



FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SEPARATED OR SEPARATING PARENTS

These factsheets are intended to assist professionals in guiding recently separated or separating parents to appropriate support and advice. It has been designed by the Family Support Co-ordination Service which was the delivery arm of the Child Poverty Project for separated and separating parents in Harlow. The project was funded by the Department for Education until March 2011.

It contains details of the main organisations the project team worked with, however, for a more comprehensive guide of organisations and agencies available to support separated and separating families and others in need of assistance see the A-Z directory compiled by Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice available at www.essexpartnershipportal.org/live/partnership/73

Advice can be accessed for:

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Counselling Services

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Parenting Advice and Support

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Other useful services



FACT SHEET 1 COUNSELLING SERVICES

Relate offers relationship counselling services for individuals, couples, families and young people.

Individual counselling can help clients clarify their problems and difficulties and find ways of working through them. For many, the ending of a relationship, whether voluntary or involuntary, can be extremely painful with feelings of loss and underlying emotions that may range from shock, numbness and despair through to anger, shame, eventual acceptance and moving on. This time can feel like an emotional rollercoaster and be hard to manage. Counselling can offer a safe environment to explore and work through these feelings. The counselling process can also be beneficial to those who need to work through other issues such as self esteem, anxiety, communication etc.

Couples counselling has no set agenda within an organisation such as Relate. The service is to help clients move forward with their lives, whether together or apart. The focus may be exploratory, to get an understanding of the reasons behind their difficulties or more focused in the here and now, enabling clients to separate amicably and where children are involved, with the least conflict possible.

Family counselling is a service where all members of the family can express their feelings, developing their communication skills and helping

to settle differences. For a separating family where, at times, children may be caught in the conflict of anger and blame being directed from one or both parents to the other, this environment can give children the opportunity to be heard.

Youth counselling can offer the opportunity for the children to talk about how they feel and find coping strategies for difficult situations. During a separation parents cannot always be as emotionally available to their children as they may normally be or, in some cases, children may feel that they cannot burden their parents, who are already distressed, with their problems.

Contact: Relate North Essex and East Herts.

Telephone: 01245 258680

Email: admin@relate-northersex.org

Website: www.relate-northersex.org.uk

MIND offers a free counselling service that covers:

- Depression
- Bereavement
- Family difficulties
- Traumatic experiences
- Anger management
- Chronic illness
- Low self esteem
- Anxiety/stress.



Contact: West Essex MIND

Telephone: 01371 876641

Email: counselling@westessexmind.org.uk

Website: www.westessexmind.org.uk

Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)

ADAS offers a free service for people who are directly affected by drugs and/or alcohol misuse.

The services include:

- Counselling: Individual and Couple
- Children's Support Services
- Family Therapy
- Complementary Therapies
- Stress and Anxiety Management Groups
- Relaxation Groups.

Telephone: 01279 641347 or 01279 438716

Email: admin@adasuk.org

Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Is a short term targeted service providing mental health and emotional wellbeing support to children and families. They provide direct work to children in a range of settings which include schools, Children's Centres and GP surgeries.

Referrals are made through a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and can only be made by professionals.

For referrals requiring consideration from other agencies, CAMHS may refer to the Multi Agency Allocation Meeting (MAAG) to ensure families receive a range of services according to need and availability, this is only considered with

consent from parents or those with parental responsibility.

A duty worker is available Monday to Thursday from 09.00 to 18.00 and Friday from 09.00 to 16.30 for consultation to professionals, foster carers or parents who may wish to discuss any concerns. The service is located in Chelmsford.

Telephone: 01245 353789

CALM is a long established charity which provides a high quality professional counselling service on a range of issues including domestic violence, drug and alcohol, eating disorders, stress, self esteem, anger and depression and promotes mental health and mental wellbeing to residents in and around Harlow. A contribution is requested for an assessment followed by counselling sessions (£30 per session for an individual and £50 per session for a couple).

Contact: CALM

Telephone: 01279 411330

Email: calmcentre@btconnect.com

Website: www.calmcentre.co.uk

Young Concern Trust (YCT) is a community based organisation, supporting young people in the Harlow area for over 20 years. Its mission is 'to support young people in and around Harlow and east Hertfordshire by providing one to one counselling, support groups and other projects relevant to young lives'.

Telephone: 01279 414090

Email: yct@youngconcern.com

Website: www.youngconcern.com



FACT SHEET 2 PARENTING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Sure Start Children's Centres are one stop shops for children under 5 and their families.

Services offered:

- Play and Early Learning
- Family Drop-Ins
- Health Services
- Family Support
- Training for Adults
- Linked Child Care

There are 6 centres in Harlow, open Monday to Friday. For opening times please phone the individual centre.

