

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 13th November 2008

**SHARED PROCESSES, COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF)
AND LEAD PROFESSIONALS IN WILTSHIRE**

Purpose of the Report

To provide an overview of shared processes in Wiltshire and to specifically update progress on the implementation of CAF.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Government has identified three inter dependent elements of the Every Child Matters Change for children programme.

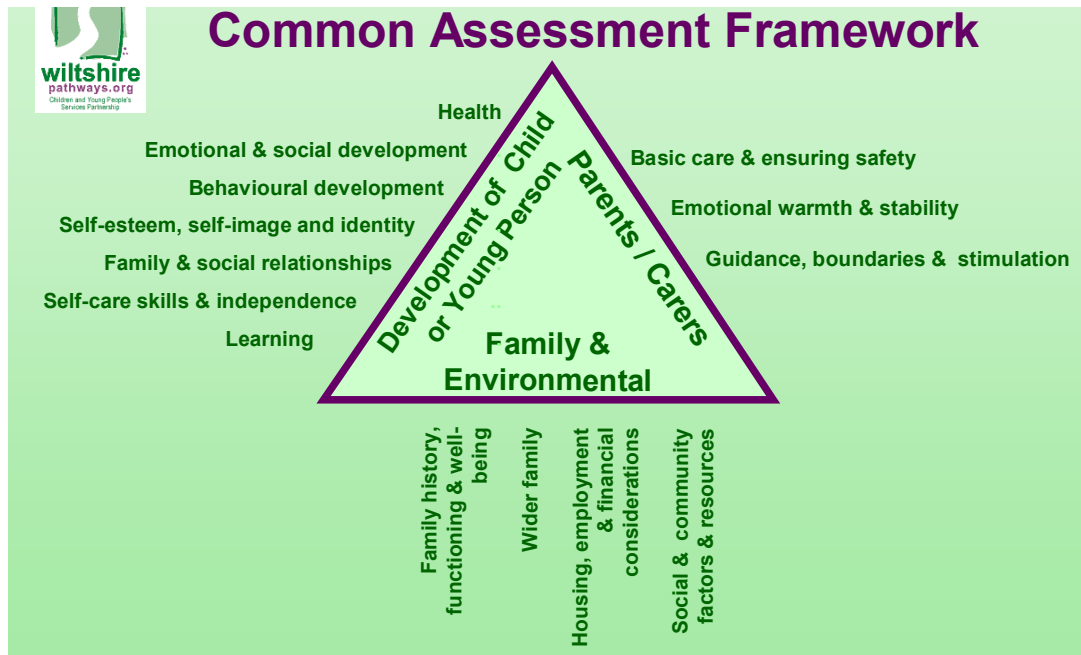
They are:

- i) The Common Assessment Framework for children and young people (CAF).
- ii) The Lead Professional
- iii) Information Sharing.

- 1.2 It is the responsibility of Local Authorities to implement these key tasks which aim to provide effective, integrated working with children, young people and families.

2 Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- 2.1 The Common Assessment Framework is a standard national assessment framework for use by all children & young people's services, using a prescribed standard form. It does not replace any existing assessments. The framework provides a series of headings ("assessment factors") which act as a checklist to ensure that all aspects of a child or young person's needs are considered. Diagrammatically, this can be represented as a triangle:



2.2 Completion of a CAF assessment, which can only be undertaken with the agreement of the parents and/or young person, involves collating information from a range of sources – the child or young person, the family and services to which the child or young person is known. The aim is to identify unmet need and then to set out an action plan for meeting that need. The nature of action required will depend on the severity and complexity of need. Three levels of severity of additional need are recognised briefly described as follows:

- **Level 2** - children & families needing some additional help
- **Level 3** – children & families needing intensive help (e.g. from Social Care)
- **Level 4** – children & young people at risk of having to live away from their families e.g. Child Protection
(Level 1 is “Universal” – i.e. no additional needs)

2.3 In this instance, “complexity” is being used to refer to the number of different services/agencies that are required to respond to the need. There is a relationship between “complexity” (used in this sense) and severity, but even children and young people at level 2 may require quite a complex array of different services. Co-ordination of delivery of these different services is the key to (a) a better experience for the child and their family and (b), the provision of help that is both more effective and more economical (avoiding wasteful duplication).

2.4 The required co-ordination may be achieved through the CAF Action Plan but a Lead Professional may be required in order to achieve it.

3. Lead Professional

3.1 The responsibilities of the Lead Professional are:

- To hold a copy of a completed CAF form for the child or young person, including an up-to-date Action Plan
- To help co-ordinate the provision of services in accordance with the Action Plan
- To contribute to those services as appropriate
- To act as a point of contact for the family and for other professionals involved with the family
- To monitor for any changes in the child's needs, review and update the Action Plan and provide or refer for additional services if required.

