide a 'one stop shop' for information and services that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 years old.		www.bexleylocaloffer.uk	0203 045 5677	localoffer@bexley.gov.uk

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Bexley Voice	We are a voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people (age 0~25) with special needs and disabilities (SEND) living in the London Borough of Bexley. We provide an opportunity for parent and carers to express their views and input into the planning and delivering of SEND services. We signpost, support and empower families to obtain the best possible care and services.	Bexley Voice C/O Send Hub - Normandy Childrens Centre Fairford Avenue Barnehurst DA7 6QP	https://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk/	07512 409 936 (Please note this is answered by volunteers on a Thursday morning term time only.)	bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk
Break Through i.e. Informal Education	Break Through is a small alternative independent school for years 7 through to 12 at risk of exclusion, not on an educational roll, the self excluded and on fixed term exclusion. A number of students have an EHCP plan and some have Social Service support. The staff team at Break Through recognise there are often multiple and complex needs that can be reflected in young people's behaviour as some young people are not yet equipped with the emotional intelligence to sustain or engage with education. Our over arching aim is for young people to successfully reintegrate into mainstream provision. If reintegration is not considered a suitable option, in partnership with other agencies Break Through will support the young person onto their next progression route.	"121 Nuxley Road Belvedere Kent DA17 5JX"	" https://www.kent-teach.com/School/Directory/Details.aspx?SchoolId=2686 (school website under construction)"	01322 440049	admin@breakthroughschool.co.uk
Breastfeeding clinic	This is the website to learn about breastfeeding and gain general knowledge on the subject. This also has links to other websites which lead to various clinics and ideas.	N/A	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/breastfeeding-help-support/	0300 330 5777	bromh.bexley0to19@nhs.net
Breastfeeding group	Alderwood Children's Centre is a breastfeeding group. The centre helps with breastfeeding problems and general enquires like when to return to work and when to stop breastfeeding.	Alderwood Children's Centre Rainham Close Eltham SE9 2JH	http://www.greenwichbreastfeeding.com/local-support/drop-in-groups/ ; https://www.better.org.uk/children-centre/london/greenwich/alderwood-childrens-centre	020 8850 5927	Alderwood@gll.org
Bromley Healthcare	Universal 0-19 Children's Public Health Service offering support and advice from the ante-natal period until 19 years. The universal service is for all children and young people and their families aged 0-19 years. Livechat can be accessed on the Bexley 0-19 website between 9-5 Monday to Friday for advice.	Bromley Healthcare Central Court 1 Knoll Rise Orpington BR6 OJA	https://www.bexley0to19.co.uk/	0300 330 5777	bromh.bexley0to19@nhs.net
Bromley Healthcare -Breastfeeding support in Drop in groups	1) Danson Children's Centre Monday 12-2pm 2) Sidcup Baby café, North Cray Neighbourhood Centre Wednesday 1.30-3.30pm 3) Erith baby group, West Street Children's Centre, Thursday 10-11.30 These centres help with breastfeeding problems and general enquires like when to return to work and when to stop breastfeeding	Bromley Healthcare Central Court 1 Knoll Rise Orpington BR6 OJA	https://www.bexley0to19.co.uk/	0300 330 5777	bromh.bexley0to19@nhs.net
Carers Support Bexley	We are a registered charity whose purpose is to provide information, support and breaks for carers. We aim always to be flexible and helpful, rather than expect carers to fit in with us.	The Manor House Grassington Road Sidcup DA14 6BY	http://www.carerssupport.org/	0208 302 8011	info@carerssupport.org
Centerpieces mental health art project	Provides a Bexley borough-wide group based at Hall Place, Bexley. Exists to promote the artwork of mental health service users and positive images of mental health through the arts. Obtains funding for community art and organises exhibitions and workshops. Friendly and accessible, a user led Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Meetings held every Monday at 11am. Newcomers always welcome.	The Lodge Hall Place Bexley Kent DA5 1PG	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/centrepieces-mental-health-art/	01322 554 589	

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<p>Children's Centres:</p>	<p>There are three Children and Family Localities in Bexley, located in the north, south and centre of the borough. You can attend activities anywhere in the borough.</p> <p>Each locality co-ordinates a whole range of local activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent training • Health provision • School readiness • Support services for families with children birth to five years and over and their families/carers 	<p>Various</p>	<p>https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/services-children-young-people-and-families/children-and-family-centres</p>	<p>020 8303 6052 020 3045 4710 020 3045 5480</p>	<p>info.surestart@bexley.gov.uk</p>
<p>Christian Life Centre Bexley</p>	<p>Run courses, training events and 'Life Groups' to help grow, equip and develop people and to facilitate them in realising their potential. They also provide outreach to young people and families and run children's clubs for 0-16 year olds.</p>	<p>17 Upland Road Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4NR</p>	<p>http://www.bexleylife.co.uk/</p>	<p>020 8303 6445</p>	<p>info@bexleylife.co.uk</p>
<p>Citizens Advice Bureau</p>	<p>Our service is free, confidential and open to anyone who lives, works or studies in the London Borough of Bexley. Staff are trained to give independent, impartial advice and information on a wide range of issues, including: money, debt, housing, employment, legal procedures, consumer problems, welfare benefits, immigration, education, health and family matters. We arm you with all the facts and possible outcomes of different options – that way you can make the decision that's right for you.</p>	<p>Bexleyheath Central Library 2 Townley Road Bexleyheath DA6 7HJ</p> <p>Bexley Borough Citizens Advice Bureaux Ltd 42 Pier Road Erith DA8 1TA</p> <p>Sidcup Library Hadlow Road Sidcup DA14 4AQ</p>	<p>http://www.bexleycab.org.uk</p>	<p>01322 517150</p>	<p>http://www.bexleycab.org.uk/e-mail-advice/</p> <p>(online form)</p>
<p>Community Connect</p>	<p>Community Connect is a new service supporting local people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them with activities, support and services in the community. Our Community Wellbeing Co-ordinators can help you to find support for issues outside of the usual care that your GP or nurse may be able to provide.</p>		<p>http://communityconnectbexley.co.uk/</p>	<p>01322 524 682</p>	<p>communityconnect@bvsc.co.uk</p>
<p>Cornerstone</p>	<p>Cornerstone is a Christian group based in the Bexley Borough. We work with people in addiction, people suffering with mental health and those who for different reasons feel ostracised from church and society. We also offer a different, more intimate way of doing church for anyone with or without any of these issues.</p>	<p>Cornerstone Trinity Baptist Church Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7AY</p>	<p>https://www.cornerstonebexley.org</p>	<p>07434 733507</p>	<p>admin@cornerstonebexley.org</p>
<p>Counselling Matters</p>	<p>We are a group of counsellors who are committed to making counselling available to as many people as possible in the London Borough of Bexley and surrounding areas. We believe that counselling has massive potential to change lives for the better, however we recognise that many people are either unable to pay for private counselling or cannot access free counselling due to service cutbacks. We therefore offer counselling which is entirely professional but is also low cost.</p>	<p>The Abbey Clinic 6A Albert Road Belvedere Kent DA17 5LJ</p>	<p>https://www.counsellingmattersbexley.org/</p>	<p>For referrals and self referrals please contact Selina Cogan on 07498 377305 or email referrals : selina@counsellingmattersbexley.org</p> <p>For general enquiries please contact Liz Hann on 075614 16617 or email general enquiries: liz@counsellingmattersbexley.org</p>	

