



The Hug's Parents Guide



For Barking &
Dagenham
and Surroundings

About the Authors

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Contact:

Valeria Giannuzzi at valeria.giannuzzi@gmail.com for Mental Health, Relationships & Family and Apps sections.

Almudena Segura at asegura33@gmail.com for Health and Practical Help sections.

Any of the emails above for: Places of Interest, Entertainment & Outdoor spaces and Childcare.

For information about the design, please, email Rute Fiadeiro at rute.fiadeiro@hotmail.com.

Valeria Giannuzzi



Dr. Valeria Giannuzzi, CPsychol, is a Chartered Psychologist Member of The British Psychological Society. She is trained in Clinical and Community Psychology. She holds a Ph.D. in Social Science and she is specialised in migrants' inclusion and community development. She worked many years with migrants, refugees, women, Roma families, and unaccompanied minors in Italy, where she was born. She lived in Spain, The Netherlands, Mexico, and finally settled in Barking, Essex, where she started her family and became the mother of her amazing son Leonardo. Valeria started The Hug to create a safe space to share and support the parenthood experience. She is interested in community development, mental health, social care, equality & diversity, groups, and any cool, kind project that involves care and creativity.

Almudena Segura



Almu is passionate about people and what connects them, their stories, their circumstances and lives and how to bring those connections together to create a healthier and happier community. Over the last 20 years, her most rewarding achievements have been her BA Hons in European Theatre Arts, being a founding member and actress with Panta Rei Theatre, work with Phakama Project to deliver intergenerational projects between schools and care homes, being a teaching assistant and Club leader for a SEN school specialised in children with Autism, amongst many other jobs. Last but not least, she is in absolute awe of her incredible family and very excited to be part of the positive and exciting transformational change happening in Barking and Dagenham.

Foreword

I met The Hug Group in early 2019 when they came to the BEC for some support in establishing their business. Since then, I have watched and shared their journey, seen their achievements but mostly their tenacity and resilience in supporting families with young children especially during the last year.

When so many mums and dads with new babies were isolated, they provided a COVID secure meeting space enabling young families a vital lifeline to meet for the first time.

The Hug Group's ethos resonates with me personally, as for many years I too worked in early years education and support. Unless you have worked, studied, or parented in early years it is hard to comprehend the enormous amount of learning that takes place in these formative years.

This guide offers practical support to all young families through the wide range of positive and sometimes sadly negative experiences at a time when you need it most. It is informative, easy to read and provides tips and support in a wide range of subjects.

Barking and Dagenham has an increasing population of young people and their young families. This guide will provide a lasting resource and my heartfelt congratulations go to the authors Almu and Valeria.

Enjoy everyone,

Karen West-Whyllie
Chief Executive BEC CIC
NNEB. BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

Introduction

A very warm welcome to The Hug's Parents Guide for Barking & Dagenham (and surrounding area)!

We are The Hug Support Group, a small community organisation based in Barking. We started in 2019 as a volunteer support group for parents. Soon realising how important it is to bring families together, help them get the support they need, provide occasions to meet safely and create fun, cultural and environmentally friendly opportunities to come together. The group grew to function as a bridge between service providers and service users. So we consolidated The Hug as a CIC company, and asked for funding to help us realise projects to support our incredible community.

We thought about making this guide in the summer of 2020 when the pandemic life was still fairly new to all of us. We were experimenting with new ways of reaching out and trying to create a tool to help parents, even if we couldn't see them in person. We knew there were so many digitally excluded people struggling with this new way of doing things at home, from a screen, and we really wanted to let every parent know that they are not alone!

Help is available, and as you will see, we collected a vast amount of resources from statutory services, organisations, the NHS, churches, mosques, community groups and more. Trying to think about everything that could be useful for a parent-to-be and parents of children from 0 to 5 years old.

We listened and learned from the conversations we have been having with services and service users, putting together on this guide the most useful tips and feedback from both, so you can have a practical resource at hand that is helpful for a range of needs, issues and interests.

Little did we know about our journey and where this project would take us! We encountered new and fantastic people, organised events together,

countless meetings with all kinds of professionals, connected with new and old friends, and all at a distance (bless Zoom, Teams and all the online meeting platforms)!

We really can't wait to finally meet in person some of the people who helped make this Guide a reality. We are really grateful to you.

Not everything was easy though. We also experienced barriers, long waits, we have been ignored by many services, given wrong information and more. This only made us persevere finding material and insight that would be as accurate as possible, tried and tested, and actually useful. We know how hard it can be to find the right help. When you are in need or distress, it can be even harder.

This Guide is our Hug to you, parent of Barking and Dagenham, and we can't wait to give it to you in person, when the situation will allow it. We know it's not extensive, it doesn't include everything, but it's the best we could do, given resources and circumstances. If you like it, let us know! It will mean the world to us, but if you don't, we'd still like to hear your feedback, as we can only learn from everybody's voice and opinion.

So what will you find in here? We included 7 main sections:

- ★ **Health:** from pregnancy to birth, and your child's health, we provide an overview of the different services available in the Borough and a little insight about what they would like you to know;
- ★ **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** perinatal mental health is often difficult to identify, here you will find some information and how to reach for help;
- ★ **Relationships and Family:** tips and recommendations about relationships, as well as some help if your circumstances become very hard to deal with;
- ★ **Childcare:** a list of all the approved nurseries in the Borough, an overview of your childcare options, some guidance for families with SEND children and what financial help is available;
- ★ **Practical Help:** a very diverse section of statutory services, organisations, charities and community groups that might come handy in different stages of your parenthood journey;

★ **Places of interest, entertainment and outdoor spaces:** a great inspiration for days out, activities, things to do and communities to meet, this section include socialisation, faith-based places, parks, museums and more;

★ **Apps:** The Hug selection of useful apps to make your parenting a bit easier.

We really enjoyed making this guide, and we really hope you enjoy reading it.

A big HUG!

Valeria & Almu

The Hug Support Group.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we want to heartily thank BD Giving for funding this project. The Guide has been voted as worthwhile by a panel of decision-makers in our community. We did our best to honour our application's promise, and we are particularly thankful for BD Giving's approach, patience, flexibility and understanding during the whole process. We hope that other funding bodies will follow their practice to create a more participative and equalitarian funding approach. Shout out for Cameron Bray and Geraud de Ville, you are the best!

We are also incredibly grateful to the London Community Response Fund, and the LBBB Neighborhood Fund, which allowed us to continue and complete this project well after the resources from the BD Giving fund terminated. These funds meant so much to us and helped us develop as company and human beings.

Huge thanks to all The Hug parents, for the insights, for sharing their stories with us, for inspiring us to do this guide, for trusting us and always giving feedback and helping us to do more and better.

If you like what you see, we really owe it to our incredible, kind, patient and extremely talented graphic designer Rute Fiadeiro.

We also want to thank Jessica Taylor, Alex Reynolds-Cocroft and Hannah Morgan for proofreading and always being so friendly and helpful with constructive feedback. We thank all the staff that answered all our questions and contributed with the best practical advice for Barking and Dagenham parent's community, especially;

LBBB Council, in particular the Community Solution team, and Ismail Rahat for always being so supportive and helpful. Your passion to help others is admirable!

Barking Birth Centre, especially Beauty for being so helpful and taking the time to explain parent's needs and difficulties.

Newham Hospital, in particular Georgina Lockwood for all her insights and information and Flora Khan, for caring about women's experiences. BD Collective, and particularly Alison Cormack for being the catalyst and the connector to many incredible people and organisations in the Borough. Re-imagining Early Help Network, for connecting us to all of those organisations that are working hard to create a better experience for parents and children in B&D.

Maternity Action for kindly providing content elaborated by their experts (you can find it in the Practical Help Section). To all the individuals and professionals that have collaborated in this guide, by having conversations with us, explaining services, voicing concerns, answering our questions by making the time to meet with us or signposting us to the right contact. We might not have all your names, but we couldn't have done this guide without your support, so thank you!

Last but not least, special thanks go to our families, our kids who led the way. It's for them and thanks to them that we got to build The Hug. All the discoveries, the parks, the services, the frustrations and satisfactions came from first-hand experience. So thank you Leonardo and Noa, for being our teachers, our sunshine, our compass.

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Health

Welcome to one of the most important sections of this Guide!

Health can be considered as one of the most (if not, the most!) valuable aspects in our lives, looking after yourself might take on a whole different meaning once you are pregnant and decide to become a parent. In this section, we will give you practical information, tips, websites, and a view of what services are out there to help you with your health from when you become pregnant through to the first years of your child's life.

We have incorporated information from services and feedback from local parents to bring you a realistic view of what goes on in Barking & Dagenham. We have presented the information in a chronological kind of order so you can find the information easily. Let's start from the very beginning!

TIP!

Due to Covid, lots of services have special measures or they might operate in a different way. Where possible, we tried to inform you of those changes, but it is always advisable to contact the services for any updates on the information we provide in this Guide.

Are you pregnant?

How to find out



Click on me!
or take a picture

This link from the NHS will give you all the basic information you need to know, however, here is the most relevant information from their website:

When:


- ★ You can carry out most pregnancy tests from the first day of a missed period. If you don't know when your next period is due, do the test at least 21 days after you last had unprotected sex.
- ★ Some very sensitive pregnancy tests can be used even before you miss a period, from as early as 8 days after conception.

How:

- ★ You can do a pregnancy test on a sample of urine collected at any time of the day. It doesn't have to be in the morning.



Where:

- ★ You can get a pregnancy test from the pharmacist or supermarkets and do it at home.
- ★ Alternatively, some places offer free testing like community contraceptive clinics (find them in our directory), sexual health clinics or **Brook Centres** (for under 25's) 
- ★ You might also get a free test from your GP, but they might refer you to one of the above to get it.

Your choices...

The result of your test might bring lots of different emotions that are normal and that lots of women have. One of the first things to learn about this journey is that no matter what the result is, you are not alone, there is lots of help and support out there!

It is very important that you take time to think about what you really want. Each person is different; you might want to speak with your partner, friends, family, or somebody who is not that close to you. Also, you can discuss your options with confidentiality at your GP or organisations that offer private and confidential advice like :

Brook



or

MSIchoices



When you become pregnant, there are three main options:

- ★ Have an abortion and end the pregnancy.
- ★ Carry on with the pregnancy and choose adoption.
- ★ Carry on with the pregnancy and become a parent.

The decision might be very easy for some or really difficult for others depending on your personal circumstances, but the choice should always be yours.

We gathered here some basic and practical information for each of these options.



★ Abortion

This might be a challenging option but nonetheless, it might be the right one for you. Here is some useful information about the practicalities of having an abortion in the UK:

- ★ Abortion is your right and is usually free of charge if performed with the NHS.
- ★ It is also very common in the UK. According to Marie Stopes UK, one in three women will have had an abortion by the age of 45, so lots of people go through it every year.
- ★ Nevertheless, it is a very personal choice and one that you should make without being pressured by anybody.
- ★ In the UK, it is legal to have an abortion up to 23 weeks and 6 days of pregnancy. Abortions after 24 weeks are only allowed if the woman's life is in danger, or if there is a severe fetal abnormality, or if the woman is at risk of serious physical and mental injury.

Here are some very informative website:

- ★ On the **NHS website**, you will find lots of useful information. If you are under 16 your parents do not need to be told and you can discuss your options with confidentiality.
- ★ There are also other organisations like **British Pregnancy Advisory Services** or **Marie Stopes UK**, an independent provider of sexual and reproductive health services that offer advice on this topic.
- ★ These are two abortion services: **Marie Stopes** mentioned above and **NUPAS**, a **National Unplanned Pregnancy Advisory Services**.



NHS



BPAS



Marie Stopes



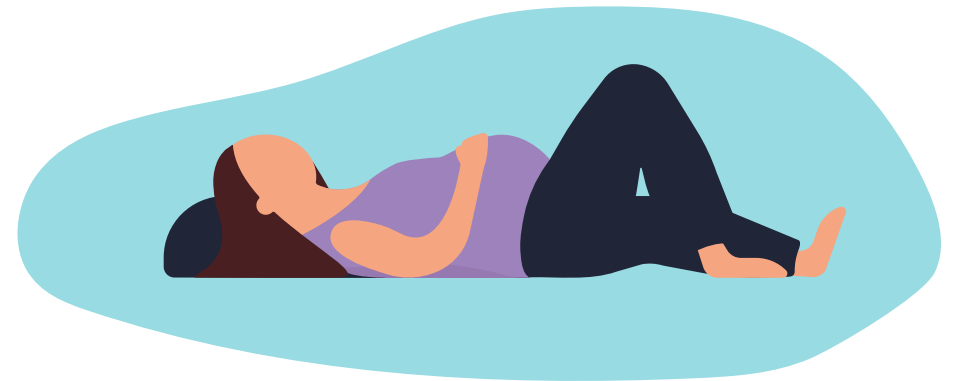
NUPAS

You can find useful information and impartial advice on these websites, but also, you can contact us at The Hug Support Group if you need somebody to talk to or to direct you to the right service.

★ Adoption

This is another option that might be suitable for you if you don't want to have an abortion and you don't want to become a parent. It might be the choice that most suits you because of personal or religious beliefs, but ultimately, it is always your choice and you should not feel pressured by anyone to make it. With this option, you will have to go through the pregnancy and give birth, and after this the process of adoption will begin. There will be a whole legal process and you can change your mind if you decide to do so.

If you want some independent and confidential advice, you can contact BPAS which has lots of information and Brook if you are a young person.



★ Being pregnant in Barking and Dagenham

Barking and Dagenham hospitals (Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals) are **one of the largest maternity services in the whole country and one of the busiest**. This fact has advantages and disadvantages. The maternity wards are covered by highly trained and experienced staff, but it also means that the services are really busy.

In the last report of the Care Quality Commission, the BHR Trust was rated as “Requires Improvement”, particularly in the areas of services “being safe and responsive”. (In this report, there is no specific rating for King George’s Maternity and Gynaecology department, however, Queen’s Hospital Maternity is rated as “Good”, Barking Birth Centre has not been inspected since 2013 and Newham Hospital is rated as “Requires Improvement”).

TIP!

King George’s hospital does outreach and appointments, however they do not currently offer delivery services. Queen’s hospital does offer all the maternity services, however, they might send you to another hospital if you are not part of their catchment area (such as Barking) due to capacity, so we advise you to check with them first.

Bearing in mind these facts, and recognising the pressures suffered by both the services and you, the service user, it is important to have as much information as possible when it comes to your future pregnancy experience to be able to make the choices that suit you best, so let’s start with some basic rights.

Your Birth Rights

Birth Rights charity is dedicated to improving women’s experience of pregnancy and childbirth by promoting respect for human rights. Here below is some of the information you will find on their **website**:



Birth
Rights

- ★ You can choose where to give birth (Hospital, Birth Centre, Home...).
- ★ You can make choices about your own pregnancy, childbirth and your care, including the right to decline any care at all (see Birthrights link for more info on this).
- ★ You have the right to receive Maternity Care. In some circumstances you might be charged if you are from overseas, but care must always be provided, even if you can not pay.
- ★ You have the right to pain relief.

If you are LGBT+ and would like to get more information on how to become a parent, visit the NHS website. Also Pride Angel and New Family Social have useful information and advice.

What happens step by step and your choices

The Hug approached local Hospitals, Birth Centres, Maternity Units, Midwives, and Health Visitors to bring you the most relevant and important information for you to know. Here is some information that will take you step by step from the moment you think you might be pregnant.

Becoming a Parent

Change for Becoming a parent will definitely be one of the most important and life changing decisions you will make in your entire life.

When you become pregnant, and for all things related to your pregnancy (and if you don't need special care) **you will be looked after mainly by midwives**. They are highly trained to deal with pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Unlike nurses, midwives are autonomous practitioners, which means they can provide care without needing back up from doctors. **They can inform you of all your choices** so you can make your own decision about what best suits you.

Once you become pregnant, you can **go to your GP and ask for a referral form to access midwife care** and then, the GP will send it over to your chosen place to give birth, or in case of this being a Birth Centre, you can go there directly and get it from them.

You will be assigned a midwife, however, do not expect to be seen and treated by the same midwife every time. This might be a challenging fact, as many women would like to build trust with their midwife. Do mention it on your appointment to make them

TIP!
This last option is the most time effective, but might not currently be available during Covid, so it is advisable to call them first to discuss current options.

aware. Some maternity units are creating small teams so you will only see the midwives from that small team to avoid lots of changes.

TIP!

If possible, it is advisable to have someone next to you that knows your wishes, concerns and options really well, so when the delivery and the first few days come, you can count on that person to be your advocate. This person can be your partner or a good friend, but alternatively, you might opt for having a doula with you during your pregnancy (for more information, visit Doula.org).



Doula

There are lots of brilliant websites out there to track your pregnancy and give you advice throughout, we find that **Emma's Diary** is a pretty good one, but you can also go to our Apps section for more choices.



Emma's Diary



MiScarriage

This might be a very challenging topic for many of us, but we think it is important to provide you with some basic knowledge. We based this paragraph on the **Miscarriage Association's website**, where you will be able to find **support and guidance**.



Miscarriage
ASSociation

First of all, **if you think you might be having a miscarriage, follow your instincts, contact your midwife**, Early Pregnancy Unit, GP or 111. They will be able to tell you what is the best thing to do with your **symptoms**, but the most common ones are **pain, bleeding or spotting**.

In practical terms, when you go to the hospital to confirm the miscarriage, an ultrasound scan is normally performed. Sometimes, to be totally certain and especially at early stages, a second scan is scheduled after one week to make sure there is no risk of damaging an ongoing pregnancy. During that time, the miscarriage might naturally happen.

If it's very early, it is possible that the health specialists won't do anything, because they can't be 100% sure of the miscarriage and they prefer to be cautious. They might not confirm the miscarriage. They might ask you to wait for a week, and come back for another scan to see if the miscarriage happens naturally, or if the fetus has developed a bit further, they can confirm whether there is a miscarriage or not.

Although it might be difficult, we recommend you to inform yourself of what happens to your body so you know what to expect. As reported by other women's experiences, it might make things a bit easier.

Unfortunately, miscarriage is very common, as many as one in four pregnancies end up in a miscarriage. Nevertheless, this event tends to be a taboo in our society, so when it happens, many times women and their partners can feel completely lost, with lots of questions on what to do and how to confront it. Tommys.org provides help and advice.



Tommys

From The Hug Community

TIP!

Normally, after the miscarriage, you might experience a whole range of symptoms, and if you are in pain, you will be offered paracetamol and ibuprofen to alleviate it, but if it is quite intense, they might give you codeine. Bear in mind that miscarriage can cause constipation and codeine might aggravate this, so it is advisable to be aware of your bowel movements and look after your diet to avoid further discomfort or complications. And if in doubt, ask your chemist or seek further medical advice.

Appointments through pregnancy

According to Barking Birth Centre, the **first appointment** will happen at around **8-9 weeks pregnant** and it will be a phone conversation that might last for approximately an hour, followed by a face to face appointment to take blood and urine samples, and blood pressure (note, they do not take a pregnancy test, they will confirm the pregnancy at your 12 weeks scan).

TIP!

If you need an **interpreter**, ask your midwife about it, the NHS should provide you with one for your appointments. This might need to be arranged in advance, so it is always good to give them the heads up.

After that, at every appointment you will be asked for an urine sample and a check of your blood pressure. Moreover, you should be able to discuss your options about where you would like to give birth to make the best choice for you. The main ones are:

- ★ Home birth (supported by a midwife);
- ★ Birth Centres (stand alone like Barking Birth Centre or within a Hospital like Newham Hospital or Queen's Hospital);
- ★ Hospital Birth.

There is more information about these options on the **NHS website**.



General points regarding your midwife appointments:

- ★ You will need to bring your maternity book to all your appointments, scans and hospital visits (your midwife should provide it to you on your first appointment), if you don't bring it, they might cancel the appointment;
- ★ Learning about how to recognise important signs and symptoms to seek medical advice during pregnancy;
- ★ It is very important to attend these appointments or re-schedule them as it is the duty of care to you and your baby for the midwives to see you, to make sure you both are ok. If an appointment has been missed, they will contact you to make sure you are ok and reschedule.

The following information is intended to act as a **guide for what you should expect during the appointments** with your midwife throughout your pregnancy. It was kindly provided by Barking Birth Centre and Newham Hospital, so the appointments and specifications might vary depending on where you decide to have your baby and your specific case.

- ★ **12 week** Scan (also called dating scan) and also **Trisomy test** if you would like one.
- ★ **16 week** Giving results from the first blood test, scan (if you haven't had one already at 12 weeks). The baby's heartbeat is not listened to at this appointment through the NHS. Here is some information about the **baby's heartbeat**. You should be reminded about vaccinations you can get during pregnancy.
- ★ **18 - 20 weeks** Anomaly scan. This scan is intended to detect major anomalies that could affect the baby. Most times the sonographer can check the gender of the baby during this scan, but it is not always possible – mostly due to the baby's position. Through the NHS it is not possible to book another scan for the purpose of finding out the gender (however, if you really want to know it that early, you can do so in a private clinic).



Trisomy Test




Baby's Heartbeat

- ★ **25 weeks** (first time mums only). General Catch up. You can request to listen to the baby's heartbeat.
- ★ **28 weeks.** The midwife should measure the growth of the baby by measuring the size of the abdomen. You will also have a blood test.
- ★ **31 & 34 weeks** (first time mums only). Midwife will measure the growth of the baby by measuring the size of the abdomen.
- ★ **36 weeks.** Measuring the abdomen and birth plan; your midwife will discuss with you where you intend to give birth, signs of labour, pain relief, when to attend, where to go etc. This appointment would normally last around 40 minutes, which is not long, so, it is always best to attend some form of antenatal classes as they can go into much more detail and they will always prepare you more for what to expect, as this could be crucial for having a better this will be key to have a better birth experience
- ★ **38 weeks.** Measuring the abdomen
- ★ **40 weeks** (first time mums). Measuring the abdomen and you can also have a membrane sweep if you wish to do so (you can find some **information on this website.**

TIP!

If you would like to have access to antenatal classes, it is advisable to ask your midwife and try to book them as early as possible, as in Barking and Dagenham, the classes get fully booked very early and you might miss out on accessing them if you book them late). The good news is that there is lots of information out there (see **NHS antenatal classes** for what to expect) and if you can't access those classes, you can find all the relevant information on the internet.

Antenatal Classes 

TIP!

If you have one, make sure your birth partner knows your birth plan and wishes inside out! They will be your best advocate if you can't think clearly.

TIP!

The membrane sweep can feel painful and invasive, so make sure you work together with the midwife performing it and that she takes her time to explain what happens step by step.


Measuring Abdomen

- ★ **41 Weeks.** You will be offered another sweep and you can discuss your option of Induction of Labour (IOL).
- ★ **42 Weeks.** You can discuss with your midwives your options, but here is some information from this **NHS website.**



Additional information:

- ★ Another additional test you might be offered is the glucose tolerance test for women at risk of developing diabetes, at either 16 and 28 weeks pregnant, or just at 28 weeks pregnant depending on the risks.
- ★ Partners (not children) are allowed to be there for the 12 and 20 weeks scan.
- ★ 1 birth partner will absolutely be allowed to accompany the woman when she is in labour but might not necessarily be able to initially attend with her whilst she is being triaged (term explained below).
- ★ Maternity Triage is an assessment department normally next to the labour wards, it is staffed by midwives that can help you if you need special care or require any treatment. They will be able to direct you to any other department if you need it.

TIP!

The Triage departments are normally really busy and you will be seen in order of priority, so you might have to wait for a long time before being seen. It is advisable to bring something to distract you (book, knitting, crosswords...) as it might be a bit distressing to see other pregnant women in discomfort while you wait.

It is very important that you know these appointments are based on your needs and questions, and that they should be informative and guide you through anything you might need during your pregnancy. Always ask your midwife any questions you might have, even if you think they might not be related, they might be able to point you in the right direction, and they are there to help and support you!

TIP!

Although most of us will have a vision on how we want our delivery to go, sometimes life has other plans, so it is advisable to read and know at least some basic information about what tends to happen in different labour scenarios such as if you need an induction or a caesarean (C-section).



Delivery

In this section, we will give you a picture of what happens when you have your baby in our Borough. It will be a mix of mum's experiences, professionals and organisations. Our aim is to focus on Barking and Dagenham so you can be better prepared when the time comes and know a bit more about what to expect.

TIP!

It is important to notice the colours of your waters, it should be clear, if not, and it has some greenish colour or are not clear, or you think you might be losing blood, contact your maternity unit or midwife immediately

There are **several signs that will tell you your labour has started:**

- ★ Back pain, contractions or tightenings;
- ★ Waters breaking.
- ★ The plug of mucus (also called the "show") comes out. Although it might not be the most pleasant thing to look at, on this website you can find what a plug looks like and how to tell the difference between a plug and vaginal discharge.
- ★ You should call your midwife or maternity unit in case: you have any vaginal bleed; your waters break; you are less than 37 weeks and you think you might be in labour; your baby is moving less than usual.



Baby
Centre

The number to call for **BHR Hospitals** is **01708 503 742** (for other contact numbers, please, refer to our directory)

On the **NHS website** you can find lots of information about the stages of labour, contractions, and what to do if your waters break. If you are having a **homebirth**, call your midwife to inform her of the signs and she will be able to explain what to do next. **NCT** provides guidance and resources about it.



NHS



NCT

Maternity Triage

There are two ways of being triaged, over the phone and in person. At Birth Centres you are asked to call before so you can have a triage phone consultation to assess if you should go in. At the hospital, you can just turn up to be triaged.

At this point, it is important to remind you that you are the owner of your decisions, that you have the right to decide what treatment (or not) you want to have and that you should not be coerced to do anything you don't want to do, for more information, look at **Birth Rights** and get your birth partner on board to advocate for you if you need it.



Birth
Rights

At Triage, **midwives will do a full set of observations**, palpate your abdomen for contractions (feel the abdomen to measure the strength, frequency and length of those contractions) listen to the baby's heartbeat and then if needed, perform a vaginal examination to assess how dilated you are.

It is useful at this stage to revisit your birth plan and discuss with the midwives your options based on your circumstances, as these might have changed. Make sure they are updated on your birth plan (as it is likely your midwife might change by the time you give birth, and this way, they can look at any changes you might have expressed). Once the pain starts, it will become more difficult to focus or make any informed choices.

If you are **less than 4cm**, then an individual assessment will be made – generally to either stay in early labour or for distant monitoring and to go home (unless there are other risk factors that you need to stay in hospital for).

