



For

**Supervised contact**  
**Supported contacts**  
**Handovers**  
**Family Assessments**

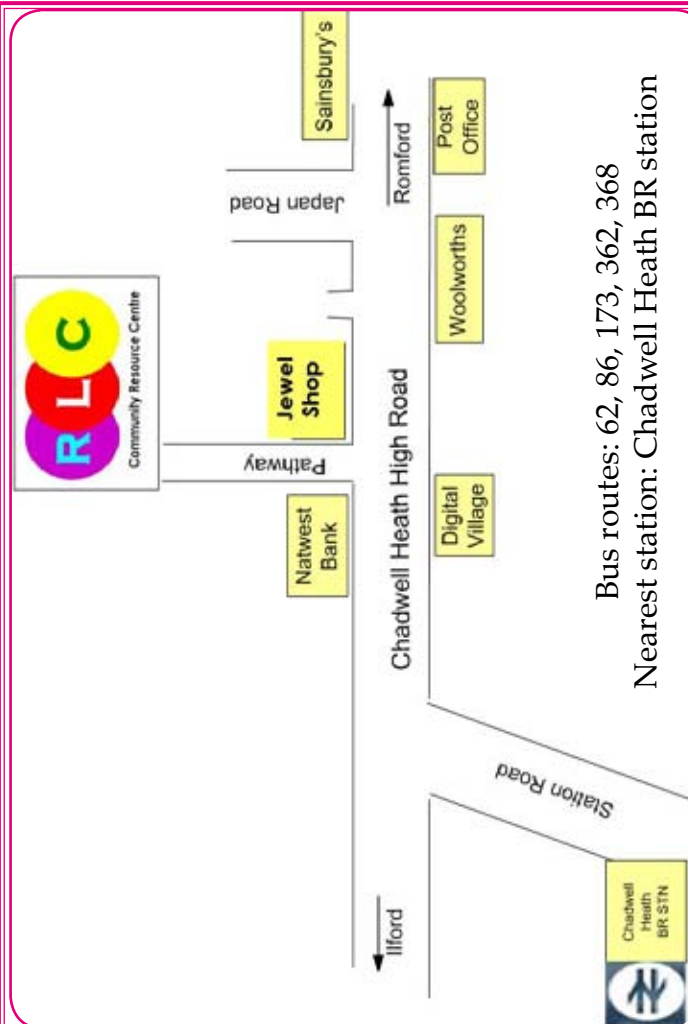
**CONTACT US**

The RLC Community Resource Centre  
Rear of 31-35 High Road  
Chadwell Heath  
Essex  
RM6 6QJ

**Tel: 0208 5977111**

**Fax: 05601161580**

Email: [contact@therlc.org](mailto:contact@therlc.org)



THE RLC COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

**CONTACT CENTRE**

**CHILD CENTRED**

**COMFORTABLE**

**INDEPENDENT & IMPARTIAL**

**PROMOTING EQUALITY**

**CELEBRATING DIVERSITY**

**PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY**



## WHAT IS THE RLC CONTACT CENTRE?

The RLC Contact Centre is a safe, friendly and homely place where children of separated families can spend time with one or both parents, and/or other family members and family friends. It is a child centred environment that puts the need of the child first.

## WHAT IS IT LIKE AT THE RLC CONTACT CENTRE?

Here at RLC Contact Centre the most important people are the children. We aim to create a warm, sociable atmosphere where you and your children can relax and enjoy yourselves. The Centre has an area with a variety of games, toys and books for children of all ages, and there are facilities for refreshments. You may want to bring along some favourite toys, special drinks, or other things you may need such as nappies.

## HOW ARE THE VISITS MONITORED?

The RLC Contact Centre has trained professionals and volunteers, who work to a strict confidentiality policy and have all been through an enhanced CRB checks. Our staff are friendly, impartial and non-judgemental.