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Counselling services referred via GP					
Cribs	The work CRiBS does supports the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of children and young people as we seek to inspire Growing Faith and promote Living Values. Our desire is that all children have the opportunity to explore and think through the values they live by and the beliefs that underpin them. Our starting point is that the Christian story provides a compelling framework for doing this in a way that includes people of all backgrounds and provides space for growth and exploration.	CRIBS Charitable Trust St Columba's Catholic Boys School Halcot Avenue Bexleyheath DA6 7QB	https://www.cribsonline.org/	01322 330730	info@bcribsonline.org
Crossroads	Provides a range of care and support services to enable carers in Bexley to have a break from their caring responsibilities.	The Pier Road Centre 42 Pier Road Erith DA8 1TA	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/bexley-crossroads-care/	01322 336086	info@ccsel.org
Cruse Bereavement	Offer support and advice to children, young people and adults when someone dies and work to enhance society's care of bereaved people. Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support. We have a freephone national helpline, local services and a website specifically for children and young people.	Queen Mary's Hospital, Frogna Avenue, Sidcup DA14 6LT	https://www.cruse.org.uk	0808 808 1677; 0208 304 5245	bexleyandbromley@cruse.org.uk
DABBGL Dyslexia	The Dyslexia Association of Bexley Bromley Greenwich and Lewisham gives information to and help for parents, teachers, adults and interested professionals. Services are provided by a team of volunteers.	Community House South Street Bromley Kent BR1 1RH	http://dyslexiawise.co.uk/	0300 999 1800	info@dyslexiawise.co.uk
Dad Pads	Bexley are commissioning a mobile app across Bexley Bromley and Greenwich, called DadPad, which aims to support new fathers. The guide is developed by the NHS for all new fathers to offer practical help and support. It is recognised that whilst new dads may feel excited they can also feel left out, unsure or overwhelmed. The benefits of DadPads are they can help to reduce anxiety, create strong family bonds and attachment. It can also help recognise the signs of postnatal depression in both yourself and partner and learn how to get help early.		https://thedadpad.co.uk/	07403274757	mailto:hello@thedadpad.co.uk
Danson Youth Centre/Trust	Danson Youth Centre offers a comprehensive programme for young people aged 5-19 years. By offering young people sound opportunities and role models, we aim to channel their energy towards a positive contribution to society. We help them learn to respect themselves and others and give them the confidence to deal with the emotional and physical stresses of the transition to adulthood.	9 Brampton Rd Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4EZ	https://www.dansonyouth.org.uk/	020 8303 6052	https://www.dansonyouth.org.uk/
Family Lives	Family Lives is a national family support charity with over three decades of experience helping parents/carers to deal with the changes that are a constant part of family life. Our role is to support you to achieve the best relationship possible with the children you care about, as well as supporting parenting professionals. All referrals to be completed online.	Three Children and Family Centres at St Augustine's, Danson Youth Centre and West Street	https://www.familylives.org.uk/	0808 800 2222	info.surestart@bexley.gov.uk

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Gendered Intelligence	<p>GI's aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the quality of trans people's life experiences, especially those of young trans people • To increase the visibility of trans people's lives and to raise awareness of trans people's needs, especially those of young trans people, across the UK and beyond • To contribute to the creation of community cohesion across the whole of the trans community and the wider LGBT community throughout the UK • To engage the wider community in understanding the diversity and complexity of gender 	<p>Voluntary Action Islington 200a Pentonville Road London N1 9JP</p>	<p>http://genderedintelligence.co.uk</p>	<p>0207 832 5848</p>	<p>http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/contact/email</p>
Good Thinking	<p>Good Thinking launched in November 2017 and is designed for anyone living or working in London to tackle sleep, anxiety, stress and depression. It's free for Londoners thanks to London's NHS, London's borough councils and Public Health England. Use Good Thinking to find tools and resources to help yourself and others to feel better. From managing your anxiety to meeting like-minded people, whatever it is that you need, we want to help you find it.</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>https://www.good-thinking.uk/</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>info@good-thinking.uk</p>
Headscape Bexley	<p>Offers young people the opportunity to independently undertake a mental health screening questionnaire, which when completed, provides individually tailored advice and information. Depending on the results, the site can offer young people living in Bexley and Greenwich the option to self-refer directly into their local Children and Young People's Mental Health Services.</p>	<p>http://headscapebexley.co.uk/</p>	<p>http://headscapebexley.co.uk/</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>http://headscapebexley.co.uk/</p>
Headway (SE)	<p>Headway UK provides support and guidance to a network of locally-run groups and branches across the UK and Channel Islands. They offer a wide range of services, including brain injury rehabilitation programmes, carer support, social re-integration, community outreach and respite care. The services available will vary, depending on local needs and resources.</p>	<p>Headway SELNWK Shrewsbury Community Centre Bushmoor Crescent Shooters Hill SE18 3EG</p>	<p>https://www.headway.org.uk</p>	<p>0203 058 1020</p>	<p>info@headwayselnwk.co.uk</p>
Health Visiting (Bromley Healthcare)	<p>The Bexley 0 to 19 service offers tailored guidance support to families and partner services who work with children and young people in order to help them understand and promote their development, with dedicated support from our expert Health Visitors and School Nurses.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>https://www.bexley0to19.co.uk/</p>	<p>0300 330 5777</p>	<p>bromh.bexley0to19@nhs.net</p>
Heart n Soul Creative Arts	<p>Offer opportunities for people with learning disabilities to take part in creative activities, train in a new skill or develop their artistic talents.</p>	<p>Heart n Soul The Albany Douglas Way London SE8 4AG</p>	<p>https://www.heartnsoul.co.uk/</p>	<p>020 8694 1632</p>	<p>info@heartnsoul.co.uk</p>
HER Centre	<p>Her centre is a small local women's charity based in Greenwich, providing services to girls and women in Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham. They work to eradicate violence against women and girls by seeking to engage, enable and empower women to move away from abuse, and to move forward with their lives.</p>	<p>Clockhouse Community Centre Defiance Walk London SE18 5QL</p>	<p>http://www.hercentre.org/</p>	<p>020 3260 7715</p>	<p>info@hercentre.org</p>

