

