Once you are 4cm dilated, congratulations! You will be in 'established labour' and will stay in the hospital (or whichever ward is suitable for you).

TIP!

Bear in mind that there might be long waiting times, so it is always good to bring some food, a comfy cushion if you use one and some entertainment.

TIP!

It is useful at this stage to revisit your birth plan and discuss with the midwives your options based on your circumstances, as these might have changed. Make sure they are updated on your birth plan (as it is likely your midwife might change by the time you give birth, and this way, they can look at any changes you might have expressed). Once the pain starts, it will become more difficult to focus or make any informed choices.

Once you are 4cm dilated, **congratulations!** You will be in 'established labour' and will stay in the hospital (or whichever ward is suitable for you).

With variable circumstances due to the pandemic, your partner might be asked to wait outside and only be allowed in once you are in established labour. This can be really difficult at such an important time in your life, the best advice we can give you is **don't hesitate to ask for help at any time**, any doubts you might have and as much as you can under those circumstances, make sure you understand everything they explain to you, the pros and cons on each decision, and if you are not convinced, take your time to check with your birth partner over the phone if need be.

If something doesn't feel right or you feel not listened to, ask to speak to the midwife in charge, ask to know which are your options (as they might not be offered to you straight away). Always have very present that it is your birth and you should be treated with respect.

TIP!

Being in established labour does not mean you will be automatically transferred to the labour ward, sometimes you might need to wait for a room to become available and this wait might be very distressing (you can expect to be in a shared room with other women), just make sure your partner can advocate for you, to know that you have a right to pain relief (whether it is night or day) and don't hesitate to ask for anything you feel you need!

TIP!

You can visit the Birth Rights website for more info



Post Birth Information

First of all, congratulations! Most of the attention will be now focused on your little bundle of joy, but it is also really important to take care of yourself, understand your bodily changes and give yourself some TLC.

From the midwives at Barking Birth Centre, here is some basic advice on what to expect physically after giving birth:

- ★ As soon as your baby is born, they can be taken to do a physical examination to determine any health problems. There are normally **two examinations, one as soon as the baby is born and another one within 72 hours.** In the **NHS website** you can read about what happens and also on the **Government website**, you can understand what those screenings are for, why they are important, your right to decline those observations and how to do it if you wish to do so.



NHS



GOV.UK

- ★ After giving birth, **you should be checked for any tears** of the skin/vaginal muscles. If stitches are required, a local anaesthetic will be used, normally right after the birth of your baby.

TIP!
From Hug Mums: when you go to the toilet for the first times after giving birth, it is a good trick to take with you a plastic cup, fill it with lukewarm water and pour it on your vagina while you pee, it will alleviate the discomfort and the soreness.

- ★ This information really varies depending on where you decide to give birth, but just to give you some guidance, in a hospital setting, you and your partner will be

TIP!
Sometimes you can opt for a private room to have some privacy, but you will have to pay for it. These rooms are not always available and you might have to wait, but you can ask for them.

allowed to be in the delivery room for a while in privacy, where you can bond with your bundle of joy, clean yourself and have some well deserved rest. Afterwards, you will be taken to a ward where you will share the room with other new mums.

★ Breastfeeding

Here is some advice from a Lactation specialist for Newham Hospital:

"If you are finding it difficult the first few times, **ask for help at the hospital!** Unfortunately the support is very limited in Barking and Dagenham at the moment, so while you are at the Hospital, the Maternity assistants there might give you the best advice and it might be the quickest way to get some tips from experienced professionals. If you breastfeed, give your nipples time to come to terms with the changes, they will be extra sensitive but if they become cracked and bleeding then you need to think about the positioning and attachment of your baby.

What I recommend to women is that they should sign up to the free antenatal classes as they will include some breastfeeding guidance and information that they can take with them to the postnatal period. Also doing their own reading on it will help prepare them, such as understanding the importance of establishing breastfeeding early on, colostrum etc. Too many women are not prepared and then jump straight to a bottle thinking that they don't have any milk – when actually they have colostrum which is hugely important – preparation is key here and unfortunately all we can provide are the antenatal classes which are not breastfeeding specific. The main thing to take away is that they need to ask for help – it won't necessarily be given if they don't ask."

You will also find further information and advice about breastfeeding on our directory and especially on **La Leche League**.



La Leche League

TIP!
If none of these tips help or you are just looking for some support, reassurance or guidance, you can always contact the Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212 every day from 9.30 am to 9.30 pm), La Leche League, or The Hug Support Group, and we might be able to help you or refer you to a lactation consultant.

- ★ Needless to say, your body has to go through a massive transformation again, so you are **most likely to experience “after pain”** and cramps, as your uterus contracts to its pre-pregnancy stage. This process tends to last about two to four weeks. Sometimes breastfeeding might make the pain stronger, but it will also help you recover more quickly, read more at **The Bump website**. It is safe to use paracetamol and ibuprofen to alleviate the pain and it is safe to use them while breastfeeding. However, if after a few weeks you keep experiencing pain and you think it is not normal, then you should check with your GP or midwife. If you are told that it is normal but you don't feel that way, don't hesitate to ask for a second opinion at your GP, midwife or ask to be referred to a specialist that can do further checks.
- ★ **You will bleed. This is normal** as again, the uterus is contracting. Blood loss will be similar to a heavy period and get less and less over the coming days, but always ask for advice if something doesn't feel right.
- ★ **You might leak** some urine while your pelvic floor muscles are weakened. It is advisable to do pelvic floor exercises but only when you feel ready for it, the most important thing is that you listen to your body. If something doesn't feel right, don't force it! Be patient, your body is very wise and will let you know when it's ready.
- ★ **Mobilise** – it is not good to stay stationary for long periods, although we don't recommend heavy exercise/heavy lifting etc, it's good to mobilise around the house/go for a gentle walk to keep your blood pumping.
- ★ **Midwives will perform 1 home visit** then you will be required to attend the local clinic for around 2 more follow ups. They will check how you and your baby are doing and should also advise you on things like contraception choices, as you might be very fertile after having a baby.



The Bump

TIP!

During Covid, some home visits have been cancelled, so if you are in doubt or want to contact the Health Visiting Helpdesk the numbers are in our directory.

Don't hesitate to ask them any questions you might have and if you are not convinced with the answer, speak to your GP or reach out to The Hug community.

- ★ **Birth Trauma.** According to Barking Birth Centre and Newham Hospital, around 80% of women would be able to resolve any trauma with enough support during the first month following delivery. If you feel like you are in the other 20% and might be experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or might be experiencing postnatal depression symptoms, there are many ways you can ask for help. If you feel comfortable, you can ask your midwife to be referred or directly send an email to **bartshealth.btrnewham@nhs.net**. You will then receive a call to do an assessment and if needs be, an appointment will be offered. You can also contact **Birth Reflections Service** to discuss how your birth went, ask any questions or raise any concerns. They should be able to look at your records and book an appointment with an experienced midwife to address any query you might have. You might want to check the Mental Health & Well-being Section of this Guide.



Birth Reflection Services

A new baby, a new you, a new life...

Welcome to a new chapter in your life! The first few days after giving birth will be really intense, you might experience a whole range of emotions, sensations and feelings. Allow them in, as they are there to teach you something. The beautiful human being that you created will be your best teacher, so get to bond with this baby and enjoy the ride.

As the old saying goes "sharing is caring" and at this point in your life, more than ever! Your baby and you are the focus of attention now and if you have a partner, they should become your support, your umbrella, your cook, your cleaner, your shoulder to cry on...you name it! However, there are priorities on the list, and during the first few days, and until you become acquainted with all the changes, we recommend you to prioritise:

- ★ Sleeping and eating. Those are sacred to be able to function, everything else can wait... Never underestimate the power of sleep! Take it in turns and make sure you sleep as much as you can (which might not be much, but every little helps!) **The Lullaby Trust** offers safer sleep advice.



The Lullaby Trust

- ★ **KidsHealth** and **Emma's Diary** provide lots of information for those first few days from feeding to nappy changing to bathing.

- ★ It is worth reading about the Fourth Trimester, or that period of adaptation that babies and parents go through right after birth. On **Happiest Baby**, you will find more about it.



Kids Health



Emma's Diary



Happiest Baby

TIP! It could be really beneficial for your new family to share information and knowledge and to be able to work as a team, as when the baby arrives it will get very busy indeed.

Each family works in different ways, but to give you some basic guidance for the very beginning, on the **NHS website** you can find some information regarding Health. Here we will include a quick look at some of the most relevant ones...



NHS

Health

First checks After your baby is born, you will be offered health and developmental reviews during the first two years of its life. This will normally take place at your GP and will be done by the health visitor. The first one will be right after their birth as we mentioned in the previous section (post birth information) and the following one will be done within 72 hours (sometimes this will happen at hospital if you have to spend a day or more there).

TIP! If you feel nervous or uncomfortable about anybody touching or examining your baby, our advice would be to speak to the health professional and make sure you know what they are doing step by step, and if you are not comfortable with something, question it and ask them for an explanation of why it is needed, remember you have the right to decline any treatment for you or your baby if you wish to do so. **Birthrights** offers guidance and advice on this topic.



Birth Rights

The Red Book, where all your baby's health information will be kept (personal child health record). This book will be given to you and you should take it to any health related appointments or emergencies.

TIP! Keep this book well at hand and always in the same place, so you or your family know where it is, you never know when you might need it! However, just for your peace of mind, it is not compulsory to have it in case of an emergency. There is also an electronic version, and an app.

Baby Weight: Your baby will be weighed at birth, (also sometimes during the first health visitor visit to your house) and after two weeks to make sure they are gaining weight. It is normal for babies to lose some weight after birth (between 7 to 10% of their whole weight) but they should regain it in the next couple of weeks. On the **NHS** website, you will find further information and also at **Kids Health** website.



Kids Health



NHS

TIP!

This is the general duty number for Health Visitors in Barking and Dagenham 0300 300 1813, give them a call directly if you have any queries as things are changing constantly.

There are weight clinics normally happening at your GP where you can weigh your baby. Before the Covid pandemic, those clinics used to run on a first come, first served basis, but now, it is advisable to check with your Health Visitor as you might require an appointment to weigh your baby, or the visit might be done virtually.

Weaning & Diet: For many of us with a love for food, this is a very exciting time! And one that we have been waiting for a long time. But before it arrives, here is some info if you are **exclusively breastfeeding** or **bottle feeding** or a **combination of both**. The prospect of feeding your baby solid food for the first time can be exciting but also equally challenging and scary. The **Healthline** website offers a very thorough and informative article about all you need to know for those first times. If you would like further advice about diet, you can find more info in the **British Dietetic Information**. Regarding vitamins, in the UK the Health Department recommends that babies take a supplement containing vitamins A, C and D, from 6 months till 5 years, and if you qualify for **Healthy start**, you are entitled to get them for free. Your health visitor or GP should give you more guidance.



Breastfeeding



Bottle Feeding



Breastfeeding & Bottle



Healthline



British Dietetic



Healthy Start

Vaccinations and Immunisation

In the UK, vaccinations are offered free of charge. The first one is offered at eight weeks, 12 weeks, 16 weeks, and one year. It is important you get to know why they are important, what they are for, which ones are offered generally and which ones are specific to the area you live in. On the Start for Life website you can find more detailed information about them.



Start for Life

TIP!
If at any point you are concerned that your baby might not be getting all the right nutrients and might have a deficiency, ask your GP to be referred to a dietitian.



GP's (Doctors)

Here you will find some practical steps of what happens and what to do when it comes to GP's and having a baby.

- ★ If you are not registered with a GP, you will need to fill out a GMS1 Registration form available online or at the GP practice. They might ask you for proof of address or identification, just so they can match you with your previous records and forward them to the new practice. If you have no proof of address or identification, it is not considered as a reason for refusing your registration. Please, see these links for further advice on homelessness, asylum seekers, refugees, travelers, visitors from abroad or under the Mental Capacity Act:



NHS - GP

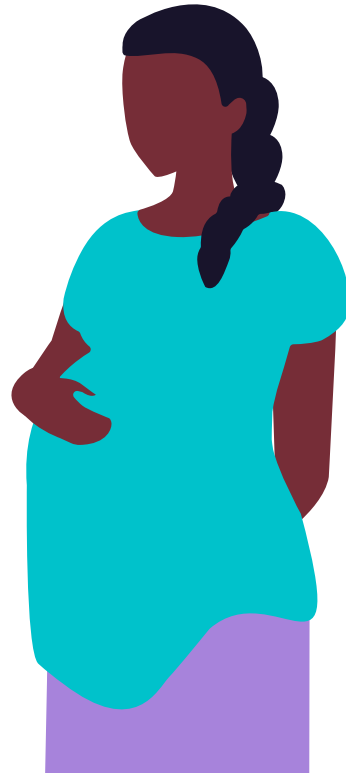


Maternity
Action



NHS -
Support

- ★ Pregnant women can access free medicines and dental care in the UK. To do so, you will need a MATB1 certificate, which you can get from your doctor or midwife after you reach 20 weeks in your pregnancy.
- ★ It is advisable to register your child as soon as possible. To do it, you can call your GP and ask for advice, you can also use the pink card given to you when you register your child's birth. Just sign it and post it or take it to your GP.



Dentists

There are so many options when it comes to Dentists, but there are three main avenues, you could choose to use an NHS service, go private, or do a combination of both to get the best deal available. However, it is important to know that **NHS dental treatment is FREE for pregnant women and for 12 months after the baby is born**. You will only need a MATB1 certificate (maternity certificate) to access free treatment (see GP section for more details)

To find all the information you need to know about what should happen when you go to an NHS dentist, please, refer to their website.



NHS

For costs of NHS treatments, please, visit this site. Private charges vary considerably, so it is always best to check with your chosen practice.

- ★ Dentists for kids and pregnant mums It is important to know that dentists are FREE for children from 0 to 18 years old. You can start looking after your baby's oral hygiene from much earlier, here are some tips in the **Nation Wide Childrens**.



Nation Wide
Childrens

TIP!

It is quite common for kids to get discoloration in their teeth and this might be linked to an underlying health issue, so check with your dentist if you notice it on your babies' teeth. The first check up should be at 1 year old, however, this visit is not to cure any pains or problems, but rather to help the child get used to going to the dentist and having their mouth checked. It is much more beneficial to go to the dentist for the first time as a routine visit, rather than an emergency with pain, in order to avoid the child connecting that unpleasant experience with going to the dentist.

TIP!

One of the most common problems amongst children is tooth decay due to sugary drinks like fruit juice so a healthier alternative is to give the kid the whole fruit (an apple instead of apple juice), herbal infusions or diluted natural juice in water.

Other Specialists

One superpower quite overlooked by society that mums and dads acquire as soon as their little one is born is maternal/paternal instincts. We can't stress enough how important it is to follow your gut feeling when it comes to the health of your little one, so talk to your health care provider, GP or midwife, if you have any concern, as small as it might be! And if you are not happy with the answer or you are still unsure, ask to get a second opinion and any health practitioner should be able to provide it to you, or you can ask to be referred to a specialist. You can check your rights as a patient on the **Citizen's Advice Bureau** website.



Citizen's
Advice
Bureau

To finalise this section of our Parent's Guide, we want to leave you with these words **"YOU'VE GOT THIS! Trust your instincts, listen to yourself and your baby, and reach out if you need help!"** Parenting is a huge task and we tried to include the most relevant and useful information, but it doesn't cover all topics, so if you have any other queries or special needs, contact the services that you can find in the directory.

TIP!

Bear in mind that specialist appointments take a long time to be scheduled, so you might be waiting weeks or months. If after a couple of weeks you haven't received a referral letter, contact your GP and chase it, they should give you an idea of how long you should wait for, at what stage or with what department or hospital your referral is with, and when to call back again if you haven't received your referral.



Health Directory

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Birth Advisory Services

Birth Rights

? Organisation dedicated to ensure women receive the respect and dignity they deserve in pregnancy and childbirth. ☎0300 400 3400 ✉info@birthrights.org.uk



Birth Centres

Barking Birth Centre

? Highly-skilled midwives provide one on one support to help you give birth naturally.
 ☎ Reception for general questions (0208 252 8281) Midwives department for any questions or worries regarding pregnancy (02086442450 or 0208 252 8281)
 📍 Barking Community Hospital, Upney Lane, Barking, Essex, IG11 9LX



Newham Hospital Birth Centre

? Birth Centre within Newham hospital for pregnant women who have had a straight forward pregnancy with no medical problems and/or no problems in a previous pregnancy or labour. ☎0207 363 8778 📍1st floor, Newham Hospital, Glen Road, London, E13 8SL



Queen's Birth Centre

? Birth Centre within Queen's Hospital for pregnant women who have had a straight forward pregnancy with no medical problems and/or no problems in a previous pregnancy or labour. ☎01708 503 742 📍Queen's Hospital, Rom Valley Way, Romford RM7 0AG ⌚24 hours ⚠️This Birth Centre might be closed during Covid.



Birth Reflections Service

Birth Reflections Service

? Service from Newham hospital if you want to discuss how your birth went, ask any questions or raise any concerns. They should be able to look at your records and book an appointment with an experienced midwife to address any query you might have. ☎020 8970 5757



Breastfeeding

Bengali/Sylheti Breastfeeding Helpline

? Breastfeeding Helpline for Bengali/Sylheti speakers ☎0300 456 2421 ⌚9:30am to 9:30pm



Infant Feeding Cafe

? Parents and infants are welcome to join for a drink and a chat regarding breastfeeding and infant feeding. ▲ Might be currently unavailable due to Covid restrictions

📍 Becontree Children's Centre, Steven's Road, Dagenham, RM8 2QR 🕒 Tuesday 1:30pm to 3:30pm

📍 Dagenham Library, 1 Church Elm Lane, Town Centre, Dagenham, RM10 9QS 🕒 Thursday 10:00pm to 12:00pm

📍 Gascoine's Children Centre, St Ann's Road, Barking, IG11 7AS 🕒 Mondays 2:00pm to 2:00pm

La Leche League Helpline

? Organisation that offers friendly breastfeeding support from pregnancy onwards
📞 07947 062277 📧 Karon.Watkin@icloud.com ▲ Please, send a text.



Lactation Websites

? Mother to mother, parent to parent breastfeeding support at meet-ups across Great Britain 📞 Maria, 07811 825107, please text to arrange a call, takes calls from South East London 📧 You can send them an email requesting more local info.



National Breastfeeding Helpline

? Breastfeeding helpline support 📞 0300100 0212 🕒 9:30am to 9:30pm



National Childbirth Trust Breastfeeding

? Breastfeeding helpline support 📞 0300 330 0771 🕒 8:00am to 10:00pm



Community HoSpital/ Outpatients Appointments

Barking Community Hospital

? Community Hospital that runs in and outpatient's services 📞 0203 644 2301
📍 Upney Lane, Barking, IG11 9LX



Gray's Court Community Hospital

? Community Hospital that runs in and outpatient's services 📞 Outpatients: 0300 300 1834 📍 John Parker Close, Dagenham, RM10 9SR



Dentists

Abbey Dental Practice

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 0208 594 4129 📧 info@abbeydentalbarking.co.uk 📍 2 Arboretum Place, Barking, Essex, IG11 7RL 🕒 Monday to Friday 8:30 to 6:30. Saturdays, 8:30am to 2pm



Castle Dental Practice

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 0208 598 1122 📍 812 Green Lane, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 1YR 🕒 Monday to Friday at different times, check website for more information.



Dagenham Aspire Dental Care

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 020 8595 1116 📧 dagenham.aspire@gmail.com 📍 1 - 3 Dewey Rd, Dagenham, RM10 8AP



Dagenham Dental

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 0208 592 0822 📧 info@dagenhamdentalpractice.co.uk 📍 221 Heathway, RM9 6AE 🕒 Mon - Fri - 9am to 5:30pm



East Street Dental Practice

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 0208 532 7910 📧 info@eaststreetdentalbarking.co.uk 📍 63 East Street, Barking, Essex, IG11 8EN 🕒 Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturdays, 9am to 4pm



Whalebone Lane North Dental Practice

? NHS and Private Dental Health 📞 0208 597 6953 📧 kclarke@essexfamilydental.co.uk 📍 474 Whalebone Lane North, Romford, Essex, RM6 6RL



Community Dental Service

? NHS only. Full range of community dentistry for patients unable to access NHS dentistry locally, requiring specialist intervention or needing a home visit. They provide special care and paediatric dentistry, family dentistry under the NHS and privately, and dental care for prisoners and in other secure institutions, such as immigration removal centres and secure mental health units. They also provide Talking Therapies for people that find it difficult to go to the Dentist. 📞 0300 123 9276 (Dental Head Office)
📧 dentalreferrals@nhs.net 📍 Vicarage Fields Health Centre, Vicarage Drive, Barking, Essex, IG11 7NR



Emergency dental service

? If you urgently need a dentist when your dentist is closed 📞 020 3594 0938
🕒 Monday to Friday, 6.00pm to 9.00pm, Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays, 9.00am to 2.00pm



Doula Advisory Services

Doula

? Organisation that supports the whole family to have a positive experience of pregnancy, birth and the early weeks with a new baby. ☎ 0871 433 3103
 ✉ admin@doula.org.uk



General Information about NHS Services

BARTS Health Services NHS

? East London Foundation Trust. Provides general information about their hospital and services. ☎ 0207 3777 000 🕒 Opening times, address and email depends on what service you require. Please, refer to website for further details.



Care Quality Commission

? It provides ratings for NHS services. CQC monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and they publish what they find, including performance ratings to help people choose care. ☎ 03000 616161 ✉ enquiries@cqc.org.uk 🕒 Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm



Clinical Commissioning Group for Barking and Dagenham

? Information, reports and contact details about NHS services locally. ☎ 020 3416 5905 ✉ bhrccgs.enquiries@nhs.net 📍 6th floor, North House, St Edwards Way, Romford, RM1 3AE



NEFLT

? North East London NHS Foundation Trust. General Info about NHS Services. Provides mental and community health services. ☎ 0300 555 1200 📍 The West Wing, CEME Centre, Marsh Way, Rainham, RM13 8GQ



Health Centres

Broad Street Health Centre

☎ 020 8465 3600 📍 Morland Road, Dagenham RM10 9HU



Chadwell Heath Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1659 📍 Ashton Gardens, Romford RM6 6RT



Child and Family Centre

☎ 0300 300 1750 📍 79 Axe Street, Barking IG11 7LZ



Church Elm Lane Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1790 📍 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham RM10 9RR



Julia Engwell Health Centre

☎ 0300 3001 797 📍 Woodward Road, Dagenham RM9 4SR



Marks Gate Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1814 📍 Lawn Farm Grove, Romford RM6 5LL



Orchards Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1810 📍 Gascoigne Road, Barking IG11 7RS



Oxlow Lane Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1617 📍 281 Oxlow Lane, Dagenham RM10 7YU



Porters Avenue Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1802 📍 234 Porters Avenue, Dagenham RM8 2EQ



Thames View Health Centre

☎ 0300 300 1668 📍 Bastable Avenue, Barking IG11 0LG

? Health Centres is one of a network of clinics staffed by a group of general practitioners and nurses providing healthcare services to people. This is their directory. The numbers are for the main reception and if you call, they should be able to advise you on what services they provide (GP, dentist, blood test, physio, mental health...) and give you their direct contact details.



Health Visitor

Health visitors are nurses or midwives trained in community public health. They work with families who have new babies, offering support and advice from before birth until the child starts school.

Health Visitor Team East Locality

0300 300 1875 | dutydeskchildrenbd@nelft.nhs.uk | Julia Engwell Clinic



Health Visitor Team North Locality

0300 300 1727 | dutydeskchildrenbd@nelft.nhs.uk | Five Elms Health Centre, Five Elms Road, Dagenham RM9 5TT



Health Visitor Team North Locality

0300 300 1672/1813 | dutydeskchildrenbd@nelft.nhs.uk | Thames View Health Centre, Bastable Avenue, Barking IG11 0LG



Information
menu

Hospitals

King George Hospital

020 8983 8000 or 0330 400 433 | Barley Lane, Ilford, IG3 8YB



Newham General Hospital

0203 6442301/ 020 7363 8137 for urgent enquiries and 020 8090 9999 for non urgent enquiries. | Upney Lane, Barking, Essex, IG11 9LX



Queen's Hospital

0330 400 4333 | Rom Valley Way, Romford, RM7 0AG



Whipp Cross University Hospital

020 8539 5522 | Whipps Cross Rd, Leytonstone, London E11 1NR



Miscarriage Advisory Services

Miscarriage Association

Association that offers support and advice if you have suffered from a miscarriage. | 01924 200799 | info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk



Tommy's Org

Charity providing information and research into pregnancy loss and premature birth. | 020 7398 3400 | mailbox@tommys.org



Pregnancy Advisory Services

British Pregnancy Advisory Services

Organisation helping women with unplanned pregnancy counselling, and abortion treatment. | 03457 30 40 30



NUPAS

Service commissioned by the NHS to provide pregnancy advice, counselling and abortion termination treatments. | 0333 004 6666



Sexual Health Services

Brook

Free & Confidential Sexual Health Advice for young people.



MSI Choices

Organisation providing contraception and safe abortion services. | 0345 300 8090 | services@msichoice.org.uk



Sexual Health Outpatients East

Sexual Health Clinics can help you with any sexual health related query, providing free advice and treatment. You can go to a clinic regardless of your age, gender or sexual orientation. | 020 8970 5724 | Barking Community Hospital, Upney Lane IG11 9LX



Sleeping Advice

The Lullaby Trust

Organisation offering safer sleep advice. | 0808 802 6869 | info@lullabytrust.org.uk



Speech and Language

I Can

? Charity that helps children with communication issues. ☎ 020 7843 2544
 ✉ enquiries@ican.org.uk



Speech and Language Therapy Service

? NHS Service that provides help and advice to parents with children that might have communication challenges. ☎ 0300 300 1754 ✉ bdsalt.admin@nelft.nhs.uk



Walk in Centres

? If you are not registered with a GP and need medical help, you do not need an appointment, you can call or go to these centres. It is advisable to call before if it's late, in case they run out of appointments.

Barking Community Hospital Walk-in

☎ 020 8924 6262 📍 Upney Lane, Barking, IG11 9LX ⌚ Monday to Friday 7am - 10pm and Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays 9am - 10pm



Harold Wood Polyclinic

☎ 01708 792000 📍 The Drive (off Gubbins Lane), Harold Wood, RM3 0AR
 ⌚ 8am – 8pm every day



Loxford Polyclinic

☎ 020 8822 3800 📍 417 Ilford Lane, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2SN ⌚ 8am - 8pm, 7 days per week



South Hornchurch Walk-in Service

☎ 01708 576000 📍 South End Road, Rainham, RM13 7XJ ⌚ 10am-2pm and 3pm to 7pm Monday to Friday and 10am-2pm Saturday and Sunday ⚠ Currently not operating due to Covid.