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Howbury Tumblers	Howbury Tumblers is a registered charity in Erith/Slade Green. The charity provide a range of hot and cold refreshments for children & adults. The charity is a parent/carer and toddler group.	DA8 2EL, Chrome Road, Erith	https://www.howburytumblers.org/	07759 908424	howburytumblers@googlemail.com
IASS	Offering a service to children and young people up to age 25 with special educational needs or disabilities and their parent/carers. Providing confidential and impartial information, advice and support via a telephone helpline, email, or by meeting in person.	Bexley Information, Advice and Support Shepway Centre Oxford Road Maidstone ME15 8AW	https://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk/bexleys-iass-information-advice-and-support-service.html	0203 045 5976	bexleyIASS@bexley.gov.uk
Inspire Community Trust	Inspire Community Trust is a user led organisation committed to promoting independent living. This is achieved by supporting disabled people and those who have sensory impairments to make informed choices which enables them to improve and enhance their lives.	20 Whitehall Lane Erith Kent DA8 2DH	http://www.inspirecommunitytrust.org/	020 3045 5100	info@inspirecommunitytrust.org
Kent (North) Adoption Group	We are the local support group of the national organisation Adoption UK. We are run by and for adopters, prospective adopters and their families and offer support, information and friendship. We can offer support and information by telephone, email and face to face.		http://www.adoptionuk.org/	020 8301 1297	janet.jones.1@talktalk.net
Lewisham Refuge and Migrant network	We have been providing free, independent and confidential advice to refugee, asylum seeker and migrant (RASM) communities for over 25 years. Today we work with thousands of clients from all over London and help them access services needed to integrate and thrive into their local community.	41 Evelyn Street Deptford London SE8 5QX	https://www.lrmn.org.uk/	020 8694 0323	info@lrmn.org.uk
Lighthouse Educational Society (British Muslims of Turkish Background)	Lighthouse Educational Society is a South London-based charity working to enable and empower young people through education and raise confidence and ability to take initiative amongst them. It is a people-centric organisation aiming to give responsibility to all those who are willing to volunteer. We encourage involvement from all ages and everyone from different walks of life.	1 Hook Lane Welling Kent DA16 2DH	http://lhedu.org.uk/	020 83060206	welling@lhedu.org.uk
Little Fish	Original, brave and compelling theatre experiences for all young lives. Little Fish supports difficult to reach young people through the transformative power of theatre and community arts. Its work is designed to enable young people to question their aspirations and beliefs, empowering them to develop both their personal and social life skills. Participants are inspired to become cultural consumers or creators, actively shaping a new social & political landscape. The charity is ambitious in building creative and progressive partnerships with emerging artists and local communities to deliver a wide range of applied theatre projects and new touring productions.'	Little Fish Theatre The Forum At Greenwich Trafalgar Road London SE10 9EQ	https://littlefishtheatre.co.uk	+44 (0) 20 8269 1123	info@littlefishtheatre.co.uk
Mencap Bexley	Bexley Mencap works with and for people with a learning disability and their families who live in, or are the responsibility of, the London Borough of Bexley. They offer advice and support to children and adults with learning disabilities, their parents, carers and the wider community.	19 Church Road Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4DD	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/bexley-mencap/ Also https://yournetwork.mencap.org.uk/group/944	0208 303 6336	kara@bexleymencap.org.uk
Metro	For lesbian, gay and bisexual people or anyone questioning their sexuality living in south east London. The centre provides mental health support services including a mixed weekly drop-in, short term crisis support, long-term and short-term counselling, advice and advocacy, and one-off workshops.	141 Greenwich High Road London SE10 8JA	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/metro-centre/	020 8305 5000	hello@metrocharity.org.uk

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Mind in Bexley	Mind in Bexley is an independent, user-focused charity providing quality outcome-based services to make a positive difference to the Mental Health of the people of Bexley. The core services are talking therapies, recovery college and carers support	2a Devonshire Road Bexleyheath Kent DA6 8DS	http://mindinbexley.org.uk/	0208 303 8932	info@mindinbexley.org.uk
Mothers Embrace	The group works closely with the midwives, Mind, and health visitors within Bexley. Suitable for any mum who is finding things tough with pre/postnatal depression.	Danson Youth Centre Brampton Rd Bexleyheath DA7 4EZ	https://www.facebook.com/	N/A	mothersembrace16@gmail.com
MUSH for mums	Mush has been selected by NHS England as an innovation that is improving maternal mental health in the UK. We are working together with midwives, health visitors and perinatal mental health specialists to reach mums across the UK.	Phone App	https://letsmush.com/get-involved/	N/A	Saskia@letsmush.com
NAS Bexley	Bexley NAS are a parent led voluntary group, all of whom are the parents or carers of children who are on the Autistic Spectrum. They offer a variety of social and leisure activities for children on the autism spectrum and their families living within the Bexley Borough.	Sidcup Youth Centre Burnt Oak Lane Sidcup DA15 9BZ	https://www.bexleynas.co.uk/	07826 950496	bexley@nas.org.uk
Re-Instate	Re-Instate is a charity working to improve employment opportunities, quality of life and well-being for disadvantaged people including people experiencing mental ill health, people with learning disabilities and young people. A key part of the vision for Re-Instate is the provision of employment services that build sustainable recovery for people experiencing mental ill-health.	St. Johns Church Community Hall 194 West St Erith DA8 1AN	https://www.re-instate.co.uk/	01322 438 155	info@re-instate.co.uk
Samaritans	Samaritans is a unique charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection that can lead to suicide. Our vision is that fewer people die by suicide. Every year, we answer more than 5 million calls for help via our unique 24-hour listening service, email, SMS, letter, face to face and through our Welsh language service.	35 Glynde Road Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4EU	https://www.samaritans.org	116 123 free from any phone	jo@samaritans.org
Snap Bexley	Bexley snap is a charity and driven by helping disabled children. They do this through inclusive plan and leisure. For example they do early years groups, commissioned short breaks and youth clubs.	Normandy Children's Centre and SEND Hub Fairford Avenue Barnehurst DA7 6QP	http://www.bexleysnap.org.uk/	01322 334192	admin@bexleysnap.org.uk
Social Arts for Education (S.A.F.E)	Social Arts for Education (S.A.F.E.) is a study centre for children who have been withdrawn from mainstream school due to bullying and/or autism and other related conditions. S.A.F.E. teach children from the age 11 - 18 depending on tutor availability. Students often come to us with additional needs due to autism, anxiety disorders, fear of social situations and extreme shyness.	253 Eltham High Street Eltham London SE9 1TY	https://safeschoolbexley.co.uk/	N/A	info@safeschoolbexley.co.uk