## ARE THERE ANY RULES?

- As few as possible! However, the RLC Contact Centre is used by several families at the same time, although each family have their own room, so safety and confidentiality is of high priority.
- Parents are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children at all times while at the Centre. No child may be left without parental supervision.
- A Child may only be taken from the Centre during a visit if this is stated on the referral form or with written consent of both parents.
- Only persons named on the contact the referral document will be permitted into the contact centre
- Any form of abusive, aggressive behaviour, verbal or physical behaviour, toward any party will not be tolerated at the Centre. Any visitor acting in such manner will be escorted from the premises.
- Smoking, drugs\* and alcohol\* is not permitted on any part of The RLC grounds. This includes the car park. \*Anyone under the influence of these with not be allowed onto The RLC grounds.
- . Mobile phones should be switched of while you are with your child. Please do not bring any pets. Taking of photographs, video filming, or use of portable computers is NOT permitted.



## THE CONTACT CENTRE FACILITIES

The RLC is equipped with 6 large and beautifully furnished contact rooms with a number of facilities to make your session as relaxed, welcoming and successful as possible.

## USING OUR CONTACT CENTRE FACILITIES

The RLC Contact Centre works primarily on a referral basis, however, personal referrals are also taken subject to conditions and availability.

## OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

The RLC contact centre operates a flexible opening time. It is normally open every day of the week except Sundays from 9:00am till 9:00pm including bank holidays. However, special arrangements can be made in exceptional circumstances outside these times.





## **THE RLC FAMILY LIFE CENTRE**

**R/O 31 – 35 High Road Chadwell Heath, Romford RM6 6QJ**

The RLC Family Life Centre is a warm, beautiful and spacious family centre based in Chadwell Heath, East London providing a neutral and child centred environment right in the heart of east London. The RLC provides a range of children and family focused crisis intervention work including assessments, community outreach, child and family contact services. Due to several years experience in children and family work coupled with extensive consultation with practitioners in the field, significant steps have been taken to address the sensitive nature of issues involved in child and family contact work thereby ensuring that the experience for children and estranged parents is as positive, private and safe as possible. To this end, the centre has been designed to offer all families as much privacy as possible by providing private and homely contact rooms.

All Staff here at the RLC are university graduates and are well trained in the area of child protection, contact supervision, report writing and people management. They are constantly supervised to ensure that they offer the best possible service while being sensitive to the variety of issues presented by users. As an independent non-profit charity organisation largely funded by public donors and with a strong commitment to promoting family values, contact arrangement fees have been kept to the barest minimum. The RLC aims to develop greater partnership with children's services like agencies dedicated to the care and support of the family.

The RLC Family Life Centre is a member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC); therefore all its policies and practice are regulated by the agency. This means that referrers and families that use the centre are reassured that the centre is being properly run and meets the highest standards of service.

We operate the following policies, which are available for viewing at any time:

- Child Protection Policy
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

### **The RLC Family Life Centre Code of Practice**

- We value the voice of the child
- Being non-judgemental and impartial is paramount
- We are totally child centred
- Ensure the interest of the child always receives priority
- Work with parents to ensure minimum stress to the child
- Offer a service to meet the individual's needs
- Offer a service which will help to enhance the lives of children and families
- Endeavour to uphold and work within cultural needs and religious beliefs
- Provide a safe and clean environment
- Ensure practical provision to support people with disabilities
- Provide training for all staff to enable them to provide a service of excellence
- Work to the NACCC National Standards
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure all our policies are adhered to
- We actively encourage children and parents to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the services we offer

## **Services Provided at The RLC Family Life Centre**

The RLC Family Centre provides the following services:

- Independent Community/Home Based Social Work Core Assessments
- Independent Child and Family Centre Based Assessment services
- Parenting Skills Assessment
- Child and Parent Re-integration (rehabilitation) Assessment Program
- Family Support Crisis Intervention Project
- Supported Contact
- Supervised Contact
- Court/CAFCASS/Local Authority Ordered Contact Assessment
- Video Assisted 2 Way Audio Visual Observation Contact
- Handover Services
- Graduated Handover Contact
- Family Group Conferences
- Pick up & drop off Driver/Escort Services
- Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Adult Counselling
- Parent/child interaction and play techniques
- Information and Advice
- 5 Loaves & 2 Fish Family Support Project
- Risk Assessments

## **When Are The RLC Family Life Centre Services Required?**

Wherever the following Issues are present:

- Emergency Crisis Intervention
- Child Protection issues
- Relationship Breakdown between parties (personal and organisational)
- Mental Health Issues
- Drug and Alcohol Addiction
- Domestic violence
- Sibling Contact
- Contentious and Contested Court Proceedings
- Risk of Abduction
- Fostering & Adoption
- Re-establishment of contact with long absent parent
- Severe conflict over contact arrangements
- Sporadic contact over a period of time

## ***Facilities***

Due to the emphasis on confidentiality and privacy for families during contact, we have several large and beautifully furnished contact suites able to cater for both small and very large families. Each contact suite also takes into consideration the ages and abilities of children. Each suite is furnished with a microwave, a fridge, television, DVD player, children's games and toys giving as true to life contact experience to families. There is a large dedicated games room **suited to cater for older children** who may want to play pool, table tennis, table top ice hockey, etc.

There is a modern and elegantly fitted kitchen able to cater for several families at the same time.

The Family Centre has two large and fully equipped conference rooms with a capacity of 20 to 40 people. This is specifically dedicated for hosting onsite placement agreement meetings, case conferences, and strategy meetings.

## ***Video Assisted 2 Way Audio Visual Observation Booth***

The RLC offers a specialist facility for in-depth assessments and therapeutic interventions in the form of a video assisted 2 Way audio-visual observation contact suite. From this video observation booth, professionals are able to observe and undertake therapeutic or in-depth assessments with children and families without physically being present in the actual activity room where it is essential not to prejudice the outcomes. This facility is also ideal for high risk contact cases where audio visual recording may be necessary as additional evidence in court, undertaking parenting skills assessments, practice training sessions and Achieving Best Evidence Interview skills training.

If Video Assisted 2 Way Audio Visual Observation is requested, the recording will be kept for 48 hours and then destroyed. This is to protect the privacy of clients.

## ***Accessibility***

Experience has shown that a lot of families can only meet outside typical office hours if parents are to maintain their jobs. Hence, The RLC Family Life Centre operates a very flexible opening time. It is normally open every day of the week except Sundays from 9:00am till 9:00pm. The Centre is just off the High street, a 3 minute walk from Chadwell Heath British rail station and which is just 20 minutes away from Liverpool Street station. The Centre has a large car park able to accommodate over 30 vehicles in addition to a cycle parking bay and 3 disabled parking bays. There is also a private access to a beautiful and spacious park for family outdoor activities.

## ***Staffing***

We have a professional staff team comprised of social workers, child care staff, psychiatrists and other social and healthcare related professions. These are supported by a number of well trained volunteers and part time staff. In order to maintain a high quality service, the centre has a partnership relationship with a number of professionals and agencies. This greatly helps to provide a thorough and objective assessment service to families.

## ***Reports (Supervised Contact/ Court Assessment Reports)***

Great care is taken to ensure that reports are comprehensive, non-judgemental, well detailed, objective and truly reflective of the contact observation. In recognition of the fact that each child and family as well as the issues affecting them are unique, reports are tailored in conjunction with the referring agency and family where necessary to record and address issues key to each placement.

## ***Security***

Here at The RLC Family Life Centre, we give the safety and security of our staff and users the utmost priority. There are three different access and exit points on the premises. This is particularly designed to facilitate safe contact for all users especially in cases where there may be acrimonious relationships hence the need to protect vulnerable parties. There is 24hr CCTV coverage around the entire premises and exit points. This is centrally operated and monitored from an onsite security office.

**The centre offers the most enriching and homely contact experience for children and families unmatched anywhere in the UK.** A visit to the centre will speak for itself. Social workers, solicitors, prospective referrals and users are encouraged to visit in advance of placements.

## ***Referrals***

We accept referrals from CAFCASS, Social Services, Psychiatry and Health Departments, Legal Profession and in some cases self referral from parents. Please send all referrals to:

### **The RLC Family Life Centre**

Rear of 31-35 High Road

Chadwell Heath

RM6 6QJ

Tel: 0208 597 7111 Fax: 056 0116 1580

## ***The Referral Process***

Our referral process is as follows:

- Initial telephone enquiry to ascertain type of service required
- Distribution of referral form and outline of fee structure if appropriate
- Return completed referral form with a copy of any existing Court Order and /or deemed necessary for us to make an informed decision, thereby allowing us to offer the correct service.