Childcare

When the time comes (and it comes at different times in every family), starting to think about childcare can be exciting, but also stressful. You want your precious baby to be in the best possible hands, and every family will have different arrangements, needs, and preferences.

This section of the guide will help you understand the different options available and give you an overview of what you need to know.

Good to know!

- ★ Free Childcare: The Government offer free childcare for all kids aged 3 and 4 years old, and some eligible 2 year olds (you need to check your particular circumstances)
- ★ If both parents are working and earning at least an average of £139 per week, but less than £100,000 per year, you might be eligible for tax-free childcare, and, when the child is 3 years old, they can be eligible for 30 hours free per week;
- ★ It is always worth a visit to the Government's website, where a quiz-type route will guide you through the right options Get childcare: step by step - GOV.UK;
- ★ Remember that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government eased some requirements to access some support such as tax-free childcare. You can check your options online at the link above
- ★ Another useful website is the governments childcare choices.



GOV



Childcare Choices

Click on me!
or take a picture

Tip!

For ANY Childcare related query, from knowing what parents are entitled to, to receiving advice and support, ou can contact the Family Information Services at LBBB Council:
fis@lbbd.gov.uk or call this number: 020 8227 5395

What are my childcare options?

Trusted family members or close friends

For many, this is just not an option, but if you are lucky enough to have someone you trust to take care of your little one, just make sure to have clear agreements to avoid disappointments (food, screentime, discipline, reimbursement, emergency management, etc.). It might be a good idea to have a chat or even write down a shared document.

NurSery

A nursery can be a great environment where your child learns a lot together with their peers. The beginnings are always the hardest part, but after the settling period, many parents say it is hard to pick them up because the kids don't want to go home! It can be quite expensive, but for approved nurseries, there is a range of public help available. Check the directory in this section

to have a look at the list of approved nurseries in Barking & Dagenham.

Childminder

Something in between a home environment and a nursery for the companionship element, they tend to be more flexible and a bit cheaper than a nursery. It looks like there has been an increase of childminders with the lockdown, so you might be able to find one close to you!

Check out the following websites:



Barking & Dagenham Childcare

Nanny

Nannies are possibly the most expensive childcare choice, but for many, they are the dream solution as their child will have one-to-one quality time with an experienced and qualified professional.

Find out more about choosing a childminder/nanny in page 61

Au-pair

Au-pairs are a temporary choice (usually up to 1 year) and involve a (usually) young person from another country living with you, having a weekly salary (pocket money) and possibly working up to 30-35 hours, taking care of your child(ren), and doing some light housework.



GOV

Check here for an overview of what an au-pair in your home would mean for you.

Aupair
World

Want to try and look for one? There are plenty of websites and agencies available, one of the most well-known is called Au-pair World.

Shared Childcare

Do you have a buddy family, someone you love and trust? Have you considered the idea of splitting the costs of childcare by sharing the house/a nanny/car/food or whatever your circumstances require to save money and do things in a more communal way?

The importance of having a trusted network of parents is also being able to help each other! Of course, this has proved a challenge with the social distancing restrictions but is something to think about in a creative and supportive way.

After-school/drop-off/ breakfast club

Over time, you will know about all the possible arrangements and services which are often offered by your school, and differences will apply according to your area, your child's age, and your school's offering. Be sure to ask about these services, should you need them when you choose the education setting for your child!



What do parents in our community look for when they have to choose childcare?

We asked The Hug community and here are some of the things that parents came up with when picking childcare for their children:

"One important factor is the outside space and how much of the day is spent outdoors. If it existed here, I would love a full on outdoors nursery"

"The personal feeling with the key person. I really liked her when I met her and I think it was one of the biggest reasons why I chose that one. And I am very happy with it!"

"Garden, food offered to the kids, resources they use with them, and how they help to develop autonomy. {...} if they have everything close to them and they can use it like sink, water station..."

"I think it's very important that the child feel comfortable like they have a home from home"

"For me is the vibe I feel, like a sixth sense. Need to be comfortable with the area and the staff"

A real-life parents' checklist

- How much the space is a child-centred environment;
- How much the activities are child-led or adult-led; What resources are available;
- Do they offer individual learning plans;
- Are there any specific areas of learning and developing;
- What the nap space looks like and how it is organised;
- Food (catering, menus, freshly prepared, special dietary requirements);
- Ofsted rating;
- Diversity of the team;
- Toilet training plans;
- What a typical day looks like;
- How discipline is managed;
- What to expect during the settling-in period
- Safety in general and Covid safety measures in particular;
- Cleaning rates;
- Outdoor space and access to it;
- How communication with parents is organised, updates during the day (many nurseries now use their own app);
- Place availability/fees/funding available;
- Opening times and full day;
- Late fees and collection;
- Location.

How to choose a nanny/childminder if I don't know anybody around?

It is always hard to trust someone to take care of the most precious thing we have in the world. So it might be worth having a look at these tips:

- ★ Try to connect with parents groups, online and offline (at the park, your local children's centre, your faith community, or some app or local Facebook group – you can look at our Socialisation and App sections!). It will be so much easier to ask there for other parents' experiences and recommendations;
- ★ Ask for certifications (Ofsted, first aid training, DBS check), qualifications, and references;
- ★ If the nanny or childminder will work in their home, check how the space is baby-proofed, how clean it is, ask if and who is allowed in the space while your child will be there, and what a typical day looks like; Set expectations and boundaries: are children allowed to use phone/tablet/TV, and if so for how long? Have a think about what would be a deal-breaker for you, and how you would like your child to be taken care of in terms of rules, eating habits, discipline etc. Having a frank conversation can really help both parties to know each other better and understand if it can be a good collaboration!



What is the difference between pre-school nurseries and private nurseries?

At the beginning it might be a bit confusing, but once you get acquainted with the terms and main rules, you will probably know what is best for your child. Pre-schools accept children aged 3 and 4 years old, while nurseries can accept very small babies, sometimes as little as 4 months old.

Both school nurseries and private nurseries follow the EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, as it is the statutory framework for care, education, and child development. The difference, however, depends on how the EYFS can be managed and delivered, as in general school, nurseries tend to adopt a topic approach, while private nurseries follow the child's interests more. The ratio of staff to children is also different, being about 1:11 in school nurseries, versus 1:8 for private. Long hours arrangements might also be easier to manage with private, as well as a greater degree of freedom for the child to engage in what matters to them. On the other hand, some parents feel that the school nurseries approach can be a good introduction to formal school education. As you can see, there is no right or wrong, this is a personal choice based on what you prioritise for your child's education and wellbeing!

Another choice is deciding whether or not your child should go to school once the time comes, as explained in the next page.



Time flies - fast forward to reception/ compulsory education age

This might feel far away in your life if you are a new parent, but some people like to have an understanding of their options in the future.

Until reception, you are not obliged to send your child to school. According to the Government's website: **"Most children start school full-time in the September after their fourth birthday. This means they'll turn 5 during their first school year."** However, if for any reason you do not think your child is ready to start school at the usual time, they have the chance to start later - **"as long as they're in full-time education by the time they reach 'compulsory school age'."**



GOV

Compulsory age is on the 31 December, 31 March, or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first.

It is important to know though, that although education is compulsory, sending your child to school is not.

Homeschooling (or home learning) is a valid option and there are many possibilities, but you need to know the law, your rights, and duties regarding homeschooling. Some information is available here:

★ Child Law Advice



★ Barking & Dagenham



Special Education Needs


One of the biggest worries as a parent is to make sure our kids get the best out of life. Many of us will hear from other parents or family how a child should develop, by when they should do what and what the best way is to support their development. The good news is that many of the answers to those questions will come from your best teacher, your child!

All children develop at different stages and in different ways. When your baby starts to grow, you can see how they progress in all areas, but if at any stage you have any concern, as we mentioned on the Health section, follow your instincts, seek advice, and if you are still not happy with the answers, look for a second opinion.

Depending on what concerns you have, and your child's age, you might want to check first with your Midwife, GP, Health Visitor, Teacher or SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator, working at schools). All those

TIP!

Have a look at this Guide from the Department of Health and Education, to get an idea of what to expect and when from your child.




Department of Health & Education

TIP!

Don't postpone asking for help, as it might make you feel more anxious and it will delay the process of getting the help your child might need. Also, services might be quite busy and it can take a while to be referred and seen by a specialist, so the sooner, the better!

professionals can help you to find out if your child is having any issues.



IASS

The IASS (Information Advice Support Service) in Barking and Dagenham is run by the Carer's Centre. They have a SEN section on their website and can be a good place to start getting advice if you are unsure on what to do. They can advocate for you if you need it.

Once you have a diagnosis, it can be much easier to find the right help. This list can give you an idea of where to start.



Care and Family Support for Under 5

★ Care and Family Support for under 5, is a service from the Council that can do a series of assessments to understand yours and your child's needs and refer you for further help.



Portage and Inclusion

★ From zero to three years, Portage and Inclusion is an education service from the Council for children with additional needs. They work together with the NHS and can help you and your child in all areas of learning and development.



Sycamore Trust

★ Sycamore Trust is a local organisation that helps parents with kids with autism. They offer information, and also run activities.



IPSEA

★ IPSEA is an independent advisor of special education advice. They focus more on your legal rights and those of your child. It might be worth checking their website... If you have any questions, you can send them an email or book an appointment through the website.



Council for Disabled Children

★ Council for Disabled Children They provide further information and resources.

If your child has more complex needs, they will require a more specialised assessment, called an EHC plan (Education, Health and Care plan). It is done by your Local Authority and you can request it on their website. Also, here is the link to the Government website, if you would like more information about it.



EHC



Gov

This assessment might be done in conjunction with the Nursery or School, and it can take up to 20 weeks to be completed. It should address the needs of your child, but it should also help you as a parent to understand them. It should feel like a collaborative and empowering process between you, your child, and all the professionals involved.

!!!

If you are not happy with the process, the EHC Plan, or the help you are getting, voice your concerns. You can ask the organisations listed above or contact The Hug for further support and advice.

Childcare Directory

Contents

- ★ Day Nursery p.66
- ★ Day Nursery and Preschool p.70
- ★ Preschool p.71

Day Nursery

1st Steps Day Nursery Ltd

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Wantz Hall, Rainham Road North, Dagenham, RM10 7DX
 🕒 9am-3pm 📞 0208 593 3063 📧 info@1ststepsnursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Barney Bears Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Barney Bears Nursery, 60 Upney Lane, Barking, IG11 9LP
 🕒 7:30am-6:30pm 📞 020 8594 3366 📧 barneysbears@btconnect.com
Ofsted Good



Barking Riverside Nursery School

📍 Birth - 5 years 📍 Renwick Road, Barking, IG11 0FU 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 0203 959 9989
 📧 barkingriverside@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** no report yet



Calvary Greatfields Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 The Shaftesbury Society, Greatfields Hall, King Edwards Road, Barking, IG11 7TR
 🕒 7:30am-6pm 📞 020 8594 9663 📧 ngreatfields@yahoo.com
Ofsted Good



Chadwell Heath Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Resurrection Life Centre, Rear Of 31-33, High Road, Romford, RM6 6QJ
 🕒 9:30am-6pm 📞 020 8599 8111 📧 admin@chnps.co.uk
Ofsted Good



Chestnut Nursery @ Arden House

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Arden House, 198 Longbridge Road, Barking, IG11 8SY
 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8591 6788 📧 ardenhouse@chestnut-nursery.co.uk
Ofsted Good



Chestnut Nursery Schools @ Halbutt Street

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 202a Halbutt Street, Dagenham, RM9 5AA 🕒 8am-6pm
 📞 020 8595 3705 📧 halbuttstreet@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Chestnut Nursery School @ Markyate

📍 2 years - 5 years 📍 Markyate Road, Dagenham, RM8 2LD 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8984 4686
 📧 markyate@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Crowned Kids Day Nursery

📍 Birth - 5 years 📍 Worshipville Christian Centre, 523a Gale Street, Dagenham, RM9 4TP
 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8595 4148 📧 crownedkidsnursery@gmail.com
Ofsted Good



Ford Road Children's Centre Nursery

📍 Birth - 5 years 📍 Ford Road, Dagenham, RM10 9JS 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8724 1382
 📧 fordroad@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** Outstanding



Furze Children's Centre Nursery

📍 6 months - 5 years 📍 1a Farrance Road, Romford, RM6 6E 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8599 1548
 📧 furze@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** Outstanding



Eastbury Children's Centre Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Blake Avenue, Barking, IG11 9SQ 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8270 6425
 📧 eastbury@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** Good



Elm Lane Day Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 24 Church Street, Dagenham, RM10 9UR 🕒 7am-6pm
 📞 020 8984 8184 📧 elmlane@outlook.com **Ofsted** Good



Gascoigne Children's Centre Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 The Coverdales, Barking, IG11 7HQ 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 020 8724 1539
 📧 gascoigne@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Harmony House At Castle Green

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Gale Street, Dagenham, RM9 4UN 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 0208 724 1530
 📧 wbujeja@hhd.org.uk **Ofsted** Good



Harmony House Childhood Centre

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Harmony House, Sacred Heart Convent, Baden Powell Close, Dagenham, RM9 6XN
 🕒 8am-6pm 📞 0208 526 8201 📧 cnantwi@hhd.org.uk
Ofsted Good



Heritage Day Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 280 Oxlow Lane, Dagenham, RM10 8LP 🕒 8am-6pm
 📞 020 8984 0673 📧 heritagedaynursery@yahoo.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



John Perry Nursery

3 months - 5 years 28 Auriel Avenue, Dagenham, RM10 8BS 8am-6pm
020 8984 4500 johnperry@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Kidzland Nursery

1yr-5yrs 522 Heathway, Dagenham, RM10 7SD 7:30am-6:30pm 020 8517 1311
kidzlandnursery2@live.co.uk **Ofsted** Outstanding



Leaping Toads Nursery and After-school/Saturday Activities

2 years - 5 years 1-4 Rectory Road, Dagenham, RM10 9SA 7am-7pm
07902 775 294 admin@ltl.co.uk **Ofsted** no report yet



Leys Children's Centre Nursery

3 months - 5 years 215 Wellington Drive, Dagenham, RM10 9XW 8am-6pm
020 8724 1984 leys@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** Good



Marks Gate Children's Centre Day Nursery

6 months - 5 years Wellgate Childrens Centre, Lawn Farm Grove, Romford, RM6 5LL
8am-6pm 020 8724 1305 marksgate@leyf.org.uk **Ofsted** Good



Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery Chadwell

3 months - 5 years 22-24 Freshwater Road, Chadwell Heath, Dagenham, RM8 1RY
7:30am-6:30pm 0208 599 8627 manager@monkeypuzzlechadwellheath.co.uk
Ofsted Good



Montessori & Me Nursery

3 months - 5 years 319 High Road, Romford, RM6 6AX 7:30am-6:30pm
020 8599 4279 info@montessorilandme.co.uk **Ofsted** no report yet



Morningstar Nursery School and After School Club

3 months - 5 years 2-4 Whalebone Lane South, Dagenham, RM8 1BJ 7am-6pm
02035030245 / 07956673799 olaadeluola2004@yahoo.com
Ofsted no report yet



Playaway Nursery (blc) Limited

2 years - 5 years Barking Learning Centre, 2 Town Square, Barking, IG11 7NB
8am-6pm 020 8591 0008 blc@playaway.uk.com **Ofsted** Good



Playaway Nursery (BCC) Limited

Birth - 5 years Becontree School, Stevens Road, Dagenham, RM8 2QR 8am-6pm
020 8724 1839 claire@playaway.uk.com **Ofsted** Good



Play & Learn Day Nursery Ltd - Barking

Birth - 5 years Barking Park Lodge, Longbridge Road, Barking, IG11 8TA 7am-6:30pm
020 8220 5674 deputy.barking@ashbournedaynurseries.com
Ofsted Good



Play & Learn Day Nursery Ltd - Dagenham

Birth - 5 years 212 Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 2TR 7am-6:30pm
0208 590 3360 manager.dagenham@ashbournedaynurseries.com
Ofsted Good



Quality Kidz Nurseries Limited

3 months - 5 years 30 Keppel Road, Dagenham, RM9 5LT 8am-6pm 020 8984 9679
qualitykidz@hotmail.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Quality Kidz Nurseries Ltd - Campden

3 months - 5 years 79 Campden Crescent, Dagenham, RM8 2RS 7:30am-6:45pm
020 8599 0047 qualitykidz@hotmail.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



Spinduliukas

2 years - 5 years 132 Lambourne Road, Barking, IG11 9QA 7:30am-6pm
07539 169412 londsasky@gmail.com **Ofsted** Good



Sue Bramley Children's Centre Nursery

3 months - 5 years Bastable Avenue, Barking, IG11 0LG 8am-6pm 0203 411 4855
Suebramley@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



The Ark Day Care Nursery

Birth - 4 years 48 Grosvenor Road, Dagenham, RM8 1NL 7:30am-6:30pm
0208 984 1691 dagenhamArk@thearkdaycarenursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Good



The Maples

6 months - 5 years 80a Gascoigne Road, Barking, IG11 7LQ 8am-6pm
0208 724 8383 themaples@chestnut-nursery.co.uk **Ofsted** Outstanding



Tubbies Day Nursery

📍 6 months - 5 years 📍 35 Strood Avenue, Romford, RM7 0UX 🕒 8am-6pm
☎️ 01708 723727 📧 tubbiesdaynursery@yahoo.co.uk 🏆 Ofsted Good



Westbury Day Nursery Limited

📍 Birth - 5 years 📍 Ripple Road, Barking, IG11 7FP 🕒 8am-6pm ☎️ 020 8507 1253
📧 vicky_mcg@hotmail.co.uk 🏆 Ofsted Good



William Bellamy Children's Centre Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Frizlands Lane, Dagenham, RM10 7HX 🕒 8am-6pm
☎️ 020 3051 9795 📧 Williambellamy@chestnut-nursery.co.uk 🏆 Ofsted Outstanding



Day Nursery and PreSchool

Abbey Children`s Centre Nursery and preschool

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Abbey Children's Centre, North Street, Barking, IG11 8LA
🕒 8am-6pm ☎️ 020 8724 1274 📧 AbbeyNursery@lbbd.gov.uk 🏆 Ofsted Good



Kiddies Lounge Pre School Day Nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Rivergate Centre, Minter Road, Barking, IG11 0FJ 🕒 8am-6pm
☎️ 07939 156510 📧 info@kiddiesloungenursery.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Playaway Nursery (SRCC) and preschool

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 Sydney Russell Childrens Centre, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, RM9 5QS 🕒 8am-6pm
☎️ 020 8724 1209 📧 sarah@playaway.uk.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Playdays Nursery And Preschool

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 801 Green Lane, Dagenham, RM8 1DD 🕒 8am-6pm
☎️ 020 8599 5986 📧 playdaysnurseryjo@outlook.com 🏆 Ofsted no report yet



Royal Gate Kids Pre School/nursery

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 39 London Road, Barking, IG11 8AL 🕒 9am-3:30pm
☎️ 07946 236011 📧 royalgatekids@yahoo.co.uk 🏆 Ofsted Good



Childcare

Spectacular Kidz Day Nursery & Preschool

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 11 Farr Avenue, Barking, IG11 0NY 🕒 8am-6pm ☎️ 020 3581 7856
📧 enquiries.spectacularkidz@yahoo.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Tender Cubs Preschool and Day Nursery, Porters Avenue

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 284 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 2EQ 🕒 9am-5pm
☎️ 020 8127 7274 📧 Ben2@tendercubs.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Tendercubs Preschool And Day Nursery, Woodward Road

📍 3 months - 5 years 📍 25 & 31 Woodward Road, Dagenham, RM9 4SJ 🕒 9:30am-5:30pm
☎️ 020 8127 7274 📧 Ben2@tendercubs.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



PreSchool

ABC Pre-School

📍 2 years - 5 years 📍 St Peters Presbytery, Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, RM9 6UR
🕒 9:15am-2:50pm ☎️ 020 8984 8999 📧 abcpreschool7@hotmail.co.uk
🏆 Ofsted Good



Beacon Pre-School Playgroup

📍 2 years - 3 years 📍 Beacontree Heath Methodist Church, The Broadway, Dagenham, RM8 1DZ
🕒 9am-12pm ☎️ 020 8595 4611 📧 beaconpreschool@btconnect.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Buttercup Preschool

📍 2 years - 5 years 📍 Fanshawe Crescent, Dagenham, RM9 5QA 🕒 9:30am-3pm
☎️ 07445 058830 📧 buttercupdag@gmail.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Childville @ Dagenham Parish Hall

📍 2 years - 5 years 📍 Dagenham Parish Hall, Exeter Road, Dagenham, RM10 8TR
🕒 8:45am-2:45pm ☎️ 07799 130 805 📧 dagenhamparishhall@childvillecentre.com
🏆 Ofsted no report yet



Childville Pre School @ St Johns

📍 2 years - 5 years 📍 St John The Divine Church, Dagenham, RM9 4XA 🕒 9am-3pm
☎️ 07914 824676 📧 stjohs@childvillecentre.com 🏆 Ofsted Good



Childville Pre-School

2 years - 5 years • Community Centre, Gascoigne Community Association, 124-128 St Anns, Barking, IG11 7AD • 9am-3pm • 07825 132898 • gascoigne@childvillecentre.com • Ofsted Good

**Childville Pre-School @ Thames View**

2 years - 5 years • Curzon Community Centre, Bastable Avenue, Barking, IG11 0LG • 9:15am-12:15pm • 07760 220367 • thamesview@childvillecentre.com • Ofsted Good

**Kinder Kapers Too**

2 years - 5 years • Kingsley Hall, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, RM9 5NB • 8am-6pm • 020 8592 1708 • school@khccc.com • Ofsted Good

**Lets Play Too Pre-School**

2 years - 5 years • Teresa Greene Community Centre, Leys Avenue, Dagenham, RM10 9YP • 9am-3pm • 07401 212824 • letsplaytoopreschool@gmail.com • Ofsted Good

**Playland**

2 years - 5 years • Vicarage Field Shopping Centre, Ripple Road, Barking, IG11 8DQ • 9:30am-4pm • 0208 594 4566 • playlandpreschool@hotmail.co.uk • Ofsted Good

**Saint Chads Anglican Pre-School**

2 years - 5 years • Church Office, St Chads Church, Eric Road, Romford, RM6 6JH • 9:15am-3:45pm • 07794 113301 • saintchadspreschoolchadwellheath@yahoo.co.uk • Ofsted Good

**St Marks Pre-School**

2 years - 5 years • St Marks Church Centre, Belben Court, 165 Rose Lane, Romford, RM6 5NR • varies by day • 07815 530613 / 020 8597 0299 • stmarkstoddlers@aol.com • Ofsted Good

**Sunnyside Pre-School Ltd**

2 years -4 years • 1st Chadwell Heath Scouts, Catterall Hall, Cecil Road, Romford, RM6 6LB • 9am-12pm • 07590 056580 • chriscocker@live.co.uk • Ofsted Good

**The Oaks Activity Centre**

2 years -4 years • Old School House, Collier Row Road, Romford, RM5 2DD • 8am-6pm • 020 8597 9171 • oaksactivitycentre@btconnect.com • Ofsted Good

**Trinity Playcentre**

2 years - 5 years • 130 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham, RM10 9RL • 9am-3pm • 0208 592 4768 / 07949075755 • wendyjohanson13@btinternet.com • Ofsted Good

**YMCA Thames Gateway Romford Pre-School**

2 years - 5 years • YMCA, Rush Green Road, Romford, RM7 0PH • varies by day • 01708 766211 (ext 261) • qualitychildcare@ymcatg.org • Ofsted Good





Mental Health

We wish you to have the best parenting experience. We really do! And we hope that you won't need these services, but... here they are, just in case.

We are here to let you know that conditions such as postpartum depression, the "baby blues", postpartum anxiety, PTSD, birth trauma and many others are very common and too often undiagnosed and untreated. We are often told that suffering is part of parenthood, that it's normal to feel overwhelmed or anxious, or very sad.

However, even though they are very common it doesn't mean that there is no help for them. For example, also cough, or hay fever are very common, and nobody is ashamed of asking for help or treatment for those symptoms!

Now you are a parent, and it often feels difficult to look out for yourself. When and if you feel that it is getting too much... don't wait any longer. Help is a phone call away.

Important information!

If you need immediate help, you can call the NELFT Mental Health Direct Team, on 0300 555 1000, or the Samaritans - 116 123 for mental health emergencies, from any phone, for FREE if you prefer to chat, send an email or download a self-help app, use Samaritans.



NELFT



Samaritans

Click on me!
or take a picture

The new you

When a new baby comes to the world, the woman that gave birth leaves space for a new person, who is also just born: it is, indeed, a newborn mother.

A lot of the attention is on the baby now, but it is really important to focus on the mum, on her body, on her mind and soul, for her to heal.

Some women find an instant connection with the new role and identity, a sense of fulfilment that helps them face all the difficulties of the lack of sleep, the new caring responsibilities, and the postpartum pains. Some women, on the other hand, struggle a bit to find the new balance.

They might be missing the old life, or finding it extremely difficult navigating into this new stage of life. Although it might sound weird when connected to the start of a new life, many women experience grief: it is legitimate, perfectly healthy and understandable.

Matrescence

This is a powerful term by Dana Raphael, a medical anthropologist, to indicate the profound shift in identity that happens when a woman has a baby. Similar to adolescence, it is a revolutionary phase where women are experiencing their way into a new body, a new role in the world, hormone and emotion shifting that go together with psychological, physical and emotional factors.

INFO

Grief for:

★ Time

Scheduling things in your own time, being able to eat/sleep/go to the loo whenever you want to, being up late and not worrying about having to wake up early, not having constant interruptions;

★ Body

You don't fit in your old jeans, your hair, your teeth, your belly, your breasts and your pelvic floor are all adapting to this new phase of your life. It doesn't mean it's not going to transform into something even more beautiful, but it's ok to have a moment of imbalance between the "old" and the "new you";

★ Social Life

It's really hard to fit in social life, in some cases you might miss your friends with no kids and feel that "they don't get it", or you might miss being able to go out "for a quick trip to the shops" (nothing feels ever "quick and easy" when it involves taking your little one out!), even having a coffee with a friend might feel hard. It's all about adjusting;

★ Your relationship with your partner

There is no time for the two of you! And sleep deprivation doesn't help;

★ Whatever it is that you need to grieve for

It is ok. Denying it won't help, in fact, understanding your needs and being compassionate to yourself will help you navigate through this new era of your life which, we promise, also comes with a lot of perks, deep happiness, intense emotions, and will make it all worth it.