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Steps for Health	Steps to Health is Bexley’s exercise referral scheme which provides a safe, supervised and enjoyable introduction to physical activity within a controlled environment. The programme provides patients who are not regularly active or who may have health problems the opportunity to improve their health and well-being, regardless of age, ability or experience.	N/A	https://www.bexleyccg.nhs.uk/Your-Health/Steps-to-health.htm	N/A	bexccg.contactus@nhs.net
The Haven Gay Social Group	Haven are a friendly mixed LGBTQ+ social group, that meets every Friday in Bexleyheath.	Meetings held 7.30 pm at the Age UK Pop In Parlour in Graham Road - 1st, 2nd and 3rd week in every month) and ASDA (the 4th week each month - 5th week Haven goes out for a meal). Both in Bexleyheath, Kent.		01322 287 356	
The Pier Road Project	The Pier Road Project is based at Erith Health Centre. They provide assessment, treatment and advice for people, aged over 18, who have substance misuse (drug and/or alcohol) related problems.	Erith Health Centre 50 Pier Road Erith DA8 1RQ	www.prbexley.org.uk	01322 357940	slm-tr.PierRoadProject@nhs.net
UK Men's Sheds Association	Community spaces for men to connect, converse and create. The activities are often similar to those of garden sheds, but for groups of men to enjoy together. They help reduce loneliness and isolation.	UK Men’s Sheds Association Henleaze House 13 Harbury Road Henleaze BS9 4PN	https://menssheds.org.uk/	0300 772 9626	admin@ukmsa.org.uk
Youth Action and Diversity Trust	At youth action diversity trust they focus on encouraging youth and family engagement within activities. They also do this through learning and in a dynamic way, helping to improve citizenship and a healthy start to life.	1 Davis Way Sidcup Kent DA14 5JR	https://www.youthactiondiversitytrust.co.uk/	020 8308 3862	Contact@YouthActionDiversityTrust.co.uk
Youth Advice Centre Bexley	The Bexley Youth Advice centre provides support, advice and guidance on a wide range of topics for young people ages 13 to 19 (up to 25 for young people with additional needs). Services to young people are provided both on a drop-in and appointment basis. There are topical workshops available as well as relevant group work opportunities. Young people provide also get the opportunity to work on job applications and to create or update CVs.	233 Broadway Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7EJ	http://www.prospects.co.uk/Contact-Us/Corporate-Head-Office/Prospects-in-Bexley-	020 3045 5555	N/A

Level 2:Additional

<p>The 2 year offer (Play 2 learn) funding for eligible families to access childcare (either nurseries or childminders)</p>	<p>Free early education and childcare for 2-year-olds in England. https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds?step-by-step-nav=f237ec8e-e82c-4ffa-8fba-2a88a739783b</p>		<p>http://www.bexley.gov.uk/sites/bexley-cms/files/2018-09/Funded-childcare-information-for-parents.pdf</p>		<p>Funded.Childcare@bexley.gov.uk</p>
<p>Best Beginnings midwifery service</p>	<p>The Best Beginnings Midwives provide an intensive community based preventative approach to women 'in need' and their families in the Greenwich and Bexley Borough, during antenatal, labour and postnatal period. There are also two links midwives from the PRUH who are a specialist service for pregnant women with mental health issues / needing more support. They are based at Queen Mary's Hospital. The Links midwives also visit women in their homes in Bexley.</p>	<p>Queen Elizabeth Hospital Stadium Road Woolwich London SE18 4QH</p>	<p>http://familiesinformation.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/kb5/greenwich/fsd/service.page?id=4VWYllSggXc</p>	<p>07748 646397 07748 646356</p>	<p>samantha.smith3@nhs.net loren.francis@nhs.net</p>
<p>Charlton Athletic</p>	<p>Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) works in partnership with local communities to empower individuals to improve their lives and their environment. CACT's programmes are delivered through a regular presence in schools and working with disadvantaged or socially excluded groups in society, through crime reduction initiatives and community based football coaching sessions.</p>	<p>Charlton Athletic Training Ground Sparrows Lane New Eltham London SE9 2JR</p>	<p>https://cact.org.uk</p>	<p>0208 8502866</p>	<p>info@cact.org.uk</p>
<p>Eating Disorder Service (SLAM)</p>	<p>Provide Specialist Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service (CAEDS) is renowned worldwide for the psychological treatments it offers to children and adolescents with eating disorders, along with their families. Our team combines a highly specialist knowledge of eating disorders, with expertise in family therapy and individual approaches.</p> <p>There are two referral options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone: 020 3228 2545 (line open 9.00am – 6.00pm Mon-Fri). Your call will be answered by a senior clinician. • On-line. This may be particularly useful if you are a young person and may find it difficult to contact us initially. A senior clinician will then call you back during office hours at a convenient time for you. 	<p>The Michael Rutter Centre The Maudsley Hospital De Crespigny Park Off Denmark Hill London SE5 8AZ</p>	<p>https://www.national.slam.nhs.uk/services/camhs/camhs-eatingdisorders/</p>	<p>020 3228 2545</p>	<p>https://www.maudsleycentre-cyp-eatingdisorders.co.uk/ (online referral webpage)</p>
<p>Family Lives</p>	<p>Family Lives provide an Early Years Family Support Service in Bexley through a range of time limited targeted interventions; we aim to support families with children 0-5 and their siblings up to 11 years so that they can function effectively with support from universal services.</p>	<p>Portman Early Childhood Centre 12-18 Salisbury Street London NW8 8DE</p>	<p>https://www.familylives.org.uk/</p>	<p>0808 800 2222</p>	<p>askus@familylives.org.uk fatimaa@familylives.org.uk</p>
<p>Imago Community</p>	<p>Imago is a social action charity which delivers a range of services and projects; supporting independence, reducing social isolation and creating opportunities, for some of the most vulnerable in our communities. In addition we help voluntary and community sector organisations operate more effectively by offering a range of information, advice, resources, training and support</p>	<p>John Spare House 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1LS</p>	<p>https://www.imago.community/</p>	<p>01892 530330</p>	<p>hello@imago.community</p>