Once the referral process requesting Supervised Contact, Court Ordered Assessment or Family Support Project has been completed, the following will apply:

- Further discussions by telephone to clarify any outstanding issues
- Case will be referred to allocation meeting
- The RLC will appointments for all parties involved to attend initial meeting to agree work plan and contract
- Our users guide will be distributed
- Following agreed work plan and prior to start date, parent(s)/children visit to the centre will be arranged
- It is the policy of The RLC Family Centre not to establish direct contact with families involved prior to the initial meeting

## Supervised Contact

The RLC Family Life Centre specialises in helping families work through difficulties and concerns around contact arrangements.

Supervised Contact is to be used when parents are locked in a dispute over issues surrounding contact, e.g. a parent has concerns about the parenting ability of another. It can also be used when children are in foster care and have contact with their natural parents, but such contact needs supervising on a one to one basis.

The contact sessions will be coordinated and managed by trained workers within The RLC who work as part of a team. Contact sessions will normally take place during the hours of 9:00 am – 9:00pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays)

In order for any referral to be processed:-

1. The completed referral form together with the Administration Fee should be returned to us.
2. Supporting documents, which are relevant to the contact, should be disclosed.
3. Payments of the fees should be agreed in advance.
4. The Referrer would be required to come and visit the centre to ensure suitability and final details of contact.

On allocation, all parties involved will be invited (parents separately) to an initial meeting. The purpose of the meeting is fourfold:

1. To introduce the RLC Staff team.
2. To outline the process of supervised contact and rules in respect of conduct within the centre.
3. To discuss anyone's concerns about the contact and the proposed future direction.
4. To agree availability for contact sessions and the review meeting date

If any party refuses to attend this meeting, the matter will revert back to the referrer.

Following this initial meeting, 12 sessions of supervised contact will be offered which includes a midway internal review meeting.

## **Court Ordered Assessment**

This is a process to be used when both parties are locked in dispute over the issue of contact and where there is prolonged conflict due to concerns about substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues and possibly child abuse/neglect etc. additionally it can be used when a child has not seen their natural parent for a considerable length of time, or are confused as to whether they want to have contact.

The assessment will be co-ordinated and managed by a team of trained staff (Graduate Level) within The RLC who will work as part of a team. Normally, this will be during the hours of 9:00am and 9:00pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays).

In order for any referral to be processed, it will need to be court ordered; we would strongly recommend that the following wording is used:

“The RLC Family Life Centre will be invited to assess the parties, their child/ren and any other individuals they think fit pursuant to their assessment programme; The court deeming this a proper assessment for the purposes of Legal Aid. The RLC Family Life Centre having undertaken their assessment should file a report detailing the progress of the said assessment and work that they have undertaken and making any recommendations to the court regarding any future contact”.

At this stage, the court should also be asked for leave to disclose all the relevant papers to The RLC Family Life Centre.

Unless the parties are paying for the assessment themselves, Legal Aid will need to be applied for (please see attached copies of our fees).

Once a completed referral, the court order and relevant papers have been received by us together with a letter of authority from the Legal Services Commission in respect of payment for the intended assessment the case can then be forwarded for allocation.

On allocation both parties will be invited, separately to attend an initial assessment meeting. The purpose of such meeting is fourfold:-

1. To introduce The RLC Staff team
2. To outline the process of the assessment and the rules concerning conduct in the centre and in respect of any contact undertaken.
3. To discuss the parents concerns about undertaking assessment.
4. To agree availability for future meetings.

If either party refuses to attend this meeting, the matter will have to be referred back to court.

When the initial meetings have taken place, the team will contact the referring solicitor to indicate the proposed date for filing the court Report in order that an appropriate date can then be arranged for a further hearing.

Once the assessment process has commenced, we would undertake only minimal communication with the referrers as we wish to ensure issues arising from the assessment are resolved within the centre and as independently as possible.



