Reducing Parental Conflict

Within the past 12 months, CHECS/Family Help Front Door have received around 1,000 referrals due to conflict between parents (**which is below the threshold for domestic abuse**). Over 75% of these referrals have closed to no further action/ or with families being signposted to external organisations/services.

Please find below the services that we are regularly signposting parents/carers to. We would really appreciate it, if you could support us in signposting families to these services yourselves prior to referring into Children’s Services to request additional support (where appropriate).

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| The Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme | Within this 6-week online course, participants will: Learn how ‘harmful conflict’, which is frequent, intense, and poorly resolved, can harm children’s physical, emotional, mental, and social development from before birth. Learn how to manage the stresses of family life. Be given techniques to enhance relationships, manage differences in values that may trigger anger and conflict, communicate more clearly, and resolve their issues more productively to reduce harmful conflict and focus their energies on both their own and their children’s wellbeing. Parents/carers can self-refer here: [Stronger Relationships courses – Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (strengthening-families.net)](https://strengthening-families.net/reducing-parental-conflict/) |
| The Write Time Take Charge Course | This free 6-week course is designed for parents facing challenges with a child who has additional needs and parents that long for a harmonious family life filled with understanding, connection, and growth. Over 6 weeks, the team will support parents/carers withmentoring and counselling aimed at strengthening relationships and embracing Choice Theory and Reality Therapy. Parents/carers can self-refer here: [website](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fthewritetime.org.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7CRobyn.Waterhouse%40cheshireeast.gov.uk%7C5c42408f815d4b7b060008dc906164e7%7Ccdb92d1023cb4ac1a9b334f4faaa2851%7C0%7C0%7C638543996267251992%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=D%2FB3OPASbbupsvZQgw1NeCOGQ990no998uUwct7OTHw%3D&reserved=0). |
| ‘Separating Better’ App | Designed for all parents in the consideration or early stage of separation, this self-managed digital intervention resource provides effective ways to assess emotional readiness, understand finances as a solo parent, improve co-parenting communication, and make practical childcare arrangements.  This child-centric app provides essential guidance on co-parenting and managing disagreements and has been designed with the wellbeing of the family in mind.  This app includes:  An emotional readiness assessment to determine a parent’s readiness for the separation process.  A personalised parenting plan with co-parenting agreement options to help shape the practicalities in a parent’s life post-separation.  A budget planner to help parents gain control of their finances as a new co-parent and to plan ahead for any shared or split expenses for the children.  *Work it out* scenario videos to help identify any poor communication skills or disagreements between co-parents and demonstrate how to improve upon them.  Expert advice and guidance articles on a wide range of separation topics, from communication and living arrangements to finances and practical legal advice.  Available on IOS and Android. |
| Relate’s AI driven Chat Bots to support co-parents and carers in conflict. | The **Co-Parenting Bot** provides tailored advice based on specific situations. It offers personalised responses, ensuring relevant support.  The **In the Middle Bot** helps parents understand their child’s potential thoughts and feelings, offering insights based on child psychology principles and tailored to the child’s age. It guides parents and carers in supporting children and improving family dynamics.  The **Sounding Board Bot** assists in crafting clear, positive messages to improve co-parent communication. It offers suggestions to reduce misunderstandings and conflicts, promoting healthy dialogue.  These chatbots are trained using clinically approved documents and safeguarding information. They detect safeguarding concerns and direct users to appropriate support. Local Authorities and frontline practitioners can integrate these tools to enhance co-parenting support. Access the tools . [New AI tools facilitate clearer communication for couples and co-parents | Relate](https://www.relate.org.uk/get-help/new-ai-tools-facilitate-clearer-communication-couples-and-co-parents) |
| Webpage | We have a healthy relationships webpage available with specific pages for parents/carers that are together or separated, as well as pages for young people, dads, and professionals too. Within these pages there are a number of links to local and nationwide support services, access to free online parenting programmes, general information and advice, a section on PR and legal support, a relationship MOT quiz, and videos around the impact of conflict on children [Healthy Relationships (cheshireeast.gov.uk)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/how-do-i-get-early-help-for-my-child/family-information-service/healthy-relationships/healthy-relationships.aspx). |
| Mediation | The Ministry of Justice has launched a voucher scheme which will provide a contribution of up to £500 towards the mediation costs for eligible cases, supporting people in resolving their family law disputes outside of court, where appropriate.  A significant number of individuals **will** be eligible for the voucher scheme, so it is worth them attempting mediation in the first instance. The law also states that you must consider whether mediation can help you before you can take a case to court too.  There is often a cost for an initial assessment, but I am aware most mediators will have an initial informal chat with families at no cost to ensure their service is right for them. If it is suitable, the mediator will complete and send off the eligibility forms for the voucher scheme, so parents will not really have to do anything other than sign to say that they agree. The £500 voucher will then cover around/up to 4-hour long sessions with the mediator. It is then up to each individual family if they would like to continue their sessions at their own cost following this.  If the family (or one parent) is in receipt of universal credit or similar, they will be entitled to legal aid (completely free mediation), this would also cover the second party for some of the process.  I have been liaising with some local mediators, all of whom are qualified to provide court documentation if required and are qualified to include children in the mediation process.  We are able to either refer families to these mediators ourselves, OR we can provide the families we are working with the mediators’ details to self-refer. This can be done via email. If we gain consent off parents, we will just need to provide a very brief overview, names of family members and their contact details (email and phone). They do all have referral forms that can be requested, if you/the family prefer to fill these in.  **Mediators that cover Cheshire East:**  **Talk, Listen, Change**  Mediation [Mediation@talklistenchange.org.uk](mailto:Mediation@talklistenchange.org.uk)  Mediators at Talk Listen Change conduct sessions online via Microsoft teams or in-person at various locations in the North West, in the Cheshire East area they currently have a location in Crewe.  ------------------------------  **Jules Rendall**  [julian.rendall@venturemediation.co.uk](mailto:julian.rendall@venturemediation.co.uk)  Online mediation sessions only.  ------------------------------ **Jen Rumble**  Family Mediation [admin@yourmediator.co.uk](mailto:admin@yourmediator.co.uk) Until December Jen is only offering online video appointments, however after Christmas, will be offering face to face in Macclesfield, Stockport, and Chester.  ----------------------------- |

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| **Support for Professionals** | |
| E-Learning for Professionals: | We have a 20-minute Parental Conflict E-Learning available on Cheshire East’s ‘Learning Lounge’ page. You can access this via the link [Course: Parental Conflict - Externals ONLY (learningpool.com)](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcheshireeast.learningpool.com%2Fcourse%2Fview.php%3Fid%3D1091&data=05%7C02%7Chealthyrelationships%40cheshireeast.gov.uk%7C07749c3ef84c45b733f508dc387da2c9%7Ccdb92d1023cb4ac1a9b334f4faaa2851%7C0%7C0%7C638447359460928118%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=TgiqymkUtbe%2B4giF1ctXjY1HJE9TgY4xt%2BcXNATijTo%3D&reserved=0), you would need to select ‘NON SSO’ and then ‘log in as guest’ if you do not already have an account. |
| Email | Robyn, our Reducing Parental Conflict Coordinator can be contacted via email – [healthyrelationships@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:healthyrelationships@cheshireeast.gov.uk) for any resources, support, or advice. |