Level 2:Additional

Insight Bexley	We seek to provide quality housing services and support to refugees, minority groups, young people and asylum seekers to develop their independence, promote their positive contribution to this country and ease their integration into the UK.	10 Kennet Road Crayford London DA1 4QN	http://insightbexley.org/	07824 999 581	info@insightbexley.org.uk help@insightbexley.org.uk
Kickstart	Bexley Kickstart Motor Project works with young people aged 11-19 who live or go to school within Bexley. Our aim is for young people to acquire basic skills in motorcycle maintenance and repair, understand the responsibilities of motorbike ownership and the law around owning and riding them. We also offer young people the opportunity to take part in off road riding to develop their riding skills.	Sidcup Youth Centre Burnt Oak Lane DA15 9BZ	www.bkmp.co.uk (not yet operational)		
Portage Service Bexley	Bexley Portage Service is a Home Education Service for pre-school aged children (from birth) with additional needs / delay in at least three areas of their development.	Child Development Centre 3rd Floor B-Block Queen Mary's Hospital Sidcup DA14 6LT	https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/bexley-portage-service	0208 302 2678 ext. 4286/ 07828847093	
Young Epilepsy	Enables children and young people with epilepsy and associated conditions to develop their full potential through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing stigma and discrimination • Being at the forefront of research into epilepsy • Providing expert information, training and advice to professionals and families • Influencing policy and thought • Delivering unique integrated health, education and care services to support students at our Lingfield campus to achieve progression and independence. 	Young Epilepsy St. Piers Lane Lingfield Surrey RH7 6PW	https://www.youngpilepsy.org.uk	Helpline: 01342 831342 (Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm) Switchboard: 01342 832243 (Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm)	info@youngpilepsy.org.uk
Bromley Healthcare	Targeted support for families requiring additional support for a specific issue and support for vulnerable families according to need.	Bromley Healthcare Central Court 1 Knoll Rise Orpington BR6 0JA	https://www.bexley0to19.co.uk/	0300 330 5777	bromh.bexley0to19@nhs.net

Level 3: Intensive

<p>Act for Change (Bexley Open Doors is a joint initiative between Bexley Council and Act for Change)</p>	<p>Act for Change is a charity which works to improve the lives of children and young people aged 11-25 and their families, who have experiences of trauma, abuse and bereavement, often excluded from school and find themselves isolated and marginalised. They may be involved in the youth justice system. We aim to improve the personal well-being of young people who have had adverse childhood experiences and to reduce their likelihood of resorting to violence and to harm themselves and others.</p>	<p>17 Canons Close Radlett Hertfordshire WD7 7ER</p>	<p>www.actforchange.org.uk http://bexleyopendoors.org.uk/</p>	<p>07793 656225</p>	<p>lea@actforchange.org.uk</p>
<p>Aspens Charity</p>	<p>Provide support to children and young people with a range of disabilities, complex needs and those on the autism spectrum who are known to the Children with Disabilities team. Helping children to develop the skills they need to live independently as adults; and adults to realise their potential, fulfil their ambitions and achieve greater independence.</p>	<p>33-47 The Green Welling Kent DA16 2PA</p>	<p>https://aspens.org.uk/</p>	<p>020 8303 7995</p>	<p>enquiries@aspens.org.uk</p>
<p>Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich Perinatal Mental Health Service (Oxleas)</p>	<p>The Perinatal Mental Health Team is a multi-disciplinary mental health service for pregnant and postnatal women with severe and complex mental illness. MDT team including nurses, consultant psychiatrists, psychologists, administrators, team manager, OT, Social Worker, Nursery Nurses. Contact service Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.</p>		<p>http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/perinatal-mental-health-service/</p>	<p>020 3961 3613 (Patient line)</p>	<p>oxl-tr.bexleycamhsreferrals@nhs.net tr.oxleasperinatalmentalhealthservice@nhs.net</p>
<p>Bexley Moorings Project</p>	<p>Bexley Moorings Project is a registered charity working in London Borough of Bexley to provide effective support for vulnerable young people aged 8-17 on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan and who are experiencing a crisis or ongoing problems, including; material or emotional deprivation, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, social isolation, bullying, or the effects of dysfunctional family life. They may have a caring role within the family to a parent or sibling with disability or life illness. Support is offered through one to one befriending and focused group work delivered by a small team of dedicated staff and over 60 volunteers.</p>	<p>c/o Danson Centre Brampton Road Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4EZ</p>	<p>https://www.bexleymoorings.co.uk/</p>	<p>020 8304 9609</p>	<p>info@bexleymoorings.co.uk</p>
<p>Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS)</p>	<p>Providing an assessment and treatment service for children and young people (aged 0 – 18) where there are significant concerns about their behaviour or emotional wellbeing. The service can help with a number of emotional and behavioural difficulties that might be affecting a child or young person's life at home or at school. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety problems • Behavioural problems • Depression • Psychosis • Self-harm • Trauma 	<p>Outpatients Department, Memorial Hospital, Shooters Hill, London, SE18 3RG</p>	<p>http://oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/child-and-adolescent-mental-2/</p>	<p>0203 260 5200</p>	<p>oxl-tr.bexleycamhsreferrals@nhs.net</p>
<p>Charlton Athletic Community Trust</p>	<p>CACT uses the power of football and sports to engage, empower and provide positive opportunities and activities for young people. From engagement and early intervention schemes young people are signposted into positive activities and provided with exit routes into recreational and structured activities run by the trust and partner agencies.</p>	<p>Charlton Athletic training ground Sparrows Lane New Eltham London SE9 2JR</p>	<p>https://cact.org.uk/</p>	<p>0208 8502 866 or Kim Dixon: 07980380708</p>	<p>Kim.dixon@cact.org.uk</p>