Contact: The Tree House
Parnall Road, CM18 7NG
Telephone: 01279 772600
Email: viv.derrick@hccn.org.uk

Contact: The Meadows
Harberts Road, CM19 4DL
Telephone: 01279 773900
Email: chris.arrowsmith@hccn.org.uk

Contact: Potter Street
Carters Mead, CM17 9EU
Telephone: 01279 420587
Email: bev.jones@hccn.org.uk

Contact: Burnt Mill
First Avenue, CM20 2NR
Telephone: 01279 442419
Email: colin.slattery@hccn.org.uk

Contact: Sunflower
Sumners Leisure Centre, CM19 5RD
Telephone: 01279 772600
Email: fay.norris@hccn.org.uk

Contact: ABC
Garden Terrace Road, CM17 0AT
Telephone: 01279 423625
Email: Louise.orme@hccn.org.uk

Family Lives is the leading national charity providing support for families with children of any age.

Confidential advice is offered in a range of areas:

- Relationships
- Divorce and Separation
- Bullying
- Finance and Work
- Lifestyle
- Health and Wellbeing
- Families and the Law.

Telephone: 0808 800 2222
Web: www.familylives.org.uk



Accuro is a local charity providing a range of services to support children with a disability and their families.

Services provided include:

- Parenting Support: Home visits, Parenting Programmes, Support Groups and Drop-ins
- Family Support Work
- Sitting Service
- Shared Care
- School Holiday Support Project
- Under 19s Scheme for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Telephone: 01279 433117/433667

Web: www.accuro.org.uk

Children's Welfare at school

Parents should first talk to appropriate school staff to discuss any concerns about their child(ren) (e.g. Head of Year, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Head of pastoral care)

Parental Wellbeing

(signs of anxiety, depression or stress)

Appointments should be made with individuals' GPs for advice.





FACT SHEET 3 ADVICE/LEGAL/MEDIATION

Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice (HWRA)

is an independent charity and a member of Advice UK.

The services include:

- Advice, advocacy and representation in debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits
- Access to specialist advisers, solicitors and support officers
- Provides a wide range of community information on other related subjects
- Holds the quality mark issued by the Legal Services Commission (LSC).

Reception staff will assess the enquiry or problem, check if there are any essential deadlines, give brief advice and/or information where necessary, explain how the service works and book an appointment if appropriate. If it is difficult for clients to attend appointments during the Advice Centre's normal opening hours, it is possible to make out-of-hours appointments or home visits for housebound clients.

Reception staff will need some personal and income details before booking appointments as the majority of casework is available only to clients who are funded through HWRA's contract with the Legal Services Commission (LSC). The LSC contract covers clients whose incomes are low enough for them to qualify for legal aid AND who live in the area covered by Harlow Council

or Epping Forest District Council AND who need specialist help that is covered by the legal aid scheme for issues with debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits.

HWRA has only very limited funding to do casework for non-legally aidable clients. There is some funding for Harlow residents who need benefits, housing, debt and employment advice. Harlow Council funds most of this work.

HWRA offers a service at Harlow County Court on possession hearing days. There is no requirement for people assisted via this scheme to be legally aidable. Clients should allow enough time on the day for the HWRA Duty Court Adviser to look through their papers before they have to appear before the court officials. This work may be transferred to hearings at Harlow Magistrates Court from April 2011.

Debt

Advisers help clients resolve debt related problems (other than most business debts) that they may face including arrears on essential services, bailiff action, Council Tax arrears, inability to repay credit or loans, mortgage arrears and repossession and rent difficulties. They can assist with Debt Relief Orders and personal bankruptcies.

Advisers prioritise debts, maximise income, prepare a financial statement showing income and essential expenses and then agree a plan



for coping with the debts with the client. As debt problems can be complex, this may require extensive long-term work.

Advisers may also be able to assist with court appearances.

Employment

Advisers help employees and workers with most aspects of employment law, including breach of contract, discrimination, dismissal, holiday pay, minimum wage, redundancy, rights for parents and other carers, unpaid wages and working time regulations.

They can normally write to employers on a client's behalf to try and negotiate a resolution to the problem. They can help clients complete Employment Tribunal or County Court applications where needed. In some circumstances, they can represent clients at Employment Tribunals, Employment Appeal Tribunals and County Courts. However, they cannot normally represent clients at internal disciplinary or grievance hearings.

Housing

Advice is offered on a range of housing issues including disputes, harassment, homelessness, householders' responsibilities, leasehold conditions, right to buy, security of tenure, tenants' rights, deposits and waiting lists.

Advisers will inform clients of their rights, act as advocates and represent clients in Court when needed.

Welfare Benefits

Advice is given on means-tested and non means-tested benefits, including disability and incapacity related benefits, NHS benefits, industrial injuries, benefits for those looking for work, Employment and Support Allowance, maternity benefits, Statutory Sick Pay, Pension Credit, Social Fund, State Retirement Pension and Tax Credits. Problems with overpayments and underpayments of benefits are also covered. Claimants who are being investigated and/or prosecuted for alleged benefit fraud should seek the advice of a solicitor specialising in criminal law.