TIP!

Understanding your needs, however big or small, doable or impossible at the moment and being compassionate with yourself are the biggest gifts you can give to an exhausted parent. You are living a moment of "giving", a lot of the attention and care is focused on the baby. It doesn't make you a bad parent wanting to be taken care of, needing nourishment, rest, and love.

Dads, we see you

Too often, dads' mental health in the perinatal period is neglected or dismissed. Unfortunately, there is still so much work to do with our society to legitimise these often very hard feelings and states. But there are some organisations, pages, apps, and professionals that are doing an excellent job out there to support dads.

While official statistics can only report a small percentage of cases of dads suffering from postnatal depression (PND), some studies from the NCT - National Childbirth Trust found instead that a 1 in 3 dads (38%) are worried about their own health, and 3 in 4 dads (73%) are worried about their partner's health (Source: Dads Matter UK). It is indeed an impressive data, and the truth is that you might have been worried about your or your partner's mental health at least once, but this doesn't necessarily mean having a concern. The idea here is to spot a light over something that doesn't receive enough attention, and we believe we should care for more.

Exactly like mothers, dads have an increased chance to experience some form of depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



According to Dads Matter UK :



Dads
Matter UK

"At the time of the crisis or trauma men are often ignored, as the priority is to provide the help needed for the mother and child. Dads take a back seat doing as instructed without any real understanding other than the person they love and their child are at grave risk. It is not uncommon for Dads to feel anxious and helpless about seeing their loved one going through the ordeal of a traumatic birth. As men tend to hide their feelings, then this can be repressed for a long time before emerging much later as PTSD"

You can assess
yourself here:



Dads
Matter UK



A real-life case from a mum resident in Barking

Please read first

At The Hug Support Group we have heard, felt, and shared dozens of stories. Some of them are uplifting, some funny, some really hard. Together we have laughed, cried, and learned so much. We want to share a real case in the Guide to show you that if you are experiencing any sort of trouble, you are not alone. But we need to warn you, **this story might be triggering** as it has sensitive content and explicit descriptions, so just jump this bit if you don't feel like reading it.

I gave birth at 37 weeks. It was unexpected, I suddenly felt reduced fetal movement, went for a check and they told me that for "low amniotic fluid" I had to be induced right after, I could just postpone until the next day. I wasn't ready, and I think my baby wasn't either. I entered Newham Hospital on a Wednesday, and my son was born on a Saturday. It was a long and quite traumatic experience. I got a bit of a fever during the delivery, so we stayed 48 hours more, as per protocol. The very first thing my son experienced in his life was a needle in his little tiny hand for the antibiotics, and I can't forget that moment of just wanting him in my arms and not realising what just happened. The postnatal care was brutal, I didn't receive adequate support for breastfeeding (was instead encouraged to formula feed as one nurse said "since you are not able to breastfeed") and felt really helpless, exhausted, and lonely. My nipples were bleeding after 24 hours my son was born. I was scared to do something wrong and hurt my baby, that was so small.

Few days after going home we were readmitted to take care of my baby's jaundice. We stayed there a couple of days, I couldn't sleep, I couldn't take

care of myself at all. My milk came, but I got an engorged duct, and then milk wasn't coming, and at the hospital they prescribed mixed feeding. I was feeling overwhelmed. I felt like someone was putting my face down the water, and that I was gasping and trying my best to get out and breathe. Coming back home, it was a little better, but the new sleep routine and my body still healing was killing me. I was scared, anxious, and googling everything about the baby. I was terrified about SIDS (infant death syndrome), poop colour, how to increase breastmilk production and so many other things.

Despite being acquainted with the concept of postpartum depression, it took me months to connect the dots of not feeling like myself, of struggling so much, of not feeling so close and in love and happy as I was supposed to be. Maybe I was feeling ashamed, or I wasn't sure, or I didn't want to tell myself in the first place that my struggle needed help. Maybe I even thought I wasn't worth the help. When I finally managed to reach for help, my GP straight-forward prescribed me antidepressants after just 10 minutes of conversation. I refused.

I requested to be referred for talking therapies and it took around 7 months to be seen for the first time. By then, I was already feeling so much better, and after a few sessions, I was dismissed. What really helped me was finding a group of peer mums in my area, and being able to talk about our birth stories, our struggles, our way to deal with them. Mostly, knowing that I wasn't alone anymore helped incredibly. I also slowly started to understand that the relationship I started building with my son wasn't given, it needed love and nourishment, and it kept growing day by day: while at the beginning was just crying and pooping and sleeping, around the third month I started getting some reciprocity, a smile, a sign






that he was there and that we were there together! I got to love him more and more, rather than having an instant immense love. (Spoiler alert: I am currently madly in love with him, and we have an amazing bond). But if you are reading this and you can relate somehow, I really wish you to not wait much to seek help, to let your network know that you are struggling. And if they say that is part of the “motherhood experience”, look for more help! There are plenty of great professionals that can really help,

will understand what you are going through and guide you into this new phase of your life. Perinatal mental health issues are more common than you think, it’s just that is so hard to openly talk about them.

TIP!

Are you at risk for postpartum anxiety or depression? Take the quiz: 
Dr Sarah Hallen

How to spot signs of depression and anxiety in pregnancy and postpartum

Around 60-80% of new mothers experience what is commonly called “baby blues”. It is usually linked to the intense hormonal adjustments that your body is going through, and it shouldn’t last long (a few days is the average). There are, however, many other conditions that are quite common,

and they can be, among others, anxiety (PNA), depression (PND), trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In some cases, signs and symptoms can be obvious, but you’d be surprised to know how often a perinatal mental health issue is left

unattended, undiagnosed and/or untreated. The reasons are many, from cultural or societal beliefs, to unawareness or shame, not knowing how to identify certain symptoms, or a lack of support network or inability to seek help. While many of these reasons go beyond our reach, The Hug wants to support you in helping you recognise some “red flags” that could make you consider seeking help, and letting you know HOW to look for help.

Some of the symptoms of PND (NOTE: it could look very different from case to case)

- ★ not feeling like yourself;
- ★ feeling constantly exhausted;
- ★ not feeling a bond with the baby;
- ★ crying often and sometimes for no apparent reason;
- ★ feeling low, having a sense of loss that is inexplicable;
- ★ not feeling as happy as you thought you would be;
- ★ guilt;
- ★ isolation and helplessness a sense of “unreality” ;
- ★ feeling disconnected from yourself and/or from your baby and/or from your partner;
- ★ scary thoughts of hurting

yourself or the baby (it doesn’t mean that you would actually act this out, these are just fantasies, but the thoughts are there);

- ★ constantly worry about your baby’s health and condition (this can look like checking whether your baby is breathing in their sleep, googling every possible disease/symptom/possible hazard)

You can find more info here:



Postpartum Alliance



Anxiety

DLC Anxiety (an online anxiety support community) suggests checking for these signs. These are generic for anyone experiencing anxiety and/or high levels of stress, but can resonate with you when becoming a new parent:

- ★ **Feeling impatient, you can get easily irritable:** stress levels are high, and patience is low;
- ★ **Not being able to focus:** doesn't matter what you do, you can't keep track or concentrate;
- ★ **Can't enjoy anything you do:** this is an important "alarm signal" that tells you that you might be close to experiencing burnout. If you can, take some time off;
- ★ **Keep getting sick** - your defenses might be low, and being constantly on the go doesn't help. You need to recharge;
- ★ **You feel so tired, but can't sleep:** high stress levels can confuse you and leave you on "alert mode", leaving you more exhausted than ever.
- ★ Other symptoms include being constantly worried, feeling anxious, having panic attacks, fast heartbeat, feeling constantly on edge.

If you are experiencing one or more of these signs, you should try and take a "mental health day", although, this is easier said than done if you are a parent 24/7 (and during a lockdown!)¹. So go ahead and read the following paragraph, it might give you some inspiration!

¹We are writing this while still in full lockdown, and we hope that by the time you will read this, it will only be a memory. But for whatever stage you were in (pregnant, with a newborn, or a toddler), we know it was not easy, and you might need to deal with the aftermath of this difficult time.

Taking care of yourself with a newborn/child

In order to take care of your mental health, a psychologist is not always the 'right fit'. There are many options available. For example, you can join a support group - specific for a category where you might have more difficulties (parents groups, bereavement, domestic violence survivors, single parents, parents with disabilities... try and have a look online, you might find an online or offline support group for you).

Another option is to download an app. The NHS has made many free apps to help you with anxiety, intrusive thoughts, depression, healthy eating, fitness, and much more. Go to your app store online and have a look.

It might feel like a joke when people tell you to "take time for yourself". But how? If you have a good support network and can count on a partner, a relative, or a friend to take over and help you, try and take all that you can get. You will need it.

Motherhood is not a competition about how much you can do or take on, it's an incredible journey and it really takes a village to grow a child. If you don't have anybody you can count on though, you need to get creative.

Gently push yourself to find a little special activity that you enjoy, it can be anything from reading a magazine, putting on nail polish, watching Netflix, or starting a new thing (crochet, painting, the possibilities are endless!) Some parents feel so mentally exhausted that all they need is some time to rest, but some other need instead a bit of a mental challenge, something that makes them feel they are still productive, or having meaningful thoughts besides the extensive routine of taking care of a newborn. So if a Sudoku works, make it your little nice time while in the loo, whatever makes you feel that you are still a person.

Perinatal mental health services

In Barking and Dagenham there is a service for all those mental health issues that arise from pre-conception to when the baby is up to one year old (there might be extensions in time though, so if you identify with any symptoms, please do contact the services to find out your eligibility).

The perinatal parent infant mental health services (PPIMHS) is a specialist psychiatric and psychological service. It might be useful to understand what specialists work in this service and what their function is:

- ★ Perinatal psychiatrists can offer assessment and treatment, including advice on medication during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. They work closely with maternity services by holding joint obstetric/psychiatric clinics.
- ★ Perinatal community mental health practitioners can provide intensive support and offer home visits to assist in getting help from other services such as children's centres.
- ★ Psychotherapists and psychologists work with the service user, their partner, and baby together to help adjust to the changes that can come with pregnancy and caring for a new baby. (Source: NHS NEIfT website)

Trauma

Birth and perinatal trauma is unfortunately more common than you might think. Like other issues and conditions shown in this section, there are many reasons why it is difficult to have a public discussion, seek specific help, or be able to share one's traumatic experience.

Especially since the first lockdown in 2020, the challenges of becoming a mother increased notably, and might have included not having anybody present during labour and delivery, not being able to receive visitors, and not receiving the care that you might have expected. Do not underestimate your struggles and know that help is available.

Whatever your experience is, learn to never compare with other people. Others might sometimes seem to have it worse, you might discredit your own feelings or doubt that you are worth healing, care, and compassion, but remember that you can drown in a deep ocean or in a small pool and still be drowning. Acknowledging your path is one of the best steps you can take towards your healing.



If you want to contact a specialist concerning your birth experience, the Birth Reflection and Birth Trauma Team at Newham Hospital can help you, offering one-to-one appointments. You can contact them at bartshealth.btrnewham@nhs.net for Birth Trauma, or serena.fisher2@nhs.net for Birth Reflections; they aim to see you within 4-6 weeks of being contacted. Alternatively, you can check the directory of this Section for counselling, talking therapy and more.

Bereavement, miscarriage and stillbirth

If you have experienced a loss, either at an early stage of the pregnancy or after giving birth, you might feel in a very dark place. There is no way to be prepared for this, and your reactions can be very different. Losing a child, at any stage, is a difficult experience to say the least and it can be very difficult to share your feelings with someone else. Specific help is available in many forms. You can contact one of the specialist services listed in our directory, join a parent group in your local area, or some less-specific but loving and understanding groups of parents, online and offline.

The website Tommy's offers great resources, such as The Baby loss series, some touching videos that could help to elaborate more on this difficult subject.

For more info check out these pages on Tommy's website:

Miscarriage



Stillbirth



Neonatal death



How to seek help in Barking & Dagenham

You can ask for a referral from your GP, health visitor, or midwife. You can also self-refer yourself by filling a form [HERE](#):



As mentioned in this form - What happens next?

"If we think we may be able to help you, we will call you to offer you an assessment appointment. The initial appointment takes place over the telephone and lasts approximately 30 minutes. If Talking Therapies, Barking & Dagenham is the right service for you, we aim to offer a therapy appointment within four weeks from the day of your initial request. We will talk with you about when and where you would like to be seen. We work in various NHS buildings and GP practices"

Contact Telephone: 0300 555 1119 for Perinatal Services

0300 300 1554 option 3 for Talking Therapies Services

Contact Email: Perinatal.Service@nelft.nhs.uk for Perinatal Services and bdtalkingtherapies@nhs.net for Talking Therapies Services.

In Conclusion

We hope you found this section useful, and that it has given you a general idea of what help is available for mental health and well-being in our area. We also hope to encourage more discussion about mental health in general, so that nobody will have to suffer in silence. In case you are not sure about your specific situation and would like a friendly chat to understand your options.

Mental Health Directory

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Abuse Support

NAPAC

? The National Association for People Abused in Childhood provides support for people affected by sexual abuse in childhood, with a dedicated support line, free online resources and training. 📞 Telephone contact unavailable due to Covid, look at the website for updates. 📧 support@napac.org.uk 📍 NAPAC, CAN Mezzanine, 7-14 Great Dover St, London, SE1 4YR



NSPCC

? Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty 🕒 Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends. It's free and you don't have to say who you are. 📞 0808 800 5000 If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact our professional counsellors for help, advice and support or 0800 1111 if you are 18 years old or under. 📧 help@nspcc.org.uk 📍 Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH



Rape Crisis

? Supports anyone who has experienced rape, child sexual abuse and/or any other kind of sexual violence. 📞 0808 802 9999 📧 rcewinfo@rapecrisis.org.uk 📍 Rape Crisis England & Wales, Suite E4, Josephs Well, Hanover Walk, Leeds, LS3 1AB ⚠️ National Helpline and live chat helpline currently close due to Covid. Check website for updates.



Refuge

? Advice on domestic violence 🕒 Always open 📞 0808 2000 247



Bereavement

Bereavement Advice Centre

? Support and advice for people after a death in the family. They provide advice on how to deal with all the practical issues that need to be managed after a bereavement. 🕒 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm 📞 0800 634 9494 📍 Bereavement Advice Centre, Heron House, Timothy's Bridge Road, Stratford Upon Avon, CV37 9BX



Muslim Bereavement Support Services (MBSS)

? Offers face-to-face and telephone support for bereaved women of the Muslim community. Can be contacted by phone, email and letter. Based in Ilford. 📞 020 3468 7333 📧 info@mbss.org.uk



The Child Death Helpline

Provides a free phone helpline staffed by trained volunteers who have experienced the death of a child. It offers support in relation to the death of a child of any age, regardless of cause and distance in time. ☎ 0800 282 986 or 0808 800 6019 (if calling from a mobile)



The Compassionate Friends (TFC)

TFC offers support after the death of a child of any age, through any cause. TFC provides online support, a helpline, email support and groups. ☎ 0345 123 2304 (open every day of the year 10am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm) ✉ helpline@tcf.org.uk



Drugs

Adfam - Families, drugs and alcohol

Information and support for families affected by drugs and alcohol. ☎ 020 3817 9410 ✉ admin@adfam.org.uk 📍 Adfam, 2nd Floor, 120 Cromer Street, London, WC1H 8BS



Talk to Frank

National Drug Education Service. Provides information on legal and illegal drugs for teenagers and adolescents. 🕒 24 hours, 7 days a week ☎ 0300 1236600 ✉ frank@talktofrank.com



Mental Health Service

B&D Community Mental Health Services

BDAAT is the assessment service for adults aged 18 to 65 that need to access community mental health services in Barking and Dagenham. They provide an initial mental health assessment. Once assessed, they may refer or signpost to other services. ☎ Out of Hours 0300 555 1000 (Mental Health Direct Line)



Barking and Dagenham Access Assessment and Brief Intervention

Mental Health from NHS 🕒 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday ☎ 0300 300 1570 (option 3) ✉ BDAA.Team@nhs.net 📍 for people 18-65



Calm

They offer support and advice to anyone, especially those in crisis. They offer a webchat and a helpline 🕒 5pm till 12am ☎ 0800 58 58 58 📍 You can send an email through their website



ChildLine

ChildLine is for young people up to the age of 19 to contact and talk to about any issue, no matter what you are experiencing. You can talk to a ChildLine counsellor about anything and this is a free, private and confidential service. ☎ 0800 11 11



Dad's Matter

Organisation offering support and information to Dads about their mental health. 📍 Contact only through their website.



Mental Health Direct Phone line

Urgent mental health help 🕒 Always open ☎ 0300 555 1000

Mind

Mind Infoline gives confidential support and information on lots of mental health related issues including where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy. Mind also has a network of nearly 200 local Mind associations providing local services. 🕒 Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm ☎ 0300 123 3393 ✉ info@mind.org.uk 📍 Harrow Lodge House, Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 1JU



NELFT

Mental Health from NHS ☎ 0300 300 1554 option 3 ✉ bdtalkingtherapies@nhs.net 📍 Various buildings in Barking and Dagenham



Phoenix Counselling

Counselling for individuals, couples, groups and workshops 📍 Consult provider for timings ☎ 020 8595 9633 ✉ info@phoenix-counselling.co.uk 📍 591 Heathway, Dagenham, RM9 5AZ



Samaritans

Provides emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They allow people to talk about feelings of distress and despair. They are confidential and offer non-judgemental support. 🕒 24 hours ☎ 116 123 ✉ jo@samaritans.org



Sane

SANE runs an out-of-hours helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends, and carers. Open every day of the year from 4:30pm-10:30pm 🕒 4:30pm-10:30pm ☎ 0300 304 7000 ✉ support@sane.org.uk



Mental Health Specialist Service

Anxiety UK

🔍 Aims to support everyone affected by anxiety. Offers talking therapies and self-help groups. 🕒 Mon-Fri 9:30am - 5:30pm 📞 03444 775 774 📧 support@anxietyuk.org.uk 📍 Anxiety UK, Nunes House, 447 Chester Road, Manchester, M16 9HA



Beat

🔍 Supports anyone affected by eating disorders. 9am–8pm during the week, and 4pm–8pm on weekends and bank holidays 📞 0808 801 0677 📧 help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk 📍 Beat, Unit 1 Chalk Hill House, 19 Rosary Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1SZ



Bipolar UK

🔍 Support for people affected by bipolar disorder, help available for pregnant women. Specific info about Covid-19 advice. 📧 info@bipolaruk.org



Depression UK

🔍 Self-help organisation that offers support to everyone affected by depression. 📧 info@depressionuk.org 📍 D-UK, PO Box 10566, Nottingham, NG13 8LU



Papyrus

🔍 Runs a helpline to help prevent suicide for anyone up to the age of 35 or anyone concerned about a young person. 🕒 9am till 12 am (midnight) 📞 0800 068 4141 📧 pat@papyrus-uk.org 📍 Lineva House, 28-32 Milner Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 1AD



Refugee Council

🔍 Provides specialist therapeutic services targeted to migrants and refugees' needs. 📞 0808 196 7272 / Children line: 02073461134 📧 London.therapeutic@refugeecouncil.org.uk / children@refugeecouncil.org.uk



Perinatal Mental Health

Action on Post-Partum Psychosis

📞 020 33229900 📧 app@app-network.org 📍 Action on Postpartum Psychosis PO Box 137, Swansea, SA3 9BT



📱 Online peer support
Their Peer Support network helps women and families affected by PP feel understood, supported and less isolated.



APNI Association for Post Natal Illness

🔍 Offers services related to postnatal mental health illness. 🌐 Different services, check the website 📞 0207 386 0868 📧 info@apni.org



BirthTrauma Association

🔍 Parent support for birth trauma or Postnatal Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. 🌐 Online Service 📧 enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk 📍 Holly Tree Farm, 92 Crosshill, Codnor, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 9SQ



Facebook
Group

Make Birth Better

🔍 Website that gives resources and information about Birth Trauma.



Maternal OCD

🔍 The Centre for Anxiety Disorders and Trauma is both a local and a national specialist service for obsessive-compulsive disorder which is now offering intensive CBT for women with OCD who are pregnant or who are in the first postnatal year. The OCD may have developed at this time or be more longstanding. 📞 020 3228 3211 (Thursday and Friday) 📧 Fiona.challacombe@slam.nhs.uk



Miscarriage Association

🔍 Organisation offering support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy, they raise awareness and promote good practice in medical care. 📞 01924 200799



NCT National Childbirth Trust

🔍 Help with feeding, practical and emotional support for parents. 🌐 Different services, check the website for availability 📞 0300 330 0700 📍 NCT has many parents group around East London (check Redbridge & others)



Pandas

🔍 Pre and post natal depression advice and support. 🌐 Helpline Monday – Sunday 11am-10pm 📞 0808 1961 776 📧 info@pandasfoundation.org.uk



Parents in mind - NCT Newham

🔍 Peer support from a trained volunteer. 📞 07525 403673, Contact Belinda 📧 parentsinmind.newham@nct.org.uk Belinda 📍 The service trains volunteers to be a peer supporter for mothers experiencing mental health issues, and offers help for new mothers. Contact Belinda in Newham for more information



Perinatal parent infant mental health service (PPIMHS)

📍 Pregnant women and mothers with babies until 1 year old. 🕒 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday 📞 0300 555 1119 📧 Perinatal.Service@nelft.nhs.uk 📍 Barley Court Goodmayes Hospital, Barley Lane, Goodmayes, Essex, IG3 8XJ ⚠️ Referrals will be accepted from any professional - most of our referrals come from social workers, GPs, health visitors, midwives, other mental health services, obstetricians, other perinatal services. Self referrals will also be accepted.



Tommy's

📍 Tommy's exists to support, care for and champion people, no matter where they may be in their pregnancy journey. 📞 020 7398 3400 📧 midwife@tommys.org 📍 Tommy's, Nicholas House, 3 Laurence Pountney Hill, London, EC4R 0BB



Relationships

Family Lives

📍 Advice on parenting. 🕒 Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm 📞 0808 800 2222



Relate

📍 Relationship help - Family, Children and Relationship Counselling, Mediation, Sex Therapy 🕒 Different services, check the website 📞 0300 0030 396 📧 counselling@relatenee.org.uk enquiries@relatenee.org.uk 01708 441 722 📍 Closest to B&D is in Romford, Romford Relate, 12a Bridge Close, Romford, Essex, RM7 0AU - but there are many other local branches ⚠️ You can get help by phone, webcam or Live chat. In order to book an appointment, call the number



Well-being

Action for Happiness

📍 Organisation that helps people to take practical action to build a happier and more caring society informed by the latest scientific research. 📧 Contact them directly on their website. 📍 Action for Happiness, WeWork, 3 Waterhouse Square, 138 Holborn, London, EC1N 2SW



Green Shoes Art

📍 If you have been feeling isolated, lonely or have been struggling with your mental health issues, they provide creative free courses. 🕒 Check website for times 📞 07907 037599 📧 vicki@greenshoesarts.com



Healthy Lifestyle

📍 Free programmes to join & support for exercise, healthy eating and stop smoking to join online services see their timetable 📞 020 8724 8018 📧 healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Different locations in Barking & Dagenham, according to the programme



Timetable



Family and Relationships

Leo Tolstoy wrote in his novel *Anna Karenina*: “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” While this is not necessarily true about the happy ones (happiness can take many shapes and forms, too!), it is definitely true that every unhappy family has their very own way of dealing with life.

That’s why in this section we just want to get you thinking. We won’t necessarily have a solution, but a thought-provoking, resourceful space that you will hopefully enjoy. There is some very important information concerning your safety and practical help in case of need. But what is most important is that you just give yourself time and space to think, and listen to your feelings.



Let's check out where we are at...

Family is home, it's a blessing, it's what makes you carry on, but... there are so many things to take care of in order for it to run smoothly! From the daily chores to the grocery shopping, paying bills, cooking, and the kids, sometimes we might forget that taking care of the quality of relationships with the other members is a fundamental part of a healthy family, no matter what it looks like, if you are two or twenty, or whatever life path has brought you together.

Below you will find some practical and emotional help concerning relationships and family. If you are feeling uncomfortable in your household, if things are not working the way you expect with your partner, if life is becoming increasingly difficult... help is available.

Let's start by asking if you ever give yourself time to evaluate your situation. If you don't know where to start, these quizzes from Relate might come in handy:

Take the quiz:

Click on me!
or take a picture



Arguments
check-up quiz



The relationship
MOT quiz

If you think you might benefit from counselling, you will find more information in the wellbeing and mental health section of this guide.

Some tips

How to improve relationships in your Family

Spend time together

with your partner (if they are in the picture) and as a family. Very often the daily routine, work, school, and house chores end up taking most of the time. Try to make a little, but significant, quality time. It doesn't have to be fancy, a walk in the park or a craft activity will do.

For some creative ideas at home, check out **World at Home** – Specially selected ideas and activities for families to make the most of their time at home. While for days out, Relate is a great website: **Day Out With The Kids: Things To Do & Family Days Out In The UK.**



World at Home



Relate

Spend time apart

Everybody needs some "me time", and with Covid restrictions, this could have become very hard to achieve for many parents. Even half an hour for a run down the road, to read your kindle, or paint

your nails; finding time to nourish yourself as a person will make you a better partner and a better parent. Learn to **micro-nourish** yourself.

Talk - meaningfully

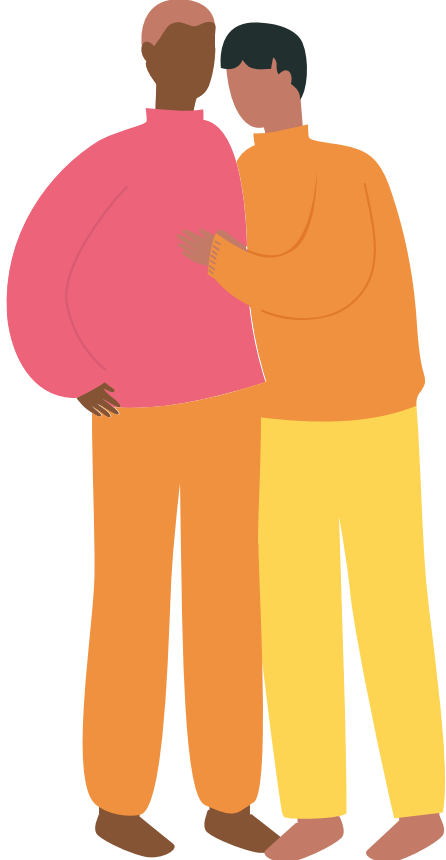
Because of tech distractions and the entire to-do list that seems never-ending, it is so easy to end up speaking about the boiler that broke, bills to pay, and to forget about dreams, aspirations, things that matter to every component of your family, problems and issues included. Give it a go!