Level 3: Intensive

Charlton Athletic (consortium)	Providing short breaks for children and young people who have a disability.	Charlton Athletic training ground Sparrows Lane New Eltham London SE9 2JR	https://cact.org.uk/		Carl.Krauhaus@cact.org.uk
Family Wellbeing Service	The Family Wellbeing team aims to provide help to families early, to prevent difficulties becoming worse. The team works with children and families from 0 to 18 years old, where there is one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permanent exclusion of a child from school • The risk of school exclusion and school attendance issues • Parental or carer mental ill health • Parental learning disability • Parental domestic abuse • Parental drug or alcohol misuse • Low-level neglect • Physical chastisement 	105 West Street Erith Kent DA8 1AQ	https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/services-children-young-people-and-families/family-wellbeing-service	Telephone: Daytime hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) 020 3045 5440 Out of hours (6pm to 8am Monday to Friday and weekends) 020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171	REFERRAL FORM https://www.bexley.gov.uk/sites/bexley-cms/files/Family-Wellbeing-assessment-and-plan.pdf
Mellow parenting course	Mellow Parenting is a Scottish Organisation who research, develop and implement evidenced based Parenting Programmes. The programme will help parents to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn new ideas to support your child's development • Think about those things that influence them and what they would like to be different • Enjoy activities with their child and help to strengthen relationships • Gain their child's co-operation and manage challenging behaviour 	Belvedere Family Centre 1 Station Rd Belvedere DA17 6JJ	http://www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/Docs/BexleyLocalOffer/Other-Services/Articles/CONT-OTHER-0116-A002_Mellow%20Parenting.pdf	Contact Kam Marjara 0208 294 6400 Senior Social Worker, Think Family Service	
NYAS	Independent Visitors (IVs) are adult volunteers who give their time freely each month to visit a specific child or young person who is looked after. An IV is an independent person who is not paid to visit you. The aim of the Independent Visitor is to build and develop a trusting and positive relationship with you by providing support for you with any issues you may be finding difficult in your life. IVs can support you by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking an interest in you • Support you to develop your interests and hobbies. • Being a reliable and consistent person in your life. • Listening to you but never judging you • A person who is independent from your care who you can ask for advice • A person who is there just for you • Someone you can have fun with • Someone you may come to trust 	NYAS Tower House 1 Tower Road Birkenhead Wirral CH41 1FF	https://youngpeople.nyas.net	0808 808 1001	If you are a child, young person or ringing on behalf of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and need help, information or advice, please contact our freephone helpline or email help@nyas.net.
Oxleas	CAMHs for children and young people known to Social Care (TBC)	Pinewood House Pinewood Place Dartford Kent DA2 7WG	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/		

Level 3: Intensive

<p>Porchlight</p>	<p>The service works with 8-17 year olds across Bexley, providing one-to-one support at home, in school, or anywhere the young person feels safe. The service is designed to help young people with all kinds of support needs, whether they're having difficulty managing their relationships, getting into trouble at school or having problems at home that are affecting their education.</p>	<p>Head Office 2nd Floor Watling Chambers 18-19 Watling Street Canterbury Kent CT1 2UA</p>	<p>https://www.porchlight.org.uk/</p>	<p>24-hour Helpline 0800 567 76 99</p>	<p>bass@porchlight.org.uk</p>
<p>Solace Women's Aid</p>	<p>Solace Women's Aid exists to end the harm done through Violence Against Women and Girls. Their aim is to work to prevent violence and abuse as well as providing services to meet the needs of survivors particularly women and girls. Work is holistic and empowering, working alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.</p>	<p>Unit 5-7 Blenheim Court 62 Brewery Road London N7 9NY</p>	<p>https://www.solacewomensaid.org</p>	<p>0808 802 5565</p>	<p>advice@solacewomensaid.org</p>
<p>Targeted Youth Team</p>	<p>Bexley TYS operates across four hubs in the borough and provides additional help at the earliest opportunity to vulnerable young people who face, or are at risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation • Family violence • Parental mental ill health • Substance misuse • Being excluded from school or at risk of school exclusion • Involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour 	<p>Thamesmead Hub – Church of the Cross, Lensbury Way, SE2 9UE Lovel Hub – Lovel Avenue, Welling, DA16 3JQ Slade Green Hub – Howbury Community Centre, Chrome Road, Erith DA8 2EL</p>	<p>https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/services-children-young-people-and-families/bexley-targeted-youth-service-tys</p>	<p>Contact 020 8303 7777 and ask for Youth Services.</p>	

Level 4: Specialist

Autism Sussex (now known as Aspens)	Aspens provides support to children, young people and adults with a range of disabilities, complex needs and those on the autism spectrum. They help children to develop the skills they need to live independently as adults; and adults to realise their potential, fulfil their ambitions and achieve greater independence. Staff provide a personalised service focused on individual needs and offer support and advice to empower families, carers and other professionals to confidently look after those who benefit from the service.	Cornford Lane Pembury Kent TN2 4QU	https://aspens.org.uk/	+44 (0) 1892 822 168	enquiries@aspens.org.uk
Demelza	"When families are struggling to cope because their children have a serious or terminal condition, Demelza provides specialist care and support, bringing them back from breaking point. Our hospices in South East London and Kent, and our homecare service in East Sussex provide tailored care to babies, children and young adults. Our facilities, nurses, therapists and dedicated volunteers give families the time and space to feel like families again."	"5 Wensley Close, Eltham, London, SE9 5AB"	https://www.demelza.org.uk/	020 8859 9800	info@demelza.org.uk
Ellenor	We provide the best hospice care and support to families facing terminal illness in Kent. We're the only charity in the county who provides hospice care for people of all ages. Our care includes pain and symptom relief, palliative care, end of life care, respite, bereavement support and emotional and spiritual care.	Coldharbour Road Gravesend Kent DA11 7HQ	https://ellenor.org	01474 320007	info@ellenor.org
Greenwich and Bexley Hospice	The Hospice is a local charity dedicated to providing free, high-quality, compassionate care and support for people with all terminal illnesses, their families, and their carers in the London Boroughs of Royal Greenwich and Bexley. We care for over 2,500 people each year at home, in care homes, in our Hospice beds, in our Day Hospice and Hospice-based clinics, and in hospital.	Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice 185 Bostall Hill Abbey Wood London SE2 0GB	https://www.communityhospice.org.uk/	020 8312 2244	info@gbch.org.uk
Oxleas	Providing speech and language services to children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) only.	Pinewood House Pinewood Place Dartford Kent DA2 7WG	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/	TBC	TBC
Oxleas	Providing speech and language services to children and young people known to the Youth Offending Service.	Pinewood House Pinewood Place Dartford Kent DA2 7WG	http://oxleas.nhs.uk/	TBC	TBC



What happens when you make a referral to the local authority about a child?

Telephone calls to MASH are received by the children's screeners. Screeners are not social workers, but are able to respond to queries, give information and signpost to other services as necessary. Such discussions do not constitute a consultation because these need to be undertaken with a social worker (see page 7 of this guidance). All calls/faxes/emails into the system are logged onto the electronic system as **contacts** (provided the call or referral does not relate to an open case, in which case, the details are recorded on open case notes and passed to the allocated worker).

