

What happens next?

Based on the information you and your child provide, all those who can help him or her will work together to provide the support your child needs. Only workers who need to know about your child will share the information.

Who is a lead professional?

If a number of people are providing support to your child, one of these people may become your 'lead professional'.

The lead professional will keep you informed, listen to your views and support you. The lead professional will also coordinate all the services supporting your child.

You and your child will have a say in who should be the lead professional.

Other questions about CAF

Why is it called a 'common assessment'?

It is 'common' because all agencies which work with children use this way of working. 'Assessment' means finding out more about the situation and agreeing with you what needs to be done.

We're thinking of moving to another area. Is there any point having a common assessment?

Because CAF is a national process, it will be understood by professionals working with children across England and so will help support many children who need to move house or school.

What is a 'statutory assessment'? Is it the same as a CAF?

In a very small number of cases where the educational needs are severe, complex and long term, and cannot be met from within a school's resources, some children will need to have a *statutory assessment* which may lead to the child having a *statement of special educational needs*. If your child already has a statement of special educational needs then he or she is unlikely to need a CAF assessment.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

Welcome to a new way of helping children and young people

INFORMATION FOR
PARENTS AND CARERS

Want to know more?

Ask a professional who knows your child well, or contact Hammersmith & Fulham Family Information Service:

Helpline: 0845 313 3933

Email: fis@lbhf.gov.uk

Visit: www.lbhf.gov.uk/caf

Every Child Matters
Change For Children

Hammersmith and Fulham
Primary Care Trust



The Common Assessment Framework

When your child needs extra support, we want to find the best way forward as soon as possible. Sometimes the people who work with your child need to spend more time with you, thinking carefully about what help your child needs. They might also wish to involve other services if the most effective help is to be provided.

This leaflet explains a new way of everyone working together. It puts your family at the heart of deciding what help your child needs and what action should be taken to get the right support.

What is the Common Assessment Framework?

The Common Assessment Framework (or CAF) is a new way of working with children and young people. It involves listening to you and your child to find out more about your child's needs, and what is working well in his or her life.

An action plan, agreed with you and your child, can then be put in place to make sure the right sort of help is provided.

The CAF is voluntary – you and your child can choose whether or not you want a Common Assessment to take place.

How will the CAF help my family?

The CAF can help when there are problems which cannot be quickly and easily sorted out by you and those who already work with your child.

The CAF will make sure that everyone involved with your child – such as early years workers, teachers, health visitors and youth workers – works together.

The CAF can help your child receive the right support as early as possible. As the CAF can be shared with other services, you and your child should not have to repeat the same story to different workers.

When is the CAF used?

The CAF can be used if you or someone who works with your child would like him or her to receive extra support. It will help to find out more about your child's additional needs, and which other workers or services could be called upon to support your family. A CAF could be helpful in lots of situations, such as:

- when a child is having behaviour problems at nursery or school but the action taken has not led to improvements;
- when a child has become withdrawn but nobody is sure about the reason for this;
- when a number of different problems are affecting your child at the same time;
- when you feel that other things that are out of your control are affecting your child.

How does it work?

If you and your child agree to an assessment, a worker you already know will meet with you to ask some questions. This is to find out what help and support your child might need.

This information is recorded on a simple form. You and your child will agree what is put on the form and you will be given a copy of it.

Older children may feel able to talk about their situation on their own with the worker. A young person's wish to keep information confidential from parents may be respected by the worker, where this is in the young person's best interests and welfare.

Confidentiality

As a rule the information which you and your child provide will only be shared with others if you clearly agree that this should happen. You could also insist that the information is only shared with particular services.

However, there may be certain times when the people working with you must share information.

For example:

- when they need to find out urgently if a child is at risk of harm;
- to help a child who is at risk of harm;
- when an adult is at risk of harm; or
- to help prevent or detect a serious crime.