Stop the auto-pilot!

Centre yourself, breathe, and be present to yourself. Live in the moment, enjoy whatever is that you are experiencing, and stay in the present. Our minds tend to automatically think about the past, or program for the future, while especially with kids, it is really important to live in the here-and-now. It will make you feel lighter.

Show respect

for every member of the family, which means watching your words, valuing the time you have together, being able to listen, and trying to understand the other person's point of view. Very importantly, be able to give a sincere apology and lead by example.



Family Time

Spending time together and making it meaningful can be a challenge, even during “normal times”. In Covid times though, it can sometimes feel like a humongous task.

So here we go with some tips of things you can do when you are together with your family, either one-to-one with your child or with your partner:

- ★ There are plenty of websites with **activities to do at home**: we want to recommend: **World at Home** – Specially selected ideas and activities for families to make the most of their time at home. It’s a small, curated selection of tried & tested ideas for activities to do at home with your child, based on age and type (home-learning, physical, sensorial etc).



- ★ Increase participation by making time for **shared activities**: it can be cooking, doing chores, or some workout. Everything can be adapted to age-appropriate activities, bearing in mind that on average the younger the baby, the shorter the attention span.
- ★ **Go outside**. No matter how far, how planned, how fancy. Just go out: a walk to the shop can become a fun learning opportunity for a toddler who is given a specific task (“we need to buy apples, you will carry the bag, choose them and help me put them in the trolley, pay and bring them home”), toddlers love responsibilities and being treated as “big kids”. Another task can be to find some specific colour, or object. Everything can become interesting.
- ★ If it works for you and it’s not a stressful thought, give yourself a **common goal as a family**, such as “try a new food every month”, “read a new book” “give each other special time to do something meaningful”. The idea is to find motivation when you need a little push, or to wind down and relax if you are too stressed.

- ★ **Screen time**: although this is very debated (and we are not here to judge!), after these unprecedented times many of us might have re-evaluated our approach to screen time. Yes or no, this is up to your personal choices, but if you do use it at home, you can make it special with snacks, blankets, cool lighting, and time spent together snuggling. Setting a specific, non-negotiable time-frame can also help when the child has a clear picture of how time will be spent in the immediate future (“we will watch this, when it’s finished we will switch off, we will wash our hands and go to have dinner”).
- ★ **Bonding**: as soon as your baby lets you. You might want to include them in your hobbies and activities, including baking, gardening, painting, exercise, even meditation. It might not be as relaxing as when you do it on your own, but you will be modelling a special use of your time and showing your child your passion for something.



Parenting Tips

When it comes to parenting, there are many different styles, ideas and beliefs. We all have a different way of bringing our children up, but we all have a common goal: to be the best parents we can be and to do the best for our kids. Although there is no magical manual tailored to each of us, The Hug has collaborated with Attachment Parenting UK and these are some tips that they recommend to every parent;

- ★ When setting boundaries be sure they are logical and loving.
- ★ A good connection/bond is the secret ingredient in gaining cooperation.
- ★ Focusing on solutions rather than consequences is more supportive for the child.
- ★ Rewards only work short-term and distract the child from the task at hand.
- ★ Punishments are the most counter-effective way to 'teach' because a good feeling is absent.
- ★ If you're stuck in a rut saying 'good girl/boy' - you could reframe it as gratitude; thank you for getting dressed...
- ★ Tantrums are a healthy mechanism to offload tension and a reminder of brain immaturity.
- ★ At the root of all aggression is a fearful or insecure child who needs loving support.
- ★ Make connection, not sleep, your bedtime goal and sleep will happen more easily.
- ★ Children will live up to your expectations so how you perceive them really matters.

Surely, some of these tips are easier said than done, and you might or might not agree with them, but they could offer alternative solutions if you are stuck in certain ways or make you reflect on your parenting techniques.

Single Parenting

According to Gingerbread Organisation, "There are two million single parents with majority care for their kids in Britain today – that's one in four families with children". If you are a single parent, you might feel that your experience is very different from others who are in a relationship. The Hug is made out of all kinds of people, paths and point of views, and we welcome everyone. You might find other single parents in our community that share your views and understand your journey. Some people feel comfortable with like-minded parents, while others love to hear different views. If you would like to find other parents like you, you can join our group or contact Gingerbread to meet people from the single parent community, and find information and resources in a huge range of topics.

TIP!

Check out the app section, Frolo app might do for you!

LGBT+

Barking and Dagenham community is extremely diverse and as such, is formed by parents coming from all walks of life, including LGBT+ community. If you are looking for something more specific, you can look at New Family Social website, join the LGBT Parents UK, or the LGBT+ Network for Barking and Dagenham on facebook, where you will find other parents that share their experiences. Another great resource is Studio3 which organises a monthly event called Be & Do: it uses creativity as a vehicle to start conversations, tell stories, and bring LGBTQIA+ people together.

TIP!

If you want further information on having a baby if you are LGBT+, have a look at our health section.



New Family
Social



LGBT
Parents UK



LGBT+
Network

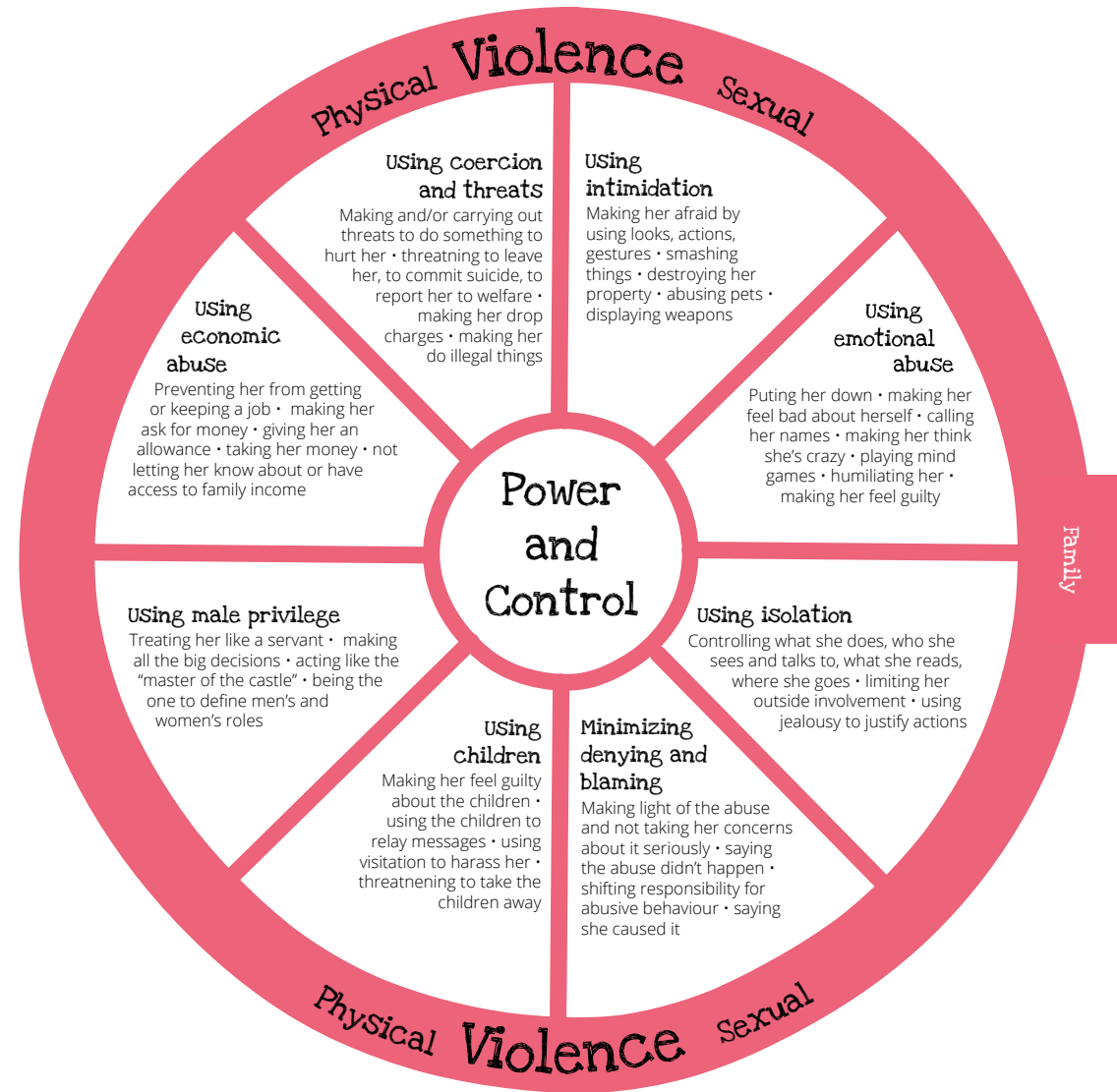


Studio3

When life with your partner/ Spouse becomes hard and you don't understand exactly why

Everybody has their ups and downs when in a relationship. But if things start to not feel right, if you are feeling insecure about whether what you are experiencing is 'normal' and if you don't feel comfortable, or would like to ask your friends but don't want to feel judged, (you might think they wouldn't understand) then have a look at the image on the right, and if you can relate, even just a little bit, you might want to read further.

All relationships involve some degree of control and power of one person over another, but there are limits to what can be defined as healthy, and this is usually established by both partners. Whenever control and/or power start to be too weighted on one side, problems might start to occur.



Power and control wheel
(Credits: Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, Duluth Model) Graphic design adapted

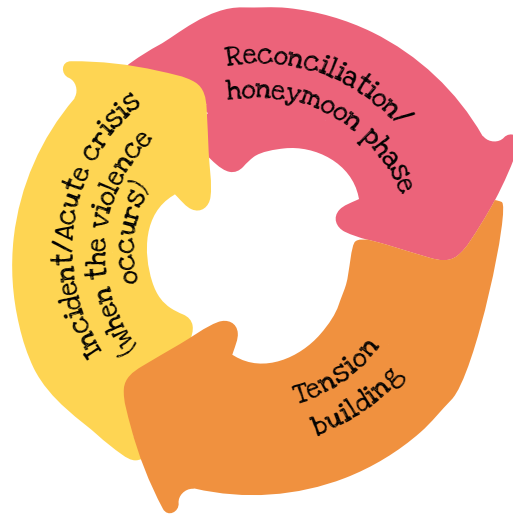
Phases

In what is called an abusive relationship, over time it is often possible to recognise a pattern that tends to repeat over and over. Every time a phase concludes, especially in the early stages, both people involved in the relationship might think that it was just a bad moment and that it will never happen again. Most of the time, if there is no help, guidance, or counselling, the pattern tends to repeat itself, often increasing in danger and intensity:

The phases are usually the following, as shown in the infographic:

- ★ Tension Building
- ★ Acute/Crisis/Incident
- ★ Reconciliation/honeymoon

Without intervention, the cycle can repeat with more frequency and increasing severity. Over time the cycle can be altered, making some of the phases missing or reduced.



Types of domestic abuse

According to the website Refuge, there are many different forms of abuse, such as:

★ Psychological/ Emotional

It could be anything from name-calling to shaming, making you feel scared, threatening you, making you feel stupid or “crazy”, and always doubting yourself. ‘Gaslighting’ is a very common problem, which consists of the perpetrator minimising or denying your feelings;

★ Physical

This can take many forms, including reducing your chances (or your child’s) to move within a house or to go outside, and of course, inflicting any type of physical pain;

★ Sexual

This includes rape, unwanted sexual relationships, and also doing things that you don’t want to do but feel obliged to;

★ Financial/Economical

This involves limiting your access to money, taking your money or not allowing you to work, putting you in debt, or forcing you to work and managing your bank accounts;

★ Tech abuse

With the pandemic unfortunately this has increased a lot, it can look like sending you unwanted images or texts, calling you repeatedly, taking control of your devices, controlling your conversations/gallery/private messages on your phone, not respecting your privacy, sharing content that regards you without your consent;

★ Coercive control

Using a pattern of behaviour that allows the person to have control over you. It could be a combination of the above examples, or something different that makes the person exercise power over you, including using blackmail. This constitutes a criminal offence.

These pages were made for you to think. If it does get you thinking, or you have a close person you know that is experiencing any of the examples above, you might want to take action.

you can find more at what is abuse

Take action

Information is the key to be able to make the best choices for yourself and your family. In the next paragraphs, you will find what options and services are available in our Borough. It will be presented in stages and will try to address some of the questions you might come across if you find yourself in a difficult situation.

Metropolitan Police (EMERGENCY)

If you think you are in immediate danger, trust your instincts and call 999.

What they say on their website: "Our first priority is to protect you and any children you have. If the situation is an emergency an officer will attend and, if proportionate, necessary and lawful to do so, arrest the perpetrator, and take action to protect you from further harm – giving you time to think."

Metropolitan Police (NON - EMERGENCY)

Their number is 101. This telephone is for general advice in non-emergency situations. They can advise you on your situation and arrange for further help if needed.

Refuge

This is what they say on their website "We run a range of specialist services to help survivors access safety and rebuild their lives. We understand each person's circumstances and needs are different and that survivors need different services at different times. Our expert staff work closely, and confidentially, with every individual to develop a bespoke support plan. If a woman is not sure what service she wants or needs, Refuge will support her to explore her options. They offer help with domestic violence, sexual violence, 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, FGM, human trafficking or modern slavery."

When you call Refuge, they are likely to do a Risk Assessment first, to determine what the best advice is to give you. They will then

assign you to a Caseworker, that will provide the best information to you, so you can get the best help available from services. There are times when Refuge might refer your case to the Police or social services due to Safeguarding concerns and their responsibility of Duty of Care. If you would like to read further, Family Lives website provides information on this topic.

Refuge can also provide you with sheltered accommodation, which most probably won't be around your neighbourhood to avoid putting you in a dangerous situation.

TIP!

It is always better to take action for the first time during a quiet phase of the relationship. If you have realised that you are constantly ending up in the same situation, and your partner is alternating extremely nice and lovely periods with very awful episodes, try to keep that in mind and start planning. Although you might feel guilt for planning a solution while everything looks like it is working out, try to remember these words and observe your life: it's a cycle, and without help, it won't change.

Targeted Early Help Consultation Line

This service acts as a referral to all other services. You might have a concern but are not sure if you need help or how you can get it. They will be able to guide you and point you in the right direction. Also, Early Help is the support the Council gives to children, young people and their families where they have additional needs that aren't being met by the usual services that are available to everyone, such as health and education.

Support offered may include:

- ★ referral to another organisation who are best placed to help your needs;
- ★ advice on housing, money and debt;
- ★ support for parenting challenges;
- ★ speech and language support for young children.

For enquiries on accessing early help support contact targetedreferrals@lbbd.gov.uk or contact them on 020 8227 5600 9am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday.

NSPCC

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) is mainly known for their work protecting children from any harm. However, as a result, they are very aware of the challenges that parents face. On their website, they have a whole section dedicated to parents.

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

If you are a member of the public and are worried about a child, please call MASH on 020 8227 3811, or if a child is at risk of immediate harm call the police on 999.



MASH

If you have concerns that a child is experiencing abuse or neglect you have a duty to take action. If you have any doubts whether it is a safeguarding issue or how to deal with a concern, you can give MASH team a call and they will advise you on what is the best thing to do in a particular case.

TIP!

As parents, we can unfortunately witness situations that don't feel right (such as a kid showing signs of neglect, or a parent being intoxicated) Those situations might happen unexpectedly, in your everyday life, and you might not know what to do. These situations require the help of professionals, and the best way to help that child or parent is a phone call away to MASH so please, report anything that doesn't feel right, you might be the first person that raises the hand to get that child or parent some help or prevent a dangerous situation.



To conclude this section

It takes a lot of work, strength and love to make a family. Reaching out for help can look very different for each of us, so while some find therapy helpful, some others prefer to refer to close friends or their religious community. According to your beliefs and ability to access help, we at The Hug want you to know that whenever you need anything but are not sure where to start, we can help. You can contact us at thehugbarking@gmail.com.

Family and Relationships Directory

Contents

- ★ Council p.117
- ★ Organisation p.117
- ★ Service p.119

Council

LBBB Family Information Services

It provides comprehensive information and advice on the services available to parents, including childcare and early years nurseries, pre-schools and childminder, funding and activities for children ☎ 020 8227 5395 ✉ fis@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Local Offer

Council Web portal that provides information for parents of children with SEN or SEND ☎ 020 8227 3811 ✉ childrens@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Safeguarding for children

If you think a child may be suffering or are concerned that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse ☎ 020 8227 3811 ✉ childrens@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Assessment Team, Ground floor, Roycraft House, 15 Linton Road, Barking IG11 8HE



LBBB Targeted Early Help Consultation line

Support offered may include: referral to another organisation who are best placed to help your needs, advice on housing, money and debt support for parenting challenges, speech and language support for young children. ☎ 0208 227 5600 ✉ TargetedReferrals@lbbd.gov.uk 🕒 9am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday



LBBB MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Telephone consultation service to discuss any safeguarding concerns. They will advise you whether you should report a serious concern about a child or ask for early help instead. ☎ 020 8227 3811 🕒 9am to 4:45pm, Monday to Friday or ☎ 020 8594 8356 from 4:45pm to 9am, Monday to Friday, weekends and bank holidays

Organisation

Attachment Parenting

They offer help, courses and support related to relationships quality in parenting. You can contact them through their website.



Barnardo's

They offer support to families and children so they can have the best start in life. They offer counselling for families and guidance on various topics. ☎ 0208 498 7744 ✉ londonbeef@barnardos.org.uk



Carer's Centre

- They provide advice, information and support for people who are carers.
- 020 8593 4422 You can contact them through their website



Family Lives

- Early intervention and crisis support to families who are struggling. They support families with include family breakdown, challenging relationships and behaviour, debt, and emotional and mental wellbeing.
- 0808 800 2222 askus@familylives.org.uk



National Domestic Abuse Helpline

- Helpline attended by female advisers that offers impartial non judgemental help. You can ask to speak in your own language.
- 0808 2000 247 You can contact them through their website.



NSPCC

- Organisation that supports families, help rebuild children's lives and prevent abuse.
- 0808 800 5000 / For under 18 contact ChildLine at 0800 1111 help@nspcc.org.uk



NSPCC Positive Parenting leaflet

- NSPCC course on Positive Discipline.



Refuge

- The Barking and Dagenham Domestic and Sexual Violence Service, run by Refuge, provides confidential, non-judgmental support to those living and working in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham who are experiencing gender-based violence. It provides outreach programmes, independent advocacy, group support, refuge accommodation and a specialist service for young people.
- 0300 456 0174 bdadvocacy@refuge.org.uk



Triple P Positive Parenting Program

- A parenting course to do in your own time, free for Barking & Dagenham residents
- 020 7987 2944 Box 9068, London WC1N 3XX You can contact them through their website.



Service

Metropolitan Police

- If you think you are in immediate danger or want to report somebody.
- 999 or if you are deaf, text on 18000



Metropolitan Police non emergency

- If you want some advise and would like to arrange for an officer to come and speak with you but you are not in immediate danger.
- 101 or if you are deaf, 18001 101





Places of interest, entertainment and outdoor spaces

We really enjoyed collecting all the fun and exciting things to do in Barking & Dagenham and surrounding areas. The more you start exploring, the more there is to discover. We know this is not an exhaustive list, but it should give you plenty of inspiration for things to do, places to visit, outdoor areas to see and communities to approach.

What came out of this section is a vibrant living map of people, places and organisations thriving to provide services, entertainment, and a better quality of life for all the residents in B&D.

It might be a bit challenging at the beginning if you are new to the Borough or are not used to traveling outside of your familiar places/routes. Once you give it a chance, you will see how much beauty there is for you to take part in.

what you will find here

- ★ Entertainment/activities: trampoline parks, soft play areas, cinemas, and more;
- ★ Outdoor spaces: parks, country parks, playgrounds and amazing areas for a walk, a day out, a picnic or a bike ride;
- ★ Socialisation: cafes, libraries and other options to help you connect with different communities;
- ★ Places of worship and faith-based community groups: churches, temples, mosques and some parent-related activities in your local religious service;
- ★ Places of interest: museums, places to visit.

Note from authors: We filled this section at different times of the pandemic, either experimenting and checking the new-normal rules, or even dreaming about them, while in full lockdown. As every other service listed in the Guide, we are not able to guarantee you that the information collected will still be up-to-date, so we do recommend you to get in touch and check opening times and rules before planning a visit.

Entertainment, activities and outdoor spaces

Check this section of the guide whether you are new to the Borough, you are looking for inspiration or you want to easily find a nice family activity. You will find local libraries, museums, theatres and cinema, as well as beautiful parks and country parks with amazing playgrounds just a short drive or a bus journey through our Borough.

Especially during the first few years as a parent, traveling to discover a new place can be very daunting (pram, toilets, food, breastfeeding, safety...) but as parents, we have the incredible ability to make the most mundane activity, like a bus journey, into a great adventure, so use your powers to keep your little ones excited! And vice versa, try and see the world through their eyes, new, exciting, and full of things to talk about. They will feed off your energy, so if things don't go to plan, explain your feelings, try to stay positive and calm, and enjoy the ride!

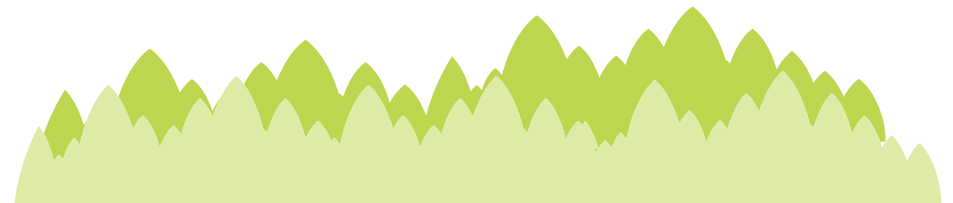
TIP!

If you have any accessibility issues, please, check the AccessAble website, you can type the name of the place you want to visit and they will have contact, website, map and sometimes pictures of the points of access to a specific place



AccessAble

Click on me!
or take a picture



Little story from a first-time mum

It was autumn and my baby was just a couple of months old. I was very excited as it was the first time I was quite far away from home, all by myself in the park with him. The sun was still shining but it was quite windy and a bit cold. Everything was great until I smelled his bum...I am laughing now but back then, in the most unexpected way, I started to feel quite nervous. I went to the public toilet in the park and it had no facilities to change him, so I thought ok, let's do it the old way and find a spot in the grass to change him.

By then, he had started crying, I started to lay his foldable mat on the floor, trying to do everything quickly so he wouldn't get cold. Some of the stuff I took out flew away, but I was too focused on him and anxious to realise it. A gentle hand touched my shoulder, it was another mum that picked up a muslin that had flown away. She saw my face and straight away knew what to do. She helped me handing me things from the bag, talking to me calmly while reassuring me that it was not silly to feel anxious when you experience things for the first time with the added huge responsibility of a tiny being completely dependent on you, that in fact, it is completely normal and healthy!

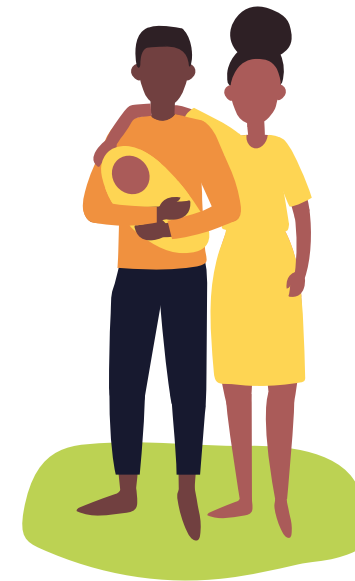
Apart from that beautiful lesson, what I learned is that as the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child" and if you find yourself in a difficult situation or if you just feel a bit overwhelmed, think about asking for help, you might be surprised by how kind and helpful people are when seeing parents in a challenging situation.



Outdoor spaces

Barking and Dagenham is full of beautiful parks and open spaces. And although we believe the best way to find the hidden gems in our borough is to ask parents in your neighbourhood, here is a list of the most recommended ones by The Hug Community (see further details on our directory).

- ★ Barking Park (big sand play area, cafe, splash park and lake with pedalos);
- ★ Belhus Country Park (musical themed play area with sandpit, cafe and lakes);
- ★ Valentine's Park (huge play area, cafe and lake);
- ★ Thorndon Country Park (Gruffalo trail, particularly exciting for toddlers and kids);
- ★ Valence Park (nice play area and outdoor gym);
- ★ Weald Country Park (Stickman trail, deer enclosure, lakes and a cafe).



TIP!
If you are fed up with the litter in your park or a local area, there are a couple of things you can do about it; you can join Rodding Rubbish, they are a group of local neighbours and volunteers that organise clean ups in different areas of our borough and then contact the Council to get it removed or you can report it to the Council on their website.

Report it here!



Rodding Rubbish



Socialisation

After these unprecedented times, many of us may have realised how important contact with other human beings is. If parenthood is too often a very lonely phase, at least at the beginning, with the Covid-19 restrictions it became increasingly difficult to try and make new friends, find a “new normality”, healthy & meaningful social interactions and overall, a sense of belonging in our community.

In our Directory, you will find community groups, activities for your child(ren), places to go and things to do in Barking & Dagenham and surrounding areas. It is definitely not exhaustive though, as you will see, the more places you know, the more you will discover. Please always check the website/contact number before you plan a visit, as many services are now open to booking-only sessions and for limited time slots.

And if you are looking for some other parent friends, we have some **tips to recommend you:**

★ Join **The Hug Support Group!** We organise weekly meetings for parents, online and offline, we set up activities and events to help parents in Barking & Dagenham come together and feel better in their parenthood journey;



The Hug Support Group

★ If you are looking for under 5s activities with phonics made fun and nursery rhymes, then Early Years Cocoon is for you. Natalia is all about offering nice activities and services for kids and babies. She is based in Dagenham but periodically also organises things in Barking;



Early Years Cocoon

★ Go to the **Big Friendly Coffee at Barking Park**, it's an excellent meeting point for other parents, it has a small indoor play area for little ones and a sand playground close by and you can have your coffee while your little one plays, win-win! (they also have sandwiches, pasta, pizza and a great variety of cakes and ice-creams)



Big Friendly Coffee

★ In the world pre-Covid, **Children Centres and libraries** used to be one of the main socialisation places for parents, as they offered entertainment, guided sessions, training and of course book rental for the kids. Also, libraries have free wi-fi and where available, like a Barking Learning Centre, you can have access to computers;



Children Centres

TIP!

Did you know that even newborn babies can be issued with their very own library card?

★ As we are navigating these uncertain times and don't know about what the future holds, we can still recommend you to check on the **online offer from the Council;**



Libraries



Council

★ Have you ever tried any “Tinder-but-for-parents” app? There are plenty now, have a look in the tip & the app section of this Guide.

Parent friends apps:

- ★ Mush
- ★ Peanut
- ★ Frolo (for single parents)
- ★ Dadapp (dads)

In these proving times, we need to be creative! Socialisation can be texting in the middle of the night with another fellow sleep-deprived parent, join a WhatsApp or a Facebook group, follow

community groups on Instagram, or on Clubhouse. There are so many out there, and specific for different categories. You can find a very welcoming community of people that gets you, based on, for example, breastfeeding support, faith, birth trauma, children with special needs, only-child families, single parents, LGBTQ+ families and so on. If you don't have a tribe already, joining one can dramatically change your parenthood experience for the better!

Facebook Marketplace, or MumToMum market Mum2mum market nearly new sales: Nearly Mum2mum new sales where mums sell to mums offer a lot of second-hand baby items on sale. You never know, you might buy something from a neighbour and end up becoming friends!

TIP!



Faith-based places of interest

We added this subsection to give you an overview of the large choice of faith-based places of interest in our Borough. We were not able to map all of them, but we rather wanted to let you know that your spiritual or religious community might be very close to you. Moreover, there are plenty of informal faith groups that do not have an official building, but you might be able to join by word of mouth, with a neighbour, or looking around in your area for flyers and announcements in community centres.

You will find in the directory different Sikh temples, Mosques, Churches and more but if you haven't found what you are looking for, the map link containing 159 places of worship in Barking and Dagenham might help you find it. Alternatively, you can contact The Faith Forum, whom might be able to inform you.



LBBB Faith
Map



The Faith
Forum

TIP!

Some religious communities hire community centres to gather together for their functions. Check your closest Children Centre or local library if you want to know what groups are meeting near you! (These meetings are subject to social distancing restrictions, so you need to ask for the latest updates)



Places of Interest

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★ Places of Interest	p.140
★ Socialisation	p.140
★ Socialisation/Outdoor	p.142

Activities

Triangoals

? CIC that provides support and activities for kids and families. ☎ 07538 135247
✉ triangoals@live.co.uk



Wellgate Community Farm

? Small Community working farm. They sell their own produce. The entry is free. Check their website for more details. ☎ 01708 747850 ✉ info@wellgatefarm.org
📍 Wellgate Community Farm, Collier Row Road, Romford, RM5 2BH



LBBB Baby Massage online by Healthy Lifestyle

? Baby massage classes in a calm, quiet environment, where you can learn more about your baby while relaxing together. 🕒 Monday 10 am, Monday 1 pm (invite only)
☎ 020 8724 8018 ✉ healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Online service, by invite only. In order to join, send an email.



LBBB HENRY Starting solids workshop by Healthy Lifestyle

? Online Starting Solids workshop to help you get your baby off to a great start. The workshop will help you decide when your baby is ready to try solid food, what foods to start with, when your baby is hungry when they've had enough and how to make mealtimes an enjoyable experience for both of you 🕒 Wednesday 1pm (invite only)
☎ 020 8724 8018 ✉ healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Little Rhyme Makers by Healthy Lifestyle

? 0-5 years - Music and movement group for children and their mums, dads and carers to sing, share music, make friends and learn language together. 🕒 Tuesday and Thursday 10.30 am, Friday 2 pm ☎ 020 8724 8018 ✉ healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Play and learn Q&A by Healthy Lifestyle

? A session to answer any questions you may have concerning your child's play and communication development, learn new tips and new ideas for activities 🕒 Friday 10.30 am ☎ 020 8724 8018 ✉ healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Story time by Healthy Lifestyle

? An online session for children and their parents to listen to a story and sing some songs together. With tips for activities to continue with after the session that also incorporate the story. Sharing books from birth helps children to learn to read later. 🕒 Tuesday and Thursday 1.30 pm, Friday 12.30 ☎ 020 8724 8018 ✉ healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk



Entertainment

Abbey Leisure Centre

? Swimming, Gym, lessons, cafe, soft play area, Spa ● Mon-Fri 6.30-22, Sat & Sun 8-20.30 ☎ 020 3948 4960 📍 Bobby Moore Way, Barking, IG11 7LX



Baby Zone at Future

? Leisure centre for young children and kids. Special sessions for special needs and babies. Baby Zone is an activity that happens within Future every Wednesday Morning from 9:30 till 2:30 free of charge for 0 to 3 years old or kids that are not in school (homeschooling). ● Everyday, check website for updated opening times ☎ 01204 362128 📧 enquiries@onsideyouthzones.org 📍 201, 225 Porters Ave, Dagenham RM9 5YX



Becontree Heath Leisure Centre

? Swimming, Climbing, Tennis, Gymnastic and more. Soft play area ● Different services, check the website ☎ 03330 050491 📧 email through their website 📍 Althorne Way, Dagenham, RM10 7FH



Better Extreme

? Skate park, trampoline park and climbing ☎ 020 3859 6358 📧 email through their website 📍 Mayesbrook Park, Lodge Ave, Dagenham, Barking RM8 2JR



Green Shoes Art

? Professional arts facilitators based in Barking and Dagenham who work to see positive change in the local community through participation in the arts. Check their website for current offer. ☎ 07907 037599 📧 admin@greenshoesarts.com 📍 Green Shoes Arts, The Vibe Youth Centre, 195-211 Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 2UT



Jump London

? Trampoline Park and Go karting venue. Check website for details. ● Mon-Fri 9-22, Sat 9-22.30, Sun 8-2 ☎ 020 8595 1538 📧 info@jumplondon.com 📍 Unit 1a Rippleside, London, IG11 0RJ ⚠️ There is a toddler session offered at 9.30 am. Check booking and availability in advance



LBBB Pen to Print

? Creative writers network from Barking and Dagenham ☎ 020 8227 5063 / 2267 📧 pentoprint@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 MR4 - Dagenham Library, 1 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 9QS



Roller Bowl

? Bowling Venue. See website for up to date information. ☎ 0208 924 4000 📧 info@thecitypavilion.co.uk 📍 The City Pavilion, Collier Row Road, Collier Row, Romford, Essex, RM5 2BH



Showcase Cinema Newham

? Movie theater, with special sessions for kids, check the website for times and prices ● See website for up to date information. ☎ 020 8591 4141 📧 email through their website 📍 Jenkins Ln, Barking IG11 0AD ⚠️ Special events for babies, toddlers, autism friendly sessions



Soft Play A's

? Soft Play with cafe, they also do birthday parties. ● See website for up to date information. ☎ 020 8554 7676 📧 info@anpg.co.uk 📍 25-27 Horns Rd, Ilford IG2 6BN ⚠️ autism friendly sessions



Soft Play Abbey - The Idol

? Soft play 0-12 years, cafe, birthday parties ● Mon-Fri 10-19, Sat-Sun 9-18.30 ☎ 0333 005 0489 📧 email through their website 📍 The Abbey Leisure Centre, Bobby Moore Way, Barking, Greater London, IG11 7HW



Soft Play Cookie's Island Gallions Reach

? Soft play, check website or call for updates ● Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat & Sun 11-6. Last Entry 5 pm ☎ 020 74733070 📧 office@cookiesisland.com 📍 Gallions Reach Shopping Park, 3 Armada Way, Beckton E67ER



Soft play Jolly Jungle

? Soft play, check website or call for updates ● Currently closed, check for updates ☎ 03330 050491 📧 email through their website 📍 Althorne Way, Dagenham, RM10 7FH



Soft Play Kidspace Adventure Romford

? Soft play 0-12 years, cafe, birthday parties, climbing, go karts ● Different opening times during term times and school holidays, please check the website ☎ 01708 768 003 📧 enquiries@kidspaceadventures.com 📍 The Brewery, Waterloo Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 1AU



Soft Play Owls Play Centre Fairlop Waters

? Soft play centre for 0-12 years old in Fairlop Waters ● Mon-Sat 10-18, Sun 10-17
 ☎ 020 8500 9911 ✉ email through their website 📍 Fairlop Waters, Forest Road, Barkingside, Greater London, IG6 3HN



Splash Park

? A place of laughter and water sparkles where you can relax and have lots of fun. The facility comprises of a safe, flat ground with an amazing variety of fountain features going up and down at different intervals. ● 10am - 6pm April - September, on weekends, Bank holidays and everyday during school holidays, weather dependent. 90 minute session will start at 10:00, 12:00, 14:00, 16:00 ✉ info@splashparkbarking.co.uk 📍 Longbridge Road Inside, Barking Park, IG11 8SS



Studio 3 Arts

? Arts organisation that focuses on connecting with communities driven by the idea that everyone has the basic right to encounter art. They organise events, workshops and courses for all ages ☎ 020 8594 7136 ✉ hello@studio3arts.org.uk 📍 Their main venue is currently closed due to renovation and they do their events all over the Borough, so check website for details.



The Broadway Theatre Barking

? Theatre with a big range of shows. Currently, the Theatre has been turned into a Covid Centre, so check their website for the most up to date information. ☎ 020 8507 5607 ✉ boxoffice@thebroadwaybarking.com 📍 The Broadway, Broadway, Barking IG11 7LS



The White House

? Arts organisation hosting a public programme led by residents that ranges from poetry to painting to gardening. ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8220 1172 ✉ whitehouse@createlondon.org 📍 The White House, 884 Green Lane, Dagenham, RM8 1BX



Multifunctional

LBBB Barking Learning Centre

? Community based learning facility that houses Barking Library and a vast range of services. In their website you will also find their online resources ☎ 020 8724 8725 ✉ libraries@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Barking Learning Centre, 2 Town Square, Barking, IG11 7NB ▲ you can join the library services by accessing online



Library

LBBB Dagenham Library

? Local library ● 10 till 5 Monday to Friday ☎ 020 8227 3942 ✉ libraries@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 1 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham, RM10 9QS



LBBB Marks Gate Library

? Local library ● Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10 till 4 ☎ 020 8724 8725 ✉ libraries@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Marks Gate Community Centre, Rose Lane, Marks Gate RM6 5NJ



LBBB One Borough One Voice

? LBBB website that invites residents to share their views, get involved in local projects and gives information about what is happening in our borough and how to be part of it. ▲ Not sure if to include...



LBBB Thames View Library

? Local library ● Wednesday and Friday 10 till 4 ☎ 020 8724 8725 ✉ libraries@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Sue Bramley Community Centre, Bastable Avenue, Barking IG11 0LG



LBBB Valence Library

? Local library ● Mondays and Thursdays 10 till 4 ☎ 020 8270 6864 ✉ valence.library@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Becontree Avenue, Dagenham RM8 3HT



Outdoor Spaces

Barking Park

Local park with a big sand playground, splash park, lake with boat and pedalo hire, cafe, public toilets, tennis courts, indoor bowling, skateboard area and a huge outdoor gym amongst other facilities. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332
 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Longbridge Road, Barking IG11 8UD ⚠️ Second oldest park in the Borough, opened in 1898



Belhus Country Park

Belhus Woods Country Park combines ancient woodland, working woods, flower meadows, open grassland, and fishing and conservation lakes with a musical themed children's play area and visitor centre including cafe. Check website for details ☎ 01708 865628 ✉ country.parks@essex.gov.uk 📍 Belhus Woods Country Park, South Ockendon, Aveley, Greater London, England, RM15 4XJ



Castle Green

Large flat green area suitable for sports with a Sk8topia skateboard park and bmx course. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332
 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Goresbrook Road / Ripple Road, Dagenham RM9 4UX ⚠️ Check out this skateboard park website



Castle Green Skateboard Park

Central Park

Large grass area with a Peace and Memorial Garden, playgrounds, outdoor gyms. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Wood Lane/Rainham Road North, Dagenham RM10 7FJ



Eastbrookend Country Park

Eastbrookend country park connects to The Chase Reserve and has a Discovery Centre, fishing lakes, coffee, public toilets with changing facilities. Check website for details ☎ 0208 215 3000 ✉ emma.roebuck@lbbd.gov.uk or parksandcountryside@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 15 Greenwood Ave, Dagenham RM10 7BD ⚠️ Public toilets



Epping Forest

Ancient forest that covers a vast area between Epping and Forest Gate. It has various visitors centres and amongst the activities, you can do horse riding, cycling, fishing and play football and golf. Check website for details ☎ 020 8532 1010 ✉ epping.forest@cityoflondon.gov.uk 📍 Epping Forest, The Warren, Loughton, Essex, IG10 4RW



Goodmayes Park

Big open space with with sensory garden next to tennis court, children play area, outdoor gym, public toilets, cricket and football pitches and bowling green. Check website for details ✉ email through their website 📍 Goodmayes Park, Aberdour Road, Goodmayes, IG3



Goresbrook Park

Small Local park with playground, basketball courts and a multi-use games area. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Dagenham Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 6YG



Greatfields Park

Local park with playground area, multi-use sport area, outdoor gym and green big areas. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Greatfields Road / Movers Lane, Barking IG11 7UH ⚠️ Limited options available, only Permit resident parking in the surrounding areas



Hainault Forest Country Park

Ancient woodland is home to a wealth of wildlife and plant species. Check website for details ☎ 0330 333 3300 ✉ enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk ⚠️ Check website for details



Heath Park

Small park with playground, car park, community centre and grass area. Check website for details ☎ 020 8592 8039 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Rusholme Avenue, Dagenham, RM10 7PR



King George's Playing Field Area

Small park with a playground, small skate area and a multifunctional play area. Check website for details 📍 Baddow Cl, Dagenham RM10 9PS



Loxford Field

Small park with playground, car park and picnic area. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Ilford, IG1 2PL



Mayesbrook Park

Large and varied park with sporting facilities, toddlers and adventure playgrounds, football, basketball and one cricket pitch, nature reserve and a river landscape. Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Lodge Avenue, Dagenham RM8 2JR.



Newlands Park

? Small local park with toddlers and kids playground, multi-use pitch and a small basketball court. ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Roxwell Road, Thames View, Barking, IG11 0PT.



Old Dagenham Park

? Large park with football pitches, outdoor bowling, tennis court and a wildlife area. ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Ballards Road, Dagenham RM10 9SA



Parsloes Park

? Largest park in Barking and Dagenham ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Parsloes Avenue/Gale Street, Dagenham, RM9 5RL



Pondfield Park

? Small local park ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Reede Road, Dagenham RM10 8DP ⚠ No car park but free parking in nearby streets



Ripple Greenway

? New path for people on foot and bicycle, connecting communities with green spaces in Thames Ward



St Chads Park

? It's the oldest in the Borough. It has a playground, football and tennis courts, and a cricket pitch ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Alexandra Road, Chadwell Heath RM6 6JD



Thames View Estate park

? Small local park with concrete skate park, parkour training area, outdoor gym, ping pong table, small basketball area and dog training circuit. It is located next to Ripple Greenway and Thames View Playing fields with big grass areas to play. 📍 Barking, IG11 0LL



The Chase Nature Reserve

? The Chase is one of the best urban nature reserves in the south east of England. It offers a diverse mix of habitats. Shallow wetlands, woodland, grassland and the River Rom support an abundance of wildlife. ● Check website for details ☎ 0208 215 3000 ✉ parksandcountryside@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 The Millennium Centre - The Chase, Dagenham Road, Rush Green, Romford, Essex, RM7 0SS



The Leys

? The Leys is an open area of grassland with trees, shrubs and the Wantz stream running through it. Next to it, there is a fenced playground area called Tyrell Gardens. It has a carpark and football pitches. ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Ballards Road, Dagenham



Thorndon Country Park

? This beautiful Country Park has as one of its most exciting features for kids the Gruffalo trail. It also has a visitor's centre, baby changing facilities, grazing animals and a Discovery Centre. ● Check website for details ☎ 01277 232944 ✉ thorndon@essexwt.org.uk 📍 Thorndon Nature Discovery Centre, Thorndon Park North, The Avenue, Brentwood, CM13 3RZ



Valence Park

? The park was once the grounds and garden of Valence Manor House, now the borough's museum. It has a children's playground, lake and gym. ● Check website for details ☎ 020 8227 2332 ✉ rangers@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Becontree Avenue, Dagenham RM8 3HT



Valentines Park

? Local park with a big playground, lake, cafe, public toilets, tennis court and a huge outdoor gym amongst other facilities. ● Check website for details ✉ email through their website 📍 Valentines Park, Cranbrook Road, Ilford, IG1 4TG



Weald Country Park

? Amazing Country park with deers, and stick man trail. ● Check website for details ☎ 01277 261343 ✉ country.parks@essex.gov.uk 📍 Weald Country Park, Weald Road, Brentwood, Essex, England, CM14 5QS



Thames Chase [Trust]

? Trust looking after the Thames Chase Community Forest. ● Look at their website for activities like organised walks, running or cycling activities. ☎ 01708 642970 ✉ enquiries@thameschase.org.uk 📍 Thames Chase Forest Centre, Pike Lane, Upminster, RM14 3NS



Place of Interest

Eastbury Manor House - National Trust

? Elizabethan house set in the middle of Barking. They do community activities, coffee mornings, exhibitions, venue hire and much more. ☎ 020 8227 2942

✉ eastburymanorhouse@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Eastbury Manor House, Eastbury Square, Barking, Essex, IG11 9SN



Laura I. Art Gallery

? Art gallery hosting events 🕒 Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 6.30pm. ✉ laura@lauragallery.com 📍 Laura I. Gallery CIC, IceHouse Court, Abbey Road IG11 7BT



Valence Museum

? The only surviving manor house in Barking and Dagenham. Although the museum might be closed at the moment, they have lots of suggestions and ideas on their website 📍 Check website for details. Currently you can do a virtual tour on their website ☎ 020 8227 2034 ✉ valencehousemuseum@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Valence House Museum, Becontree Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 3HT



Socialisation

Barking Park Cafe - Big Friendly Coffee

? A very welcoming and cozy cafe with a friendly space for babies and toddlers, a pick one-leave one library, food menu, a free “babyccino” with any order and a great selection of cakes and ice creams. They have a toilet with changing facilities.

🕒 Everyday 9:00 - 19:00 ☎ 07305 463 978 ✉ thebigfriendlycoffee@gmail.com 📍 The BFC, Barking Park Longbridge Road, IG11 8UD



Central Park Cafe East Ham

? A lovely cafe selling freshly baked bread and baked goods, located within Central Park in East Ham 🕒 Everyday 9-3 ☎ 079 69920853 ✉ sophie@breadclub1.co.uk 📍 Bartle Ave, East Ham, London E6 3AJ



Community Resources

? A hub of residents and volunteers to help community projects thrive, connecting people, places and resources. They have a Community Cafe run by volunteers where local people can get to know each other, take part in a wide range of activities and give something back to their community. They focus on breaking isolation and have started offering Tots and Tinies session, for more info, click on their facebook link

☎ 0208 227 1927 ✉ info@communityresources.co.uk 📍 163 Bennett's Castle Lane Dagenham, Essex, RM8 3YJ



Facebook

Early Years Cocoon CIC

? Cocoon offers a range of educational and playful activities for families with young children. Get in contact for up to date information on their programme.

✉ earlyyearscocoon@gmail.com



LBBD Children Centres

? LBBD Official Children Centres page with useful info and updated information for parents and babies 🕒 Different opening times according to Children Centre and service, please check the website ☎ 0208 724 1983 📍 Different addresses (please check the website)



LBBD Support groups

? LBBD support groups (online play and learn sessions, speech therapy support)

🕒 Different services, check the website ☎ 0208 724 1983



Mindful moms

? Free Wellbeing Groups that provide help for women to look after their mental and emotional wellbeing during pregnancy and their baby's first year. Currently running in Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich. ☎ 01689 811222 ✉ email through their website 📍 Various locations



Special needs parents group

? Support group for parents with children who have special needs 🕒 Last Wednesday of every month 9.30-11.30 ☎ 020 8593 4422 📍 334 Heathway, Dagenham, RM10 8NJ



Thames Ward Community Project

? Community Organisation based on Thames View. They work engaging the local community in various projects. ☎ 20 3946 5898 ✉ You can drop them an email on their website. 📍 Riverside Campus, Renwick Road, Barking, IG11 0FU







The Boat House

? Small stylish hidden gem in the middle of Barking. They have great coffee and drinks, small selection of games for kids and a beautiful terrace overlooking the River Roding. 🕒 Monday to Friday 10:30 till 10:30 ☎ 020 8594 7334 ✉ alison@theboathousecafeandbar.co.uk






The Hub (Tots and Tinies session, run by Community Resources)

Community cafe run by volunteers where local people can get to know each other, take part in a wide range of activities and give something back to their community. They focus on breaking isolation and they have started to do zoom sessions for little ones. Check their facebook page for details  Currently closed  0208 227 1927  info@communityresources.co.uk  163 Bennett's Castle Lane, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 3YJ



The Hug Support Group

Practical and emotional support for parents, children are welcome to come along at every activity and event. We offer individual and group support, event organisation, donation, community activities and much more!  The groups meet every Tuesday at 10 o'clock, but it's subject to funding and availability, contact the organisers to avoid disappointment  thehugbarking@gmail.com  To join The Hug Session, check the website, Facebook or Instagram Page







We are everyone

Organization that helps the community come together, whether you want to take part in one of their workshops or present a business idea. Their website is full of collaborations, events and projects that you can join.




We are family

A Parent Support Group in Plaistow  Mondays 11 to 1pm  0207 476 8215  Check website  Children's Centre, at the back of Memorial Community Church on Barking Road, Plaistow (opposite the police station)




who lets the dads out

Local male parent and carer baby and toddlers group  0788 3870676  Gerhard Marais - bassger@gmail.com




Socialisation/ Outdoor

Roding Rubish

Community group that organises litter picking events to socialise, learn about our Borough and build respect for our environment while creating a more respectful and caring neighbourhood.  07395 930872  rodingrubbish@gmail.com




Greening Network Barking and Dagenham

The Greening network is led by residents to discuss ideas, connect and make our borough a greener and better place to live.  wayne.trevor@lbbd.gov.uk



River Roding Trust






Trust that restores, preserves and protects the River Roding. They do tree planting, paths, cleaning the pollution in the river and protect its wildlife. Get in contact to be involved.  river.roding@gmail.com



Faith Based

Contents

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Faith Based	Type of Faith
<p>Humanism UK</p> <p>☎ 020 7324 3060 ✉ info@humanism.org.uk 📍 Humanists UK, 39 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB</p>	<p>Humanism</p> 
<p>Care for the Family Organisation</p> <p>❓ National charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties. ✉ mail@cff.org.uk</p>	<p>Christian</p> 
<p>Chadwell Heath United Reformed Church</p> <p>❓ Food bank, community meetings, elderly group, work party. ☎ 01708 609422 ✉ email through their website 📍 Mill Lane, Chadwell Heath, Essex, RM6 6RS</p>	<p>Inclusive Church</p> 
<p>Durga Mandir</p> <p>❓ They run a food bank on Tuesdays from 5:30 till 7:30. ☎ 020 8514 4781 ✉ info@durga-mandir.com 📍 3-9 Norman Road Ilford IG1 2NH</p>	<p>Hindu</p> 
<p>East African Education Foundation</p> <p>❓ Charitable organisation that supports users in accessing quality education that will allow them to improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Muslim</p> 
<p>Ilford Federation Synagogue</p> <p>☎ 020 8554 5289 ✉ ilfordadmin@federation.org.uk 📍 2a Clarence Ave, Ilford IG2 6JH</p>	<p>Jewish</p> 
<p>Riverside Muslim Association</p> <p>❓ Funerals, marriages, family Counselling, visits and tours. ✉ info@riversidemuslimassociation.com 📍 Rivergate Centre, Minter Road, Barking, IG11 0FJ</p>	<p>Muslim</p> 
<p>South West Essex Reform Synagogue</p> <p>☎ 020 8599 0936 ✉ admin@swesrs.org.uk 📍 8 Oaks Ln, Ilford IG2 7RS</p>	<p>Jewish</p> 

Thames View Christ Church

Christian

☎ 020 85949491 📍 The Vicarage Christ Church Thames View, Bastable Avenue, IG11 ONG

**Faith Based Information****LBBB Map of Places of worship in Barking and Dagenham**

Mixed

📍 LBBB map of all the faith based places in Barking and Dagenham.