Where a contact is potentially a child in need referral or a child protection referral (i.e. in need of intensive support and help), the MASH will gather further information that day, having a duty to respond to the referrer within 24 hours to explain what is going to happen next.

Where the call or referral suggests that a child is at risk of immediate harm, the details will be passed to the referral and assessment service for immediate action under the supervision of the service manager for the referral and assessment service. The child will ALWAYS been seen on the same working day.

All contacts will be seen by a manager or senior practitioner within one working day to decide a course of action. Next steps will include:

- Advice and information given
- Sign-posting to other help or targeted services, for example targeted youth or Bexley Womens Aid or to the MASH for further consideration, including a consultation between the caller and a qualified social worker where next steps are not immediately clear
- Held in the MASH until the end of the next working day (at most) to gather more information
- Accepted as a referral and allocated to a social worker in the referral and assessment service
- No further action.

The outcome of the enquiry will be fed back to the referrer within 24 hours as required in statutory guidance.

When a referral is accepted, it will usually be allocated to a social worker in the referral and assessment service. In most cases a **children and families assessment** will be undertaken. This will include seeing the child alone (where age appropriate), **within 3 working days of the original referral (or as soon as in necessary in accordance with the presenting risk and uncertainty)**, meeting parents and carers, discussing concerns and gathering current and historical information from all relevant professionals to make a judgment about needs and risks in order to develop a plan or agree further actions to support the child.

During an assessment, UNLESS there are concerns that the child is at risk of harm or significant harm or has already been harmed AND the decision has been made that the nature of the assessment is that it is a child protection enquiry (section 47 of the Children Act 1989), parental consent must always be sought, gained and recorded before seeking further information from other agencies as part of the assessment.

The outcome of an assessment may be the provision of advice or help from an existing service, a child in need plan, request for family wellbeing to support the child/family, or no further action. The outcome of the referral will be shared with the referrer and any agencies from whom information has been sought.

Statutory guidance (see **Working together 2018**) gives up to 45 working days for the completion of an assessment which allows for detailed information from other agencies and family members to be sought, detailed exploration into the family background to be carried out, and the needs of the children to be fully understood. In Bexley, the time an assessment takes is agreed at the start between a manager and practitioner. It will be wholly dependent upon the presenting risk and uncertainty, the family history and the judgement about the welfare and safety of the child or children at that time. **An assessment may lead to a child in need plan or other protective action as is deemed necessary.**



Whenever there are **child protection concerns**, a **'section 47 (Children Act 1989) enquiry'** is undertaken. This involves liaison with the police and other agencies and will ALWAYS be started following a **strategy discussion**, often through a multi-disciplinary meeting, to decide and plan next steps.

An assessment of the child's circumstances including risks and needs is undertaken following the strategy meeting. This may lead to a decision that there are no concerns, to a voluntary child in need plan, or to some form of statutory intervention often through an **initial child protection conference (which needs to take place within 15 working days of the initial strategy meeting)**.

If those in attendance at the child protection conference agree, a **child protection plan** is written and becomes the agreed working arrangement for everyone to protect the child. This includes the parents, carers and extended family. The child protection plan will make clear to the parents what changes they have to make to ensure the child does not suffer significant or further harm. The plan will also set out what will happen if the changes are not made. Should the circumstances of the child not improve

or where further serious incidents occur, a decision may be made to apply to the court for **care proceedings**. The first step in this process is usually to have a legal planning meeting and issue parents with a formal **public law outline (PLO) letter** stating what must improve to avoid care proceedings.

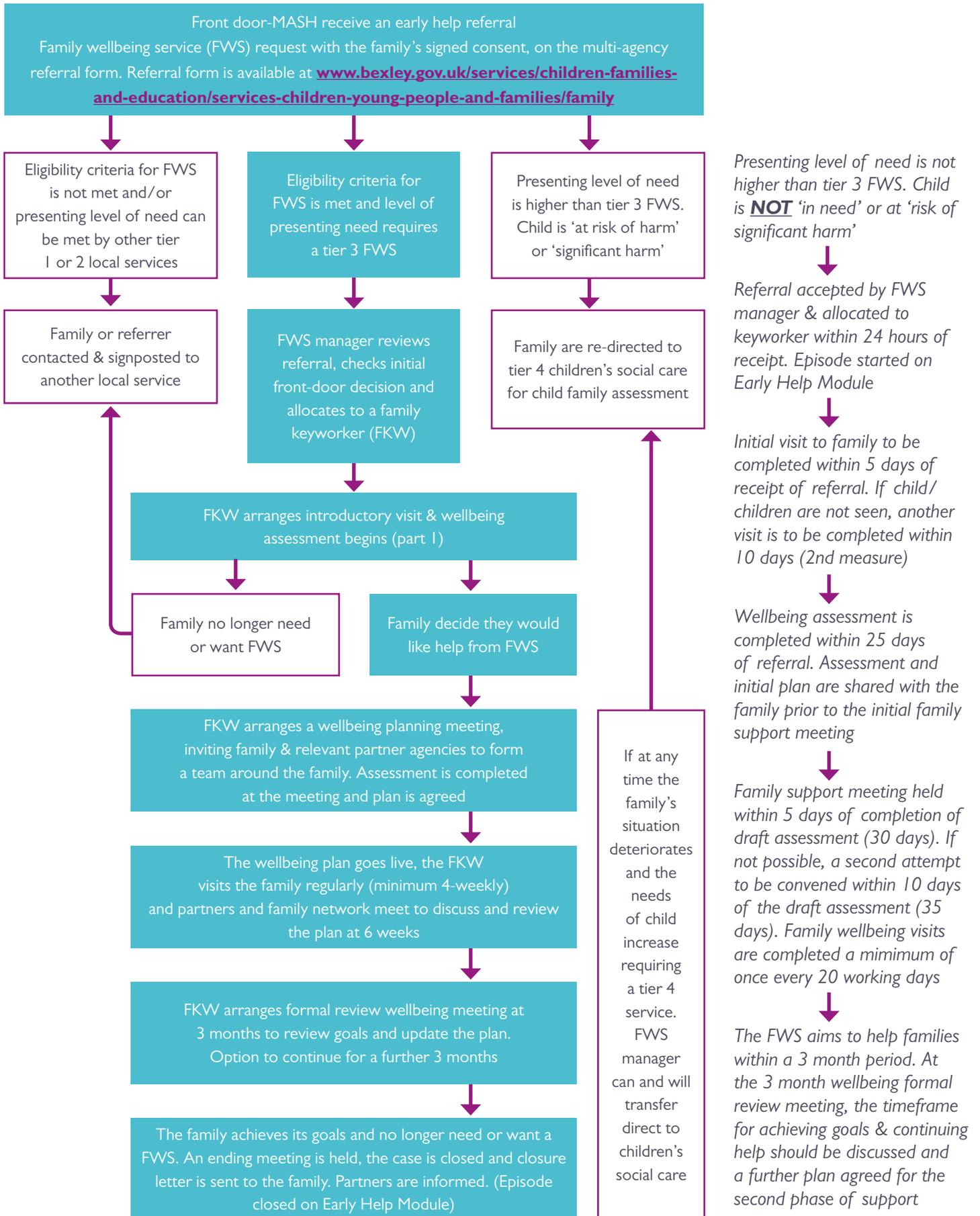
Once children's social care and other specialist help have successfully reduced the risk of significant harm for the child, targeted and/or intensive services may be asked to continue to support the child and family through the **'effective support'** processes already described.