3.2 The best person to act as Lead Professional will be the person with the necessary skills, who is familiar with the needs of the child or young person and who has a good relationship with them and their family. The workers most likely to undertake the role of Lead Professional at level 2 are:

- Midwives
- Early Years
- Children's Centres
- Health Visitors
- School Nurses
- Primary school staff:
 - SENCO
 - Head Teacher
 - specialist TAs
- Secondary school staff
 - SENCO
 - specialist TAs
 - pastoral staff
- Education Welfare Officers
- (Connexions) Personal Advisers
- Youth development workers
- College staff

4 Contact Point

4.1 Contact Point (previously known by the working title of the 'Information Sharing Index') will hold the name of every child and young person in England and will provide a quick way for those working with children and

young people to find out who else is working with the same child or young person.

- 4.2 It will be available to authorised practitioners who need it to do their jobs. Contact Point will 'go live' in Wiltshire in July 2009 but will not be fully operational for at least a year after this date.

5 Process for delivering Shared Processes

- 5.1 In Wiltshire there has been considerable activity to support the implementation of the CAF. We recognise the need to build upon progress made to date to ensure that the CAF is firmly embedded and that in turn outcomes for children & young people are improved.
- 5.2 To assist with the major task of implementing the CAF across the County four Information Sharing and Assessment Co-ordinators (ISAC's) have been appointed to support agencies with completing CAF's. A senior ISAC has been recruited to manage the team.
- 5.3 The Shared Processes Board is the accountable forum for overseeing activity in relation to Shared Processes in Wiltshire. It meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by Jimmy Doyle, Service Director Children & Families. The Board has multi agency representation from Health, Education, Voluntary Organisations and Social Care. Its purpose is to oversee the implementation of CAF, Lead Professional and Contact Point.
- 5.4 The operational vehicle for moving the agenda forward is the Shared Processes Implementation Plan. This plan has been updated post JAR. The updated implementation plan will be presented to the Board on 26th November 2008 for adoption.
- 5.5 Key areas identified in the plan for development include:
- Reviewing the definition & clarifying expectations of the use of the CAF in Wiltshire in light of the most recent CAF guidance.
 - Reviewing the Terms of Reference and structure of the Shared Processes Task Group.
 - Reviewing the role of the Information Sharing Assessment Co-ordinator (ISAC) to incorporate the need for more hands-on support for stakeholders including chairing multi-agency meetings as appropriate.
 - Re-stating the importance of the CAF, with a major emphasis on the benefits for the child & expectations to all key stakeholders and in particular to schools.

- Providing clarity around the structure and processes which support the CAF and Lead Professional including developing a protocol for managing CAF meetings.
- Developing regular performance management information to enable CAF activity to be monitored which will contribute to the commissioning of services for children & young people in Wiltshire.

5.6 To date there are 121 CAF's registered on the Wiltshire CAF register. The register has been operating since March 08. The majority (53%) have been completed in the West of the County largely driven by a well developed CAF network. Work is being undertaken to build upon existing networks across the county to encourage the CAF to become an embedded assessment tool.

6. **Anonymous case examples**

Attached in Appendix 1 are two anonymised case examples which demonstrate how undertaking a CAF has improved the outcomes for children in Wiltshire.

7. **Recommendation**

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress made in respect of implementing CAF and the actions to ensure that the CAF is firmly embedded across Wiltshire.

Family Support Worker; CAF Case Study

Mary aged 5 together with her 3 year old sister and parents attended the Children's Centre. Having attended a few sessions, staff became aware that Mary's parents were experiencing some mental health problems and this in turn was affecting Mary's behaviour at the centre. The Family Support worker discussed with the family about completing a CAF and emphasised that it was an assessment to identify any needs Mary might have as a result of the family's situation.

Mary's parents were keen to undertake the CAF as they realised it would take into account the whole family and highlight the support that they might need. The Family Support Worker reported that, although the assessment seemed quite daunting, the whole family found the CAF a very positive experience. Mary was able to contribute to the CAF by writing on the form and drawing a picture to show how she was feeling. The action plan from the CAF identified that Mary's needs could be met through the services offered by the Children's Centre. The family continued to receive support from the Family Support Worker and a referral was made to the Young Carers for Mary to access some respite care.

Head teacher and SENCO CAF Case Study

Daniel was 7 years old and school staff had become increasingly concerned, across the board with his learning, deterioration in behaviour and emotional stability. Daniel had taken to curling into a foetal position whilst in school. The Head and SENCO decided to complete a CAF and discussed this with Daniel's parents to get a better idea of the underlying issues that were affecting Daniel's behaviour.

As a result of the CAF support was sought from the Paediatrician and School Nurse, Educational Psychologist and NCH. The Paediatrician organised a Cognitive Emotional Assessment and together with the School Nurse have organised to meet with Daniel every fortnight on a one to one basis. Daniel is on the waiting list with NCH to start sand therapy. He also has a personalised learning programme in school as a result of the CAF.

The Paediatrician reported that the CAF was very useful to have all the professionals working together as although they would have probably made the same decisions independently the process would have taken a lot longer. The school and family reported that they are very happy with the assessment and ongoing action plan.