Advice ranges from simple benefit checks and 'better off' calculations through to challenging decisions on benefit claims. Advisers can make written representations to benefit appeal tribunals and at Upper Tribunals and Courts where appropriate. In some circumstances, they may be able to attend tribunals with clients.

Contact: Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice
Harlow Advice Centre, 2 East Gate,
Harlow, CM20 1ND

Telephone: 01279 446622
between 10.00 to 13.30, Monday to Friday

For clients who are unable to telephone between 10.00 and 13.30

Telephone: 01279 446777

Fax: 01279 446599

Email: admin@hwra.org.uk

Website: www.hwra.org.uk



Family Law

(separation/divorce/child custody/division of marital assets/Adoption)

Family law is an area of the law that deals with family-related issues and domestic relations including:

- Separation
- Divorce
- Child custody
- Division of marital assets
- Adoption

Contact: Harlow Solicitors (Legal Aided)

L D Law Limited, 1 West Walk, Harlow,
Essex, CM20 1LR

Telephone: 01279 441266 | DX: 40501 Harlow

Fax: 01279 444440

Contact: Barnes and Partners

5 West Square, The High, Harlow,
Essex, CM20 1JJ

Telephone: 01279 418601 | DX: 40500 Harlow

Fax: 01279 450552

Legal Aid

Legal aid helps with the costs of legal advice for people who cannot afford it.

Whether legal aid will be provided will depend on:

- the type of legal problem
- the amount of income and capital (money, property and belongings) the person applying has – called ‘financial eligibility’ and
- whether there is a reasonable chance of winning the case and whether it is worth the time and money needed to win.

There are income and capital limits, however, if it is an application for an order to protect someone from harm, these upper limits can be disregarded.

Legal aid can be provided for some types of help regardless of how much money the applicant has. These include, for example, getting a barrister or solicitor to represent at a Mental Health Review Tribunal, or if the local authority starts care proceeding in relation to children.

Proposals to reduce the amount of help available via legal aid will be considered in 2011.

There is a legal aid calculator available on

Web: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk or

Telephone: 0845 345 4 345 for further information on legal aid.



Mediation

Mediation is a negotiation to resolve differences; it is conducted by some impartial party who intervenes for the purpose of bringing about a settlement. It is a voluntary process conducted in a neutral safe environment. It helps those involved in family breakdown or conflict to reach their own decisions about the future and to communicate better.

Some mediators charge on a sliding scale according to each person's ability to pay. A detailed assessment will have to be done to determine how much you will have to pay for each session. This is dependant upon; income, benefits, etc.

Contact: Essex Mediation
Harlow Enterprise Hub, Edinburgh Way,
Harlow, CM20 2NQ
Telephone: 01279 311431
Email: harlow@essexmediation.co.uk



FACT SHEET 4 OTHER USEFUL SERVICES

Domestic Abuse

Contact Safer Places (new name for Harlow & Broxbourne Women's Aid).

Safer Places has a mission to ensure the safety, improve the quality of life and reduce repeat victimization for the survivors of domestic abuse.

The services include:

- Refuge accommodation in Harlow, Broxbourne and Southend
- Community based support in Harlow, Epping Forest District, East Herts, Broxbourne and Southend
- Drop-in services in Harlow and Broxbourne
- Learning and Development, including employability and life skills
- Services for men experiencing Domestic Abuse

Telephone: 24hr Emergency 0845 0177 669

Email: info@womensroom.org

Family Holidays

The Family Holiday Association was set up in 1975 to help struggling families take the break they need. It is only able to accept applications for a break via a welfare agent (e.g. someone who knows the family circumstances, for instance a health visitor, teacher or social worker).

The services include:

- Direct Grants: a one off contribution towards any type of break
- Short Breaks: 3-4 nights self catering accommodation at selected UK holiday parks
- Holiday Center Breaks: working with Butlins and Haven, providing self catering breaks in chalets and caravans
- Last minute breaks: occasionally travel companies offer breaks at short notice in the UK or abroad
- Group breaks: a one off contribution towards breaks or day trips, organised by the client's welfare agent.

All holiday payments are made to the welfare agent, who assists the family with the application, holiday preparations and completing feedback forms.

Contact: The Family Holiday Association

16 Mortimer Street, London, W1T 3JL

Charity number: 800262

Company number: 02301337

Telephone: 0207 436 3304

Web: www.FamilyHolidayAssociation.org.uk

(Applications for 2011 can be downloaded from the website)



Housing

When housing security is an issue contact Harlow District Council/ Housing Services/ Housing Needs.

Contact: Housing Options & Advice
Civic Centre, The Water Gardens
Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG

Telephone: 01279 446655

Email: contact@harlow.gov.uk

Police

Non-emergency enquiries

Telephone: 0300 333 4444

Neighbourhood Policing Teams for areas of Harlow

Telephone: 0300 333 4444 ext 20603 or 20611