**Faith Based Places of Interest****Akanjee Foundation Mosque**

Muslim

☎ 020 8507 0177 📧 info@akanjee-foundation-masjid.org 📍 86 Longbridge Road Barking, IG11 8SF

**Al Madina Mosque**

Muslim

🕒 Different services, contact organisers ☎ 020 8478 8526 📧 info@barkingmosque.org.uk 📍 Victoria Rd, Barking IG1 2PG 📞 whatsapp 07380 405043 and facebook page



Facebook

Al-Hudaa Islamic Prayer Group

Muslim

📍 Prayer Group ☎ 0208 822 4666, 07946 555 167 📍 290 Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, Greater London RM9 6

**Alnoorcet Islamic Centre**

Muslim

☎ 00 44 208 5943100 📧 Contact on website 📍 170 Gascoigne road, Barking, Essex, IG11 7LH

**At-Taqwa Centre**

Muslim

☎ 0203 583 2324 📧 info@at-taqwatrust.co.uk 📍 1041-1043 High Road, Chadwell Heath, RM6 4AU

**Barking Baptist Church**

Baptist

📍 Different age-groups activities (0-6, 7-11, 12-16, Youth, Boys & Girls Brigade, Bible study and more) ☎ 07961 801291 📧 info@barkingbaptist.org.uk 📍 28 Linton Road, Barking IG11 8HG

**Barking Methodist Church**

Methodist

☎ 020 8594 0752 📧 email through their website 📍 London Road, Barking, Essex, IG11 8AL

**Becontree Heath Islamic Centre**

Muslim

☎ 020 8590 4188 📧 bhis@live.co.uk 📍 798 Green Lane, Dagenham, Greater London RM8 1XU

**BecontreeSt. Johns The Divine**

Christian

☎ 020 8593 4992 📧 fayebailey09@gmail.com 📍 522 Goresbrook Road Becontree Dagenham

**Catholic Church of St. Mary and St. Ethelburga**

Catholic

☎ 020 8594 2849 📧 email through their website 📍 Linton Rd, Barking, Essex IG11 8HG

**Dagenham Aishah Islamic Centre**

Muslim

☎ 07930 210422 📍 1 Selinas Lane, Dagenham, RM8 1QH

**Dagenham Ummah Welfare Trust**

Muslim

📍 Education, sport for kids and adults, employment advice, community activities. ☎ 07473650294/07947426866 📧 duwt@hotmail.com 📍 5 Hewett Road, Dagenham, RM8 2XT

**Elim Pentecostal Church**

Pentecostal

📍 Groups for children, youth, elderly, women, men, online prayers and events. ☎ 07444 747210 📧 info@bechurch.life 📍 93 Axe Street, Barking, IG11 7LZ

**Essex Islamic Academy**

Muslim

📍 Madrasa, Funerals, Nikah Family Counselling organisers ☎ 020 3802 2149/07944 605984 📍 343 Ripple Rd, Barking, Essex, IG11 7RR



Ilford Islamic Centre

Muslim

📍 Funeral, Nikah, Marriage counselling, Madrasa, Sunday School, Services for women, Community Centre, Employment Advice, Elderly and more. ☎️ 020 8553 5739
 📧 ilford-islamic-centre@hotmail.co.uk 📍 50-58 Albert Road, Ilford, IG1 1HW

**Imam Jabir bin Zayd Islamic Centre**

Muslim

📍 5 daily prayers, Jumu'ah prayers, Taraweh, Eid prayers, Library, Weekend Quran Madrasah, Arabic Classes for youth, Bright Learning Supplementary School for tuition classes, Hajj and Umra training, Daawah/Lectures. 📍 Different services, contact organisers ☎️ 0208 5077981 📧 Contact through the website 📍 Medite house 11-13 Broadway, IG11 7LS

**Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness**

Jehovah's Witness

☎️ 01708 740761 📧 email through their website 📍 163-165 Brentwood Rd, Romford RM1 2SJ

**LBBB Somali Community Association**

Muslim

☎️ 020 8591 5917 📍 97 Longbridge Rd, Barking, IG11 8TB

LifeLine Church

Inclusive

📍 Groups and connection for children and families Different Services, contact organisers ☎️ 020 3488 4977 📧 info@lifelinechurch.co.uk 📍 LifeLine House, 25 Neville Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 3QS

**London Barking Congregation of Jehovah's Witness**

Jehovah's Witness

☎️ 44 20-8906-2211 📧 email through their website 📍 5 Stanley Ave, Barking IG11 0LD

**London Dagenham Congregation of Jehovah's Witness**

Jehovah's Witness

☎️ 020 8590 1843 📧 email through their website 📍 562 High Rd, Seven Kings, Ilford, IG3 8EG

**Madina Foundation Dagenham**

Muslim

📍 Madrasa, facilities for women. ☎️ 07782 190903 📧 info@madinafoundationdagenham.org 📍 539 Rainham Rd, Dagenham, RM10 7XJ

**Masjid Bilal Community**

Muslim

☎️ 020 8472 7488 📍 295 Barking Rd, East Ham, E6 1LB

**Masjiid Bilal Community**

Sikh

📍 They offer punjabi classes for kids. Call them for updated information. ☎️ 020 8594 3940 📧 Facebook Singh Sabha London East 📍 100 North Street, Barking, Essex, IG11 8JD

**Nichiren Shu Buddhist Temple Of UK**

Buddhist

☎️ 020 8595 8659 📧 email through their website 📍 185 Rainham Rd N, Dagenham RM10 7EH

**Romford and District Synagogue**

Jewish

☎️ 01708 741690 📧 info@theus.org.uk 📍 25 Eastern Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3NH

**Salvation Army Starbursts**

Christian

📍 Parents and toddler group 📍 Tuesdays at 9 ☎️ 0208 594 2964 📧 email through their website 📍 240 Ripple Road, Barking, IG11 7DJ 📍 Check updates with the organisers, the group might be suspended until further notice

**St. Erkenwald Church**

Christian

📍 Live streaming prayers and functions. Marriage courses, children and young people resources ☎️ 0208 594 2271 📧 admin@sterkenwaldschurch.org 📍 St Erkenwald vicarage, Levett Road, Barking, IG11 9JZ

**St. Margaret Parish Church**

Catholic

📍 Daily Prayer, Eucharist. Church tour, Tea rooms, Curfew Tower ☎️ 020 8594 2932 📧 email through their website 📍 North Street, Barking, IG11 8AW

**St. Patrick's Church**

Christian

☎️ 0208 594 4468 📧 spbarking@btinternet.com 📍 79 Sparsholt Road Barking IG11 7YG



St. Thomas More Church

Catholic

☎ 020 8590 2191 ✉ barkingstm@dioceseofbrentwood.org 📍 514 Longbridge Rd, Barking IG11 9BY

**Thames View Muslim Association**

Muslim

📍 Madrasa, Arabic lessons for children and more. Different services, contact organisers
☎ 07908212505 ✉ info@tvmcharity.org.uk 📍 15 Farr Ave, Barking, IG11 0NZ, UK

**The Church of Pentecost**

Pentecostal

☎ 0208 590 5823 ✉ email through their website 📍 746 Green Ln, Becontree, Dagenham, RM8 1YX

**The Hive (Al Madina Mosque)**

Muslim

📍 Mother and toddlers groups. 🕒 Mondays 10.30-12.30 (mother and toddler, 1.50 per family, healthy snack included) Tuesdays 11-12 (Little souls songtime, £1 from birth up to 5 years) ☎ Sadhia 07958539003 📍 Al Madina Mosque, (first floor) 2, Victoria Road, IG11 8PY Barking

**The Redeemed Christian Church of God**

Christian

☎ 07533 175 079 or 07939 700 292 ✉ rccgcityofjoybarking5@gmail.com
📍 Conference Centre Barking Learning Centre 2 Town Square, Barking IG11 7NB

**Upney Baptist Church**

Baptist

✉ email through their website 📍 9-11 Cavendish Gardens, Barking, Essex, IG11 9DR



TIP!

If you can't get the help you need from the services you have contacted, ask to be signposted! There is currently a big effort being put together in our borough to bring all organisations and services closer to understand who does what, so don't be shy and reach out!



Practical Help

These organisations and their services give you access to practical help, so you can navigate the parenthood journey with more ease.

Barking and Dagenham Council

The Council offers a vast amount of services, support, help, and guidance to families. We have contacted them to bring you the most relevant ones. Here are some of them:

Click on me!
or take a picture

★ **Local Offer Directory** is the web portal from the Council where you will find a menu with all the relevant help and information related to children from 0 to 25 with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Its purpose is to provide clear information and make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children, their parents and young people as well as service providers in its development and review.



★ **Children, young people and families** useful menu, where you can find lots of information relevant to children and family services.



★ On the **Early Help and Support for families**, you can find advice and support if your family needs are not met by the usual services, such as GP's, health visitors, nurseries or any other service. They can sign post you to the right department like **Home** and **Money** services if you have any problems with housing or are suffering from financial difficulties. They can allocate a caseworker to help you with your individual needs.



TIP! This service is for everyone, so you don't need to be on benefits or experiencing a very difficult situation. If you think you need extra help or you are not getting anywhere with a specific service, they might be able to guide you further.

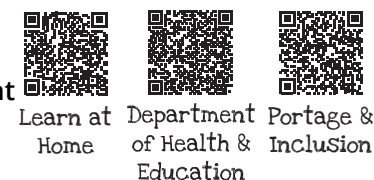
★ If you are trying to find a specific service or you are not sure which service you need, you can always contact the **Family Information Service**. They can provide free, confidential, and impartial advice and guidance on: early education and childcare services, costs (including tax-free childcare), and information about Ofsted childcare providers (more contact details in our Childcare section and our directory).



★ If you are thinking about **adopting or fostering**, here you will find information on where to get started or get some general advice. If you would like to read further, there is some **more info**.



★ On the section of Helping your child **learn at home**, you will find a large selection of home learning resources. The **Department of Health and Education** developed a guide that explains what to expect and when. Also, on their Portage and Inclusion Education Service, you can find educational support if you have a child from 0 to 3 with additional needs.



★ On **Events and activities** for children, you can find a directory of activities from most of the organisations working in our borough, explaining what they do and **what's on** currently.



★ **Children Centres** are currently mostly closed due to Covid, they are only opening for antenatal and postnatal appointments and Community Food Clubs. They normally offer a range of services like Play and Communication sessions, baby weighing and weaning advice, check our Socialisation section and directory for more information. Bear in mind that with constant changes in Government Guidelines, they might be able to open in the following months.



★ **BD Can** is coordinated by the Council and BD Collective. Their Hubs are run by local organisations across the borough. If you find yourself in a difficult situation, they can help you with picking up medicines or essential food shopping, a chat with a friendly person, and other things.




A bit of insight into the Housing situation in Barking and Dagenham from the Council

The Hug approached the Council to give you an overall view and understanding of the housing situation in our borough and this is what they told us (March 2021):


“We cannot offer housing to most people who apply. The pressures and demands on Council housing supply are increasing in Barking and Dagenham and all other London councils. There are over 7,000 households on our waiting list (housing register) and only around 600 council homes become vacant each year. Even those in the most need may have a very long wait. It is unlikely that you will be allocated any type of council housing and you will be better off renting privately.”

These are some links and pieces of information provided by the Council, that might help you figure out what your best option is:


- ★ People on the housing register have told us that if they knew how unlikely it was that they would be housed by the council they would have considered other options like moving into private rented accommodation in cheaper areas. There is a shortage of social (Council) housing in London, but other areas across the UK have more availability. The Mayor of London has produced a **map showing average rents for all London postcodes**, and you can check to see where you can afford to rent within your budget.




Map




Renting Privately




Universal Credit
- ★ Find out more about **renting privately**. If you are on a low income you can get help with rent payments by claiming **Universal Credit**.



Renting Privately




Universal Credit
- ★ The **Benefit Calculator** will assist you to work out how much, if any, housing benefit element may be applied once the rental amount is established.




Benefit Calculator


- ★ **Discretionary Housing Payment** – If your family is in receipt of the Housing element of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, you could look to move to property within the private sector, in any borough, with the assistance of the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). Where the removal costs, deposit, and rent in advance can be applied for, to assist with the move.




Discretionary Housing Payment
- ★ If you have received an eviction notice or think you might become homeless soon, go to our **homelessness prevention** page.




Homelessness Prevention
- ★ **Homefinder UK** helps those already on the council waiting list or who are homeless, find permanent social housing. They assist families to move out of the London Area to council properties available in other areas where the rent may be more affordable and council properties are available. They will also look to house other family members in their own property. Under this scheme, you have to be willing to consider a property which is more than 100 miles from your current address.



Homefinder UK
- ★ There are some exceptions to the requirement to currently live in this borough, or having continuously lived here for the last 3 years. They are listed in Section 4 of the **housing allocation policy** (PDF, 417KB).



Housing Allocation Policy
- ★ **Reside** - is a housing company, wholly owned by Barking and Dagenham Council, set up in 2012. Owning a housing company means that the council can develop and provide affordable housing for rent. Reside properties are rented out to people who are in employment but cannot afford to buy or rent privately and have limited access to social housing. Properties are let at 65% to 80% below the market rate.



Reside

When it comes to vital information that might change your housing situation, it is very important to have a realistic understanding of the Housing offer in our Borough, so you can make informed choices with better outcomes for you and your family. Hopefully, this information will save you some time and headache.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureau is a charity that offers a great range of services that helps people to solve the problems they face by providing free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

You can contact them by their webchat, advice line on 0808 278 7870 or you can visit them in one of their offices by dropping in or making an appointment to your nearest branch.

These are some of their advisory services (see more in their website):

- ★ Benefits, Debt, Money, Pension
- ★ Housing, Family, Law & Courts
- ★ Work, Consumer Rights or Immigration



Citizens Advice Bureau



webchat



Nearest Branch



Advisory Services

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a benefit for working-age people, which was introduced to replace six benefits and merge them into one payment. It aims at making benefit claims easier. Important things to know about it are:

- ★ This benefit replaces Child tax credit, Housing benefit, Income support, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance and Working Tax Credits.
- ★ It can be claimed over the phone (0800 328 5644) or online.
- ★ It can take up to 5 weeks to receive the first payment since the date you first claim to receive the first payment (although you might be eligible for an advance loan)
- ★ Entitlement to Universal Credit depends on your household income, number of dependants and housing costs. You can find a Universal Credit calculator on their website.
- ★ The amount of Universal Credit you get can vary each month depending on yours and your partner's income (if you are in a couple). If you are not currently working, your Universal Credit entitlement will be based solely on your partner's income. If you are a single parent and you have no income, you will be eligible for Universal Credit.
- ★ If you are eligible, a single payment will be made into your account.
- ★ You should be aware that if you have savings over £16,000, you will not be eligible.
- ★ If you receive any tax credits, you should call for advice before applying, as you might lose your tax credits, even if you are unsuccessful (see BBC's article).



Online



Universal Credit Calculator



BBC Article

TIP!

To understand if there is a benefit that can suit your needs, it is worth having a look at this website where it explains in a lot more detail how it works.



Understanding Universal Credit

- ★ They might also be able to help with childcare costs or council tax.

Food Bank Network and Community Food Clubs

BD Collective and **Humdum** have collaborated with us to bring you the following information. On the BD Collective website, you can find the **Food Bank Network**, a directory to find out which Food Bank is closest to you and its contact details.



BD
Collective

Food banks are run by religious organisations or charities. Some food banks offer cooked food, others a standard food service, consisting of fresh, canned, and packaged foods, and some charge a nominal fee in a 'supermarket style' shop.



Humdum

TIP!

Some will have Halal and vegetarian offers like Humdum, and others might offer other products like feminine hygiene products or clothing.

All food banks vary on their opening days and times and eligibility, so before making the journey to one, call and check that you're eligible.



Food Bank
Network

Food banks operate for all the community in a non-judgemental manner, despite this, some people might have some reservations about accessing the service. They exist to nurture people when they need it the most and can be a great way to access a network of support to get you through tough times. Some food banks also offer help with things like CV writing and job finding and some can signpost to other support services, so it is worth asking what other help they offer.

TIP!

Sometimes there are queues outside the food bank managed by a volunteer for safety reasons, especially during Covid. It might be worth asking when the best time to go is, so you don't have to wait too long. Also, it is best to take your own bags to collect the food. Regular users must register with their chosen food bank.

The Council also runs three Community Food Clubs, on that link you can find information on where, when, and how to apply.



Community
Food Clubs

Pharmacies

Local pharmacists can provide you with a whole range of services. As the **CCG** (Clinical Commissioning Group) for Barking and Dagenham mentions on its website, they can give you expert and confidential advice on:



CCG

- ★ Dispense medicine when you give them your prescription.
- ★ Dispense repeat prescriptions without the need to visit your GP – speak to your GP or pharmacist to arrange this.
- ★ Give advice on treating minor ailments like coughs, colds, head lice and athlete's foot.
- ★ Help you manage long-term conditions such as diabetes and asthma.
- ★ Give advice on medication, including if you're taking medicine for different conditions.
- ★ Give advice on staying healthy, including eating healthily, stopping smoking and getting enough exercise.
- ★ Give sexual health and contraception advice, the morning after pill, for free to eligible customers and Chlamydia screening.
- ★ Provide treatments for minor ailments.
- ★ Allergy screening.
- ★ Medicine 'MOTs' – to help you use your treatments correctly.
- ★ New medicine service – to help you understand how to use new treatments.

TIP!

The person serving you over the counter might not be the pharmacist, so if you want expert advice, always make sure you ask to speak to the pharmacist.

My Healthy London website from the NHS, can help you find your nearest pharmacist and any other health service like Dentists, Opticians, GP or A&E services.



Healthy London

Note that while having a Maternity Certificate, you don't have to pay for prescriptions or dental care (see GP section on Healthcare). If you need information or help paying for your prescription, ask your pharmacist. You could get a PPC (Prescription Prepayment Certificate) to pay less for your prescriptions. Find out more information on the website.



PPC

Language bridges and barriers

Below, are some local organisations that offer help with translation and interpreting services and ESOL classes.

For your NHS appointments, interpreters are free and it is your right to have access to one. Your service provider can access them over the phone or face to face if you request it in advance. For more information, have a look at the NHS website for BARTS Hospitals.



NHS

Excel Women's Centre

Organisation that provides services and a safe space for women and children. Their current courses are:



CourSeS

- ★ ESOL and Creative English classes
- ★ Work Club (includes CV building, ICT training)
- ★ Women in business (for those who have a business idea and want advice)

TiSonline

Translation and interpreting services for the Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Currently, they have funding to provide Interpreting Services for free to all BAME communities who are having difficulties obtaining any interpreting services during these difficult times, to access health and mental health services. The Translation Service (for documents such as Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates, ID Cards, Educational Certificates etc) is available to the community directly for a fee. Please visit their website.



TiSonline

Tisonline also offers its services to the NHS and local authorities. Interpreters are requested by the service providers directly and paid by them.

TWCP

Thames Ward Community Project is a community project and charity that aims to promote sustainable community-led change. They provide a range of services, workshops, classes like their ESOL Classes (English to speakers of other languages) for parents.

They also run Art Classes and Creative Wellness Community Club.



Thames Ward Community Project



ESOL Classes



Art Classes



Creative Wellness Community Club

Have your say & participate

If you want your voice to be heard, be accounted for and bring about a change in the services that care about you and your Borough, there are a few organisations that are being really active on promoting communications and changing the way things are happening. These are some that we find really interesting and inspiring.

★ **East London Maternity Voices** - they have lots of useful support on their website and they also do a zoom meeting every two weeks with Maternity professionals from Barts and BHR hospitals where you can ask questions (link to their instagram page where they post information about these meetings).



★ **Birth Reflections services** - you can book an appointment with one of the experienced midwives and they can look at your records and discuss any doubts or questions about the care you received.



★ **One Borough One Voice** - this is a web portal from Barking Council where you can have your say about lots of different projects, consultation processes and in general, as a citizen. They have a Citizen Alliance Network that you can be part of and they also have an Activity Hub section where you can find information about what is going on in the Borough.



★ **BD Giving** is the organisation that funded this Parent Guide. It is a local grant-making charity that puts the community at the heart of its decision-making. They believe that local people should have a say in funding decisions that impact their lives and want to make funding opportunities accessible to all. There are three main ways that you can get involved with their work: take part in decision-making processes, applying for funding for your own ideas, and sharing your story with the community. If you are interested in the Borough as a neighbour, community group, or business, have a look at their website and reach out!

★ **BD Collective** acts as a connector between local groups, organisations and the social sector in general to develop joint funding bids, collaborate on projects and mentor & share learning. They have a **Directory** with a very useful menu.



Carer's Hub

This is a local charity that offers support, advice, advocacy, and social activities for everyone that is a carer. They also have:

- ★ A specific section on their **website** dedicated to parents, where they focus on parents of children with additional needs.
- ★ A Parent's **forum**.
- ★ **IASS**, which is the Information and Advice Support Service.



Website



Forum



IASS

This charity is really useful and well connected to the Council and other



bMoneyWize

bMoneyWize's, mission is to improve financial literacy and numeracy skills for young people. The founder Arinola Araba, based in Barking, is passionate about demystifying the subject of money, to increase young people's awareness about how money works in an increasingly 'cashless society'.

After being inspired by her 14 year old daughter, Arinola created the concept of a board game that addresses financial wellbeing and education. The game uses real-life situations that are relatable to young people and equips them with the confidence, knowledge, and key skills to value money in a fun way.

Here are some tips that she shared with us about money management & kids:

- ★ **Show** the children how you deal with finances, payments, bills etc. with relevance to their age, making it fun!
- ★ **Teach** them enough to help them begin to take care of their money. Try Money Advice Service or bMoneywize game for inspiration.
- ★ **Involve** them in paying for some smaller bills depending on their age and earnings or at least get them to offer their time to help around the house.
- ★ **Encourage** the children to save towards something they want, (a goal), to give them a feeling of control and achievement, starting with smaller priced items.
- ★ **Reward** them in some way, if possible, to help them understand the benefits of savings and interest, or offer to pay part of the cost of an item they are saving up for.



bMoneyWize
Website

Maternity Action - Pregnancy, maternity and parental rights

For the information in this section, we teamed up with the great charity Maternity Action, which kindly provided the content for this topic. Please check their website for the latest news. For more information or specific guidance for your case, you can also contact their team at 0808 802 0057 open all weekdays except Wednesdays from 10 am to 1 pm. Click here for further details about their advice line.

Here you will find some very important things you need to know about your rights, the updates with Covid regulations and Government guidelines, Maternity pay, Maternity leave and much more.

Are you a working mother-to-be or new parent? This section will give you an outline of your rights and benefits during pregnancy and maternity leave and tells you where you can get more detailed information.

There are a few key things to remember when you read about your rights: These rights apply to UK citizens and women from abroad who are working here. Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance are not classed as public funds.



- ★ All workers are protected against discrimination if you are dismissed or treated unfairly because of pregnancy or childbirth. It is discrimination to dismiss you or treat you unfairly because you have taken maternity leave or exercised any of your maternity rights at work.
- ★ It doesn't matter if you work full-time or part-time, the same rights still apply.
- ★ You have the same maternity rights if you are an employee on a term-time only, fixed-term or temporary contract or if you are an apprentice. If you are not an employee, for example, because you are self-employed or doing casual work, you do not have the right to maternity leave but you may still get maternity pay and have other rights.
- ★ Agency workers are protected against discrimination during pregnancy and after childbirth. Most agency workers are entitled to maternity pay. Agency workers who have completed 12 weeks in the same placement have the right to paid time off for antenatal care and health and safety protection. Any pregnancy-related absence will not affect the qualifying period.

Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave

What is Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)?

OML is the first 26 weeks of maternity leave. If you return to work after 26 weeks' OML you have the right to return to exactly the same job. You must give your employer the correct notice in order to qualify for maternity leave (see 'How to give notice' below).

What is Additional Maternity Leave (AML)?

AML lasts for 26 weeks and starts on the day after the end of OML. If you return to work after AML you still have the right to return to the same job but, if it is not reasonably practicable, your employer can offer a suitable alternative job on similar terms and conditions.

When do I have to tell my employer I'm pregnant?

The latest time you can tell your employer that you are pregnant is the 15th week before your baby is due. There is nothing to say that you have to tell your employer any earlier although it may be to your advantage, for example, special health and safety rights during pregnancy and the right to paid time off for antenatal care apply when your employer knows you are pregnant. The law protects you from being dismissed or discriminated against on the grounds of pregnancy once your employer knows you are pregnant.

Maternity Pay

SMP (Statutory Maternity Pay)

SMP is paid for 39 weeks to women who qualify for it. You can extend your Maternity leave up to one year, but from week 39 to week 52, it will be unpaid.

Who gets SMP?

You can get SMP from your employer if:

- ★ you have been employed by the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (which is approximately the 26th week of pregnancy). In other words, you need to have started the job before you got pregnant, and
- ★ you are still in your job in the 15th week before your baby is due – even if it's only for one day that week – or you are off sick or on holiday, and
- ★ you actually receive at least £120 per week on average in the eight weeks (if you are paid weekly) or two months (if you are paid monthly) up to the last pay day before the end of the 15th week before your baby is due. This means that your earnings in weeks 18 to 26 of your pregnancy are important for SMP.

TIP!

You can check if you are entitled to SMP by using an SMP calculator here:



Maternity Allowance

What is Maternity Allowance (MA)?

Maternity Allowance (MA) is paid by your local Jobcentre Plus for 39 weeks. You may be able to get an MA if you do not qualify for SMP from your employer, for example, because you started a new job when you were already pregnant, your earnings are too low or you are self-employed.

Who gets MA?

You can claim MA from the benefits agency if:

- ★ you have been employed for at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the expected week of childbirth, and
- ★ you can find 13 weeks (not necessarily in a row) in which you earned over £30 per week on If you are employed. You should send in payslips for the weeks in which you earned the most. You can add together earnings from more than one job. If you are self-employed, the Job Centre Plus will check your national insurance contribution record and allow you to update your NI contributions.

TIP!

You can find a link to the maternity allowance claim form at:



Other Rights

Paid time off for antenatal care

If you are an employee, you have the right to take reasonable time off for your antenatal appointments, including time needed to travel to your clinic or GP, without loss of pay. You should let your employer know when you need time off. Your employer can ask to see your appointment card and a certificate stating that you are pregnant for all appointments apart from the first one. Agency workers are entitled to time off for antenatal appointments after they have worked in the placement for more than 12 weeks.

Antenatal care can include parentcraft and relaxation classes. You may need a letter to show your employer from your GP or midwife, saying that these classes are part of your antenatal care.

Dismissal, discrimination, or loss of wages

It is against the law for your employer to treat you unfairly, dismiss you, or select you for redundancy for any reason connected with pregnancy, childbirth, or maternity leave.

If you are dismissed while you are pregnant or during your maternity leave, you are entitled to written reasons for your dismissal.

You must make a claim in an employment tribunal within three months, less one day, from the date of the act you are complaining about.

You must also contact ACAS Early Conciliation within the time limit on 0300 123 11 00 before making a tribunal claim.



ACAS

Redundancy

If you are made redundant because you are pregnant or taking maternity leave, you may have a claim for unfair dismissal, automatic unfair dismissal, and/or pregnancy/maternity discrimination.

If your job is at risk of redundancy during maternity leave you have the right to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy (if one exists) before it is offered to any other employees without going for an interview.

Paternity leave

Fathers and partners (including same-sex partners) have the legal right to take two weeks paternity leave and pay at the birth if they meet the qualifying conditions.

Fathers or partners also have the right to take shared parental leave if the mother ends her maternity leave early and both parents meet the qualifying conditions.

Parental leave and time off for dependants

Parents are entitled to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per parent per child (this is different from the new right to shared parental leave), up until your child's 18th birthday. They can take a maximum of 4 weeks per year (per child) and have to give 21 days' notice to take the leave.

Parents are also entitled to unpaid emergency leave to care for a dependant who falls ill, gives birth, or is injured. The leave can also be used if there is a sudden problem with arrangements for care of the dependant e.g. if your childminder falls ill.