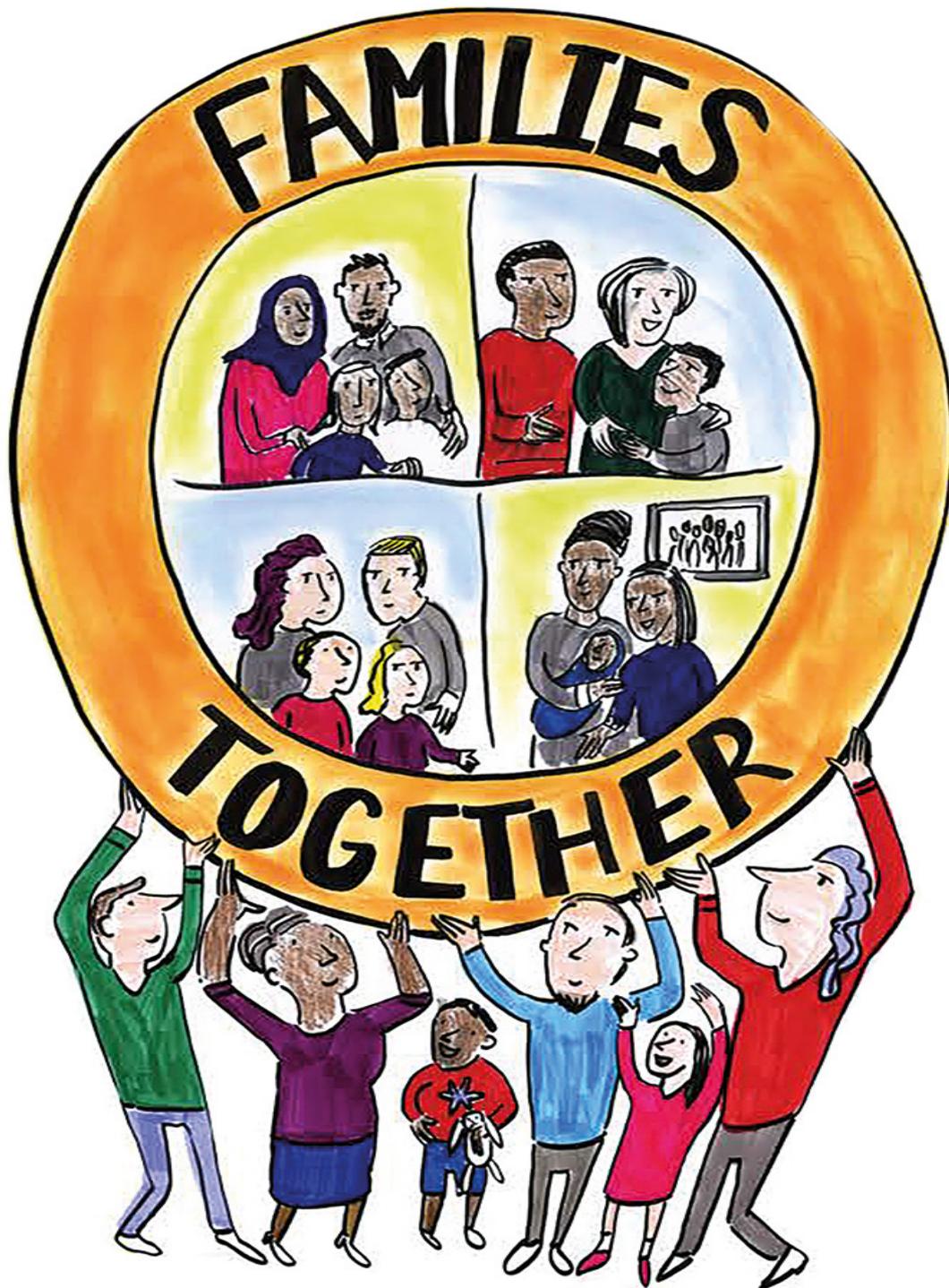




Family wellbeing

Tier 3 – intensive help, family wellbeing service





Useful weblinks

Documents and Services

[Family wellbeing service guidance](#)

This includes:

- [Family wellbeing assessment and plan](#)
- [Referral form for effective support \(includes a section on consent\)](#)

[Effective support for children with disabilities and their families in Bexley](#)

This includes:

- [Disabled children's service – matrix](#)
- [Eligibility and threshold criteria for the disabled children's service](#)

[Children's social care](#)

[Bexley children's services vision and values](#)

[Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People](#)

[Directory of voluntary and community services for the family wellbeing service](#)

Local Education Systems Leader (Safeguarding in Education)

The Local Education Systems Leader (Safeguarding in Education) assists schools and education settings to make their safeguarding practice as effective as possible. Contact EIS@bexley.gov.uk for further information.

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners, March 2015](#)

[When to suspect child maltreatment \(NICE\)](#) (please note the current guidelines have recently been consulted on and are likely to be updated)

Legislation

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

Children and Families Act 2014

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Education Act 2002

Data Protection Act 1998

Guidance

Working Together 2018

Keeping children safe in education 2018:

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment

Gillick competence

Government advice on information sharing:

Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)

London safeguarding children board:

Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidance

Acknowledgements

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This information is issued by Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. You can contact us in the following ways:

By email: shield@bexley.gov.uk

Visit our website: www.bexleyscb.org.uk

By telephone: 020 3045 4125

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