## Family Support Project

This is a project where contact is facilitated between a child/children and any member of their family from whom they are estranged. This project specialises in facilitating only those families where there is a basic arrangement that contact should take place but that it should be supervised in the initial stages to allow confidence, stability and trust to build up between the parties. At the referral stage, both parents will have agreed that they will be part of the process and will work towards progressing the contact to self-management. To assist in this process each family is allocated a specific worker alongside the Case Development Manager who will be constantly assessing, assisting and guiding this process.

This programme will limit itself to a maximum of 12 sessions ideally over a period of six months with contact taking place between 9:00am – 9:00pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays).

The philosophy and aim of this project is to assist and support families to minimise or even resolve difficulties around contact and gradually help these families to move on to self management of possible. Consequently this programme will not be used for families who are entrenched in acrimony.

The Family Support Project is used by families who agree at the referral stage that this contact will be able to move away from the centre and become self-managed after a period of 6 months. We would be able during this programme to begin to move towards graduated handover. However if at the end of the six month period we have not managed to achieve this, the family could be involved in a further period of stabilisation whereby the only service on offer to them would be to actively take part in our **Graduated Handover** programme.

### The Graduated Handover Programme

The graduated Handover Programme is a way of providing reassurance and support to all parties as they move on to the next stage of progression. It comprises of two-hour sessions on a fortnight basis outside the centre accompanied by the initial worker allocated to the case. This will be gradually followed by the contact taking place unsupervised for an hour out side the centre between the child/children and the estranged parent allowing the worker assess the child/children's wellbeing on their return. The amount of time spent out of the centre will increase in agreement with the parties and The RLC. At this stage, the contact could be moved to full Handover in the centre for a limited period of time, which will be part of assisting self-management.

In order for any referral to proceed

1. The completed referral form together with confirmation of how our fees will be met should be returned to us. \*
2. If court ordered, the Judge should order the release of all background papers to us and also if the costs of our Assessment and Report back to court on progress are to be covered under public funding, the Judge is requested to incorporate this into the Order.
3. If this is a referral from Social Services then we would need to have a detailed care plan and ensure that the sheet entitled "background history" on page (3) of the referral form is completed in a way that reflects how the contact at The RLC shall fit into the plan for the child/children's. We would also need written agreement from your manager that our fees will be met.
4. On receipt of the above the referral will be passed to the Case Development Manager for processing.

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\* To facilitate our administrative process and to ensure a fair allocation process, only a referral form with an initial enquiry number will be accepted.

If it is agreed that the family being referred meet the criteria for the Family Support Project the case will be in line for allocation.

Following allocation the parties will be invited separately to attend an **Initial Meeting**. The purpose of the meeting will be:

1. To enable parents and child/children's to see the facilities offered.
2. To outline the process of the contact
3. To receive a copy of the rules/procedures of the centre and to sign for these.
4. To discuss any concerns about the contact and proposed future direction
5. To agree availability for contact sessions.

A **Family Plan** is devised outlining all the above and this is sent to be signed by all parties before contact is set up.

There are **Review Meetings** with all parties halfway through the process to ascertain to assess progress and agree on a Future Plan, if different. Copies of the agreement will be provided to the referrers so that all parties are involved in the development of contact.

At the end of the six months period we will provide a mini court report if necessary outlining the progress of contact together with specific agreements for the self-management of the contact.

## **5 Loaves & 2 Fish Family Support Project**

5 Loaves and 2 Fish Family Support project is a crisis intervention service geared to assist children and families in need in the community. The project provides free packages which includes food items, personal and everyday items such as toilet rolls, soap, baby nappies, etc. The package contains enough supplies to help families survive for at least two weeks until their benefits or crisis situation is alleviated.

### **Cost to Users/ Who can benefit from this project?**

This service is entirely free to all users as well as the referring agency. The only requirement is to have a need and to be referred by the local authority agency who have responsibility for carrying out the means testing. Due to high demands for this service only one package is allowed per client per month except in exceptional circumstances where a double package can be provided for the family.

### **Funding For The Project**

Funding for this service comes primarily through voluntary donations as well as recycled funds from other services provided by the organisation. That is, the paid services cater for the free services.

### **How to refer a client**

Its easy to refer a client to this project. Simply fill out a referral form and fax through to us 24hrs in advance. This is to enable our staff to put together the package and purchase those items which are perishable and cannot be stored for long e.g. bread, eggs etc.