Coronavirus related info

These rights continue to apply during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Pregnant women are clinically vulnerable under the government guidance and there is some important information that is constantly updated according to the Government Guidelines. For more help with questions about rights at work in relation to Covid-19 see **FAQs: Covid-19 – rights and benefits during pregnancy and maternity leave.**



FAQ

We hope you find this section useful and informative. We tried to bring you some of the most relevant information, but there are lots of organisations and services in Barking and Dagenham not included here, so our best advice is to reach out and contact The Hug or the most relevant service to you and ask to be signposted.

Practical Help Directory

Contents

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- ★ Government p.176
- ★ NHS p.176
- ★ Organisation p.176
- ★ Organisation (Dads) p.179

Council

BD Collective Food Bank Network

? This is a link to a Food Bank Directory put together by BD Collective. Here you can find a list of all the active food banks in the Borough.



LBBD BD Can

? Council service designed to help the most vulnerable during Covid. A request form is filled in once you call and a support officer will give you a call back to assess your situation. ☎ 020 8215 3000 (Council general helpline, ask to be transferred to the BD CAN service)



LBBD Care and Family Support for under 5's

? Council service that provides help to families that think their children might be disabled or have any additional needs. ☎ 0208 227 3811 ✉ childrens@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBD Children Centres

? LBBD Official Children Centre's page with useful info and updated information for parents and babies. 🕒 Different opening times according to Children Centre and service, please check the website ☎ 0208 724 1983 📍 Different addresses (please check the website)



LBBD Children, Young People and Families

? Website menu from the Council to access all the services offered by the Council to families.



LBBD Community Food Clubs

? Community Food Clubs information.



LBBD Early Help

? Council Service. Support is given to children, young people and their families where they have additional needs that aren't being met by the usual services that are available to everyone, such as health and education. 🕒 9am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday ☎ 020 8227 5600 ✉ targetedreferrals@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBD Family Information Services

? Provides comprehensive information and advice on the services available to parents related to local childcare and early years nurseries, pre-schools and childminder, childcare funding options, activities for children. ☎ 020 8227 5395 ✉ fis@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 The Maples, 80a Gascoigne Road, Barking IG11 7LQ



LBBB Family Support for pupils and students

? Benefit which provides a child or young person with meals at school for free.



LBBB Homes and Money Hub

? Council services providing advise and support with housing, financial difficulties, worklessness, debt, council tax, eviction and homelessness. ☎ Barking Learning Centre - 020 8724 2115 / Dagenham Library - 020 8227 2927
✉ homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Housing Advice and Homeless prevention

? Council service providing support to residents who are facing housing issues or homelessness. ☎ Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm ☎ 020 8724 8323
✉ housingadvice@lbbd.gov.uk



LBBB Portage and Inclusion Education Service

? Portage and Inclusion is an education service for children from birth to 3 years with additional needs, run by education, youth and childcare together with NHS. ☎ 020 8724 8550 ✉ PortageOffice@lbbd.gov.uk 📍 Alibon Children's Centre, 175 Sterry Road, Dagenham RM10 8PT



Government

Universal Credit

? Universal Credit is a benefit that supports you if you are on a low income or out of work. It includes a monthly payment to help with your living costs. ☎ Monday to Friday 8am till 6pm ☎ 0800 328 5644



NHS

Healthy Start

? NHS scheme that provides vouchers to spend on food and also vitamins (check details for eligibility) ☎ 0345 607 6823



Organisation

ACAS

? ACAS provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law, including those concerning mental health. ACAS supports good relationships between employers and employees, but also provides conciliation services to resolve workplace problems.
☎ Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm ☎ 0300 123 1100



Action for Children

? Organisation that offers information and supports parents, children and carers
☎ Monday to Friday 9 till 5 ☎ 0300 123 2112 ✉ ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk
⚠ They offer a chat service.



Barking Food Bank

? They provide emergency food to people in crisis. You might need a food voucher from the Council to receive a food parcel so it is advisable to contact them before to see their eligibility criteria. ☎ Monday to Friday 9am till 4pm ☎ 07507 648948 / 0208 861 0660 ✉ barkingfoodbank@gmail.com



BD Collective

? They act as a connectors between local organisations. They have a very useful directory on their website ☎ 020 8597 2900 ✉ hello@bdcollective.co.uk



BD Giving

? Platform for anyone who has a stake in the borough to get involved in addressing local issues. ✉ access email from their website



BMoneywize

? bMoneywize provides an innovative educational solution to teaching young people financial literacy and numeracy skills. ☎ 020 8532 7300 ✉ admin@bmoneywize.co.uk



Carer's Hub

? Registered charity that provides information, advice and support if you are caring for someone. Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm ☎ 020 8593 4422 ✉ carers@carerscentre.org.uk



Citizen's Advice Bureau (Barking and Dagenham)

? Organisation that provides advice about a huge range of issues, such as housing, debt, immigration, work and law. Webchat available. ☎ 0808 278 7870
📍 Barking Learning Centre



Cry-Sis

? Support for parents with crying and sleepless babies ☎ 7 days a week, 9am till 10pm ☎ 08451 228 669 ✉ info@cry-sis.org.uk



Dagenham Food Bank

? They provide emergency food to people in crisis. ☎ 02085 950122/07983431070
 📍 RCGG House Of Faith Connections, The BEACON, 104 New Road, Dagenham, RM9 6PE



Debt Advice Foundation

? Help with debt, money and financial advice. ☎ 0800 043 40 50



East London Maternity Voices Partnership

? They provide opportunities to share your maternity experience through different media and they can signpost you to the right person within the Maternity Services on or after you've given birth. 📧 You can contact them by email through their website



Excel Women's Centre

? Organisation that provides services to women and children. They organise activities, events and training. Monday to Friday 10am till 4pm ☎ 0208 594 3730 📧 info@excelwomenscentre.org.uk



Harmony House Dagenham

? Different services: a free handyperson for small jobs in your house (mainly focusing on elderly people with accessibility problems, conditions apply), help with training, employment and other projects but check for eligibility by contacting them over the phone. ☎ 020 8526 8200 📧 Enquiries@hhd.org.uk 📍 Baden Powell Cl, Dagenham RM9 6XN



Henry Programme

? Organisation that supports parents and children to provide them with a healthy start in life. It is promoted by the Council. If you would like to have a look at their resources, you can find them on their website ☎ 020 8724 8018 📧 healthy.lifestyles@lbbd.gov.uk



Make your Mark

? Organisation that helps people experiencing food poverty. They provide educational resources and safe spaces and facilities. They focus on the BAME community. ☎ 07946 598 236 📧 Hello@makeyourmark.gov.uk 📍 IG11 7BT



Maternity Action

? Organisation that provides advice and information about your rights. ☎ 0800 138 7777 📧 webchat available on the website 📞 07701342744 WhatsApp chat



Mums on a Mission

? Mums support group offering advice, workshops and meet ups.



One One Coco

? Support of children, parents, and young people with complex needs, including learning disability and mental health difficulties. Safe House for young women and girls, young mothers and mothers-to-be, empowering them to overcome trauma and the effects of gender based abuse, preparing them for parenthood and adult life, supporting them therapeutically to develop resilience, independence skills, positive networks, good health and well being. ☎ 0203 771 8673 📧 contact@oneonecoco.co.uk 📍 46 Britannia Road, IG1 2EQ



Step Change

? Help with money management, financial and debt ☎ 0800 138 1111
 📧 webchat available on the website



Sycamore Trust

? Organisation that offers a range of services designed to help and support families who have children and adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and / or Learning Difficulties. ☎ 0208 517 9317 / 0208 262 5330 📧 enquiries@sycamoretrust.org.uk
 📍 Unit H14, Laurie Walk, Romford, Essex, RM1 3RT



Tisonline

? Organisation that offers translating and interpreting services in Barking and Dagenham. They might help you with doctors appointments. 🕒 Monday to Friday 9 till 5 ☎ 020 8591 0050 📧 info@tisonline.org.uk 📍 4 Farr Avenue, Barking, IG11 0NZ



Organisation (Dads)

Future Men

? One-day course for new and expectant dads, that demonstrates practical and emotional approaches to take care of themselves, their partner and their baby. ☎ 0207 237 5353 📧 You can contact them by email through their website
 📍 34 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1W 0DH



The Dadsnet

? Network, advice, support & knowledge





Apps

This section is meant to be easy, short, and agile so you can have a look at fun, interesting and helpful apps that can support you in different areas. And if we didn't include something you are looking for, check on your app platform, you might find just the right tool for you (and please share it with us!).

In pregnancy and up to 6 months

Pregnancy is such a special moment of a family's life, and it is great to have the chance to track your progress, knowing how big your baby is, what happens to your body, and what to expect: these apps will help you with this, some are more focused on medical appointment reminders, while others give you vouchers and discounts. There are plenty out there, here is The Hug selection:

BabyCentre

Some of the features of this app include learning how your body is changing and how to cope with aches and pains, what your baby looks like each week with detailed fetal development images and videos. You can also connect with other mums-to-be due at the same time as you and swap life tips, as well as turning weekly bump pics of your growing belly into a beautiful time-lapse video keepsake.

Bounty Pregnancy & Baby App

This app comes with a pregnancy tracker to monitor baby growth and development, as well as updates, advice, and fun facts, discounts and vouchers.

Baby Buddy

This is a pregnancy tracker, which also gives you some useful information, helps you with scheduling appointments, and it has a little playful avatar that you can personalise according to your parenting stage, to keep you distracted while waiting for an antenatal check :)

Emma's Diary Pregnancy App UK

Another pregnancy tracker made by the popular website and magazine Emma's Diary. It offers weekly tips and pregnancy advice, free mum-to-be gift packs that you can order and collect for your hospital bag, journaling option for pregnancy and when your baby is born, plus many discount vouchers for your baby's essentials.

M&B Mum and Baby

This app is great, but it would be really amazing if only it would also cover the Barking & Dagenham area! It gives all the details about maternity units in your area. Hopefully they will include Barking and Dagenham in the near future!



To meet people

Have you ever used a dating app? Well, it might feel weird if you never have, but these apps take the same concept and apply it to the parent world. You can meet other like-minded parents in your area, based on your interests or circumstances, or just have online friends to share middle-of-the-night-chats with! Some other suggestions to make friends and meet other parents in Barking and Dagenham are in the 'Places of interest, entertainment & outdoor spaces' section of this guide.

MuSh

A geolocalised app to meet parents (most users are mothers) in your area. There are also chat groups, online events, tips and more - a little secret: that's how The Hug founders met :)

Dadapp

An app for dads to meet other fathers in their areas, it follows the same concept of Mush and Peanuts for mums.

Frolo

The single-parent community app. If you want to meet-up with people in similar circumstances to yours, Frolo might do it for you, and it's designed for online and offline meet-ups

Peanuts

Same concept as Tinder, but for mums, the graphics are also very similar. It also comes with a feed and chat groups

Feeding

This small selection of apps will be particularly useful in the first months when sleep deprivation will make everything foggy and you might forget things. Also it gives you nice and handy information about breastfeeding, but if you need more info you can check our 'Health' Section in this Guide.

MyMedela Baby Tracker

Once your baby is born, you will need all the help in the world! If you like to be very organised or need a hand to keep track of feeding/nappy changes and more, there are many baby trackers for feeding. This one was designed by the breast pump brand Medela and has great ratings, you can ask questions, track your child growth and activities (nappy/feed/nap etc) and more.

BreaStfeeding Hub

This app tells you where it is safe and comfortable to breastfeed. Although the area of Barking and Dagenham is not well covered, we can all contribute to add information to it for other parents! The app still stays relevant as it gives information, comes with a toolbox aimed at helping you figure out all the issues you might encounter in the first months and encourages you to educate yourself about the benefit of breastfeeding.

Baby Feeding Log

This app gives you a timer to check how long you have been feeding, giving you the chance to select which breast or bottle (good also for mixed or bottle feeding), log baby sleep and nappy changes .

Nutrition

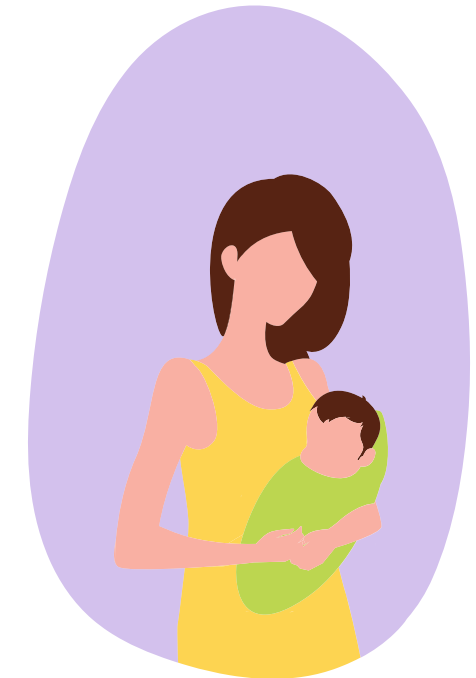
Following up from feeding to first solid foods, here you will find some useful apps related to nutrition - both for your baby and the whole family

Annabel Karmel

Baby and toddler healthy recipes. It is always nice to get inspiration for those first months when you are still unsure about what is best to feed your baby. You will find a world of recommendations and this app is highly rated.

MyMedela Baby Tracker

(150 recipes recommended by NHS) - for those looking for inspiration in the kitchen, it provides 150 healthy recipes that can be enjoyed by all the family.



To enhance your baby's development

When we are at home with a baby, we all run out of ideas of things to do sometimes: some of these apps are designed to help you with age-appropriate activities, some are more oriented to understand and guide you through your baby's developmental stages, while others focus on the community that can back you up in case of need. Whatever is your preference, here you will find plenty of inspiration!

Kinedu

Loads of personalised activities to do with your baby according to age and needs. The free version gives you one free activity per day and email reports about development stages in different areas that are nice and useful to keep track with.

Baby Sparks

This is another development app aimed at suggesting different activities to enhance your child's potential. Based on age and personalisation, the main take is to propose things that are relevant to your kid, giving the chance to measuring progress, and focus on specific needs.

EaSyPeaSy

A great community and a network of researchers, experts and parents back up this simple but very complete app to help you with activities and ideas related to specific areas that you can select according to your needs/struggles (tidying up, bedtime, potty training and more)

The Wonder Weeks

This award-winning app helps new parents to understand the several and sudden changes in babies' development. So for all those that are trying to understand those growth spurt and leaps, changes in sleep patterns and more, this app is for you!

Health

Baby and Child First Aid by British Red Cross

A free and very useful app to know how to act in case of emergency, but also to prepare for any eventuality. It is divided into main categories and different health issues that your baby might have, and it has informative brief videos and tests to check your knowledge.

The Lullaby Trust Baby check

This app is particularly useful for first-time parents. If you are unsure if your baby is ill, you will just have to answer 19 questions. According to the score, you will know if your baby is not ill, mildly ill or if they require medical attention.

Squeezy NHS Pelvic Floor App (£2.99)

Quite self explanatory, this app should be able to help you get through your pelvic floor exercises, especially postpartum when you need them the most.

Boots

Especially if you sign up for the Parenting Club, you will be able to collect extra points and be updated about the latest offers (including some freebies like toothbrushes, weaning books and vitamins).



To enjoy outdoor & nature

Outdoor and screen time don't sound like two things that go well together, but! Have a look and explore this selection of tools to make a trip to the shop more adventurous, to discover a new playground near you, or to learn things about the world outside...a phone can be your ally if used wisely.

SkyView & SkyView Lite

Stargazing: enjoy the night sky and learn to recognise constellations (might be less easy to use in urban areas, but it's a good tool for a weekend away or for more rural environments. The main idea is to enhance your child's education by sparking curiosity, so if they are into space/rockets/stars this could be for you!

Playground Buddy

A simple, very useful app to find a playground near you using geolocation on a map. As easy as it sounds, it could help you find hidden gems in your area or explore new places wherever you go.

Geocaching

Might be for older children, but it's a kind of a treasure hunt with participants from all over the world, it can get you moving with a purpose and give you that sense of adventure without going far from your home

Get outside

A great app with lots of features to select places of interest in your selected area, including historic areas, picnic areas and playgrounds, events and the chance to select what facilities you will find/you are looking for in the activity of your choice.

iNaturalist

iNaturalist helps people to learn about nature. The main goal is connecting people to nature, but also to generate scientifically valuable biodiversity data. It gives you the chance to join shared projects, take notes, keep track of nature walks and more

RHS Grow your own

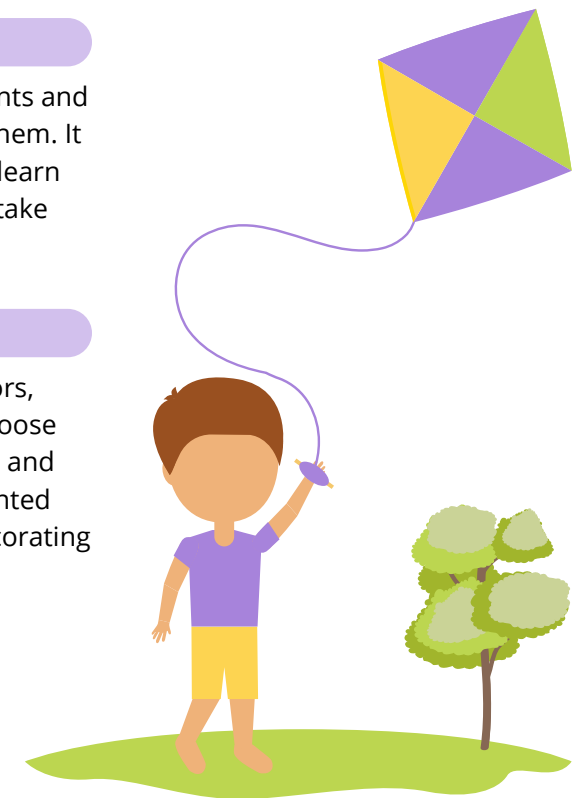
The Royal Horticultural Society is the world's leading gardening charity. They are committed to inspiring everyone to grow, and their app is very useful for beginners and more expert gardeners to answer lots of questions about growing your own fruits and vegetables.

PlantSnap

It helps you to recognise plants and trees by taking a picture of them. It can help you and your child learn about different species and take care of them.

Festive People AR

Both for indoors and outdoors, it gives you the chance to choose between different festivities, and make festive related Augmented Reality activities, such as decorating a tree or egg hunting.



Toddler-friendly games/educational

There is a “before” and an “after” pandemic time that defines how we feel about screen time. While some parents managed to keep their kids away from technology, others just got the kids their own tablet and found their own way to deal with it. At The Hug we really don't judge! You do whatever is best for yourself and your family. Our take here is that technology can be very useful, educational and fun, as long as it's used mindfully.

If you are worried about getting the right balance, here is a very useful **link to guidelines from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age**: We recommend that you stay with your child while they are using a phone, tablet or watching TV, and help them comment, name and categorise what they see.



WHO

If screen-time is used to let you do something (cooking, maybe?), just make sure that you have control over what they are watching and check often how they are reacting to what they are seeing, as they might feel upset, confused, scared or lonely. The website Internetmatters.org has some **useful advice on how to set controls on your devices** and gives you information and tips about screen time like:

- ★ Take the lead on choosing what they do and see on screens use;
- ★ Play, watch and discover together;
- ★ Set a good example with your own;
- ★ Make sure your child doesn't feel alone watching.
- ★ Make family time and sleep time a priority over screens
- ★ Set rules on the use of the screens in and out of the home;



See their advice here

The **games** in this section are educational and fun, and help develop important skills such as coordination, fine motor and more.

Baby piano for kids & toddlers

A musical app to explore different sounds, hand/eye coordination, cause/consequence, fine motor and attention.

Hopster

A mix of different activities and mini-games, includes the possibility to purchase the premium version for extra content.

VookS

Designed for kids from 2 to 8 years old, it features audio storytelling on video and audio for little kids, with a read-aloud library that aims at strengthening interest for reading. Limited offer for the free version, it has a 30 days free trial.

BabyPanda Word

This is a collection of many educational mini-games that are designed to enhance creativity, with adventure and role play games. Recommended by The Hug parents as it can work offline and be used on long trips.

Kiddopia

A mix of different activities and mini games such as puzzles, animal care, drawing and videos, includes the possibility to purchase the premium version for extra content.



Mental Health

We can take care of ourselves in many different ways. The key is understanding our needs, listening to what our mind and body are telling us, and finding a way to figure them out. These apps are nice tools that won't substitute professional help, but might give you insights, make you more aware, help you vent, deal with a situation or learn some techniques to deal with certain uncomfortable feelings. If you want to know more about it, please check our 'Mental Health and Well-being' section in this Guide.

Daybook

This app is designed to help you keep your memories, reflect on them and support you through the journaling tool used by many therapists in mental health. You can create entries by dictating them to your digital voice assistants, track mental health, mood and guide you through different reflections.

My Possible Self

This app adopts CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and a holistic approach to mental health. It will help you with managing anxiety, tackling depression, easing stress and improving sleep. It comes with a mood tracker to help you identify and get more acquainted with your emotions. Its aim is to help you understand yourself better and learn to think differently

TIP!

Journaling is something you don't need an app for, it can be done with good old pen & paper and different techniques - including art, collage, painting and writing. There are several apps out there, so if this one doesn't work for you you can have a look over your app store for more!

eQuoo Emotional FitneSS

The eQuoo app uses adventure games (choose your own story type of game) designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness and teach you new psychological skills. It can be used by adults and adolescents older than 12 years old. It's meant to make certain skills, topics and issues approachable and fun.

Feeling Good

Feeling Good uses relaxation, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and resilience building techniques from sport to help improve positive feelings, self-esteem and self-confidence. To get you going, the app offers 4 free audio tracks combining soothing music with gentle coaching.

Cove

When you don't have the words to express yourself, you might want to use this app. It uses music, and you can use different sounds and effects to express yourself, make sense of a mood or just unwind and play with it. Recommended by mental health practitioners, it can be particularly useful for those who tend to use things other than words to express themselves.

The Tapping Solution

Also known as EFT, or Emotional Freedom Technique, the Tapping solution app teaches you how to combine the ancient technique of acupuncture with easy and simple exercises. Some activities are free to use immediately to help reduce psychological distress, but also to set a goal such as weight loss, motivation, anxiety reduction and more.

InSight

this app is designed for parents and teenagers. Its aim is to give you some tools to understand and overcome anxiety, and what is really good is that it focuses specifically on the parent identity, without forgetting about your own self as a person.

Nourish

Divided into watch-listen-read categories, or by subject, you can choose to do a meditation, listen to some talk, read about new baby contents and in the meantime build your toolkit with the contents that speak the most to you. Designed specifically for parents, this app is time-mindful and its contributions are from some experts in perinatal mental health, mindfulness, yoga, psychology and more.

Blueheart

This is for couple therapy, it makes an initial assessment with many questions, aimed at giving you personalised and relevant content. It comes with mini-tasks and you can watch, listen and read through the contents by yourself or by inviting your partner to the app and starting something together

You can check more apps recommended by the NHS here:



NHS

Meditation

Meditation is not for all, we get it. But these apps are designed for both beginners and experts, and can bring great benefits to your daily life. A calmer and happier parent makes a calmer and happier environment for your child(ren) and the whole family, so if you ever find difficulties dealing with strong emotions, stress, anxiety, or trouble with sleeping, you might give it a try. Next time you find yourself mindlessly scrolling through your phone, just put on a guided meditation from one of these apps. Let us know!

Calm

Calm is a winning app to help you soothe in different moments and situations, including for anxiety, sleep and stress. It comes with beautiful backgrounds and relaxing techniques, guided meditations and calming music.

Chopra

Worldwide famous guru Deepak Chopra created an app with simple, self-care guidance and meditation including tools from the discipline of Ayurveda, an ancient system of healing. The free version has limited content, but you can find online the "21 days of abundance" meditation challenge to have a taste of what Chopra does and if it could be good for you.

HeadSpace

With a great design to attract newbies to meditation techniques without labeling, Headspace can be really good for those who think that "yoga and meditation stuff" is just not for them. If you feel that way but still would like to know what all the fuss is about, this app might get you there.

InSight Timer

This app is simply amazing. Not only does it offer over 80 thousand free meditations, but it has a great supportive community, with people from all around the world. You can find groups for your specific interest, search for category, length or type of resource. There is something for everyone, including pregnant women, new parents and even bedtime stories for kids

Sleep

We wish we could give you “THE” answer about your child’s sleep! We really do, but unfortunately there is no magic solution for it. Babies’ sleep cycles are different than an adults, it takes time to adjust (for us and for them!), and all we can do here is help you create a nice and cozy environment, a nice bedtime routine over time, and give you some little tools to make it happen smoothly (you can also check our ‘Health’ section where we talk about the Lullaby Trust website for safe sleeping and tips).



Huckleberry

This app is a great promise for sleep-deprived parents who are desperate for some rest. The idea is to measure your child’s natural sleep rhythm and find ‘the sweet spot’ when it is better to put your child to sleep. This should be done with the help of pediatric experts paired with AI (Artificial Intelligence). It can be controversial, and we do not necessarily recommend it, but we thought it would be good to let you know about it.

Sound Sleeper

There are plenty of playlists on Spotify or Youtube with relaxing and nature sounds, frequencies and sound therapies, but if you want an app with a curated selection to help your child (or yourself!) wind down and relax with different soundscapes, here you will find white sounds, soothing lullabies and more.

Sleepy Sounds

With this app you can play lullabies, white noise, or nature sounds to soothe your baby to sleep. Among the features, you can select how long you want the music or the sounds to play for, and it will loop until that time has finished. When you start the music/sounds, your phone will start a looping animation which will light up a dark room, serving as a night-light as well.

Miscellaneous

To conclude our selection, here are a few miscellaneous apps. The more we look for them, the more we find, so if you didn’t find just the right fit for you, know that there might be an app developer just working on it as you are reading this! :)

Tinto

Community and advice from peer mothers. In a very interesting design and calming colour palette, Tinto starts with a personality test to pair you with like minded parents. You are able to ask and give advice, make connections, find help about everything connected to parenthood.

Lunar Baby Monitor

Turn two iPhones or iPads into a baby monitor with this app, particularly useful if you are outside and don’t want to pack too much, at the grandparents’ or you just never really wanted to get a baby monitor but still need it from time to time.

NCT Baby Change

This app is simple but so useful when on the go! It helps you find your nearest baby changing facility and share it with others.

BackThen Family and Baby Photos

Last but not least, we just chose one photo app as staying connected with family has been particularly hard over the last year, and sharing safely your baby’s pictures with your family can make them feel a little closer. This app lets you create albums with pictures and videos in a nice, easy-to-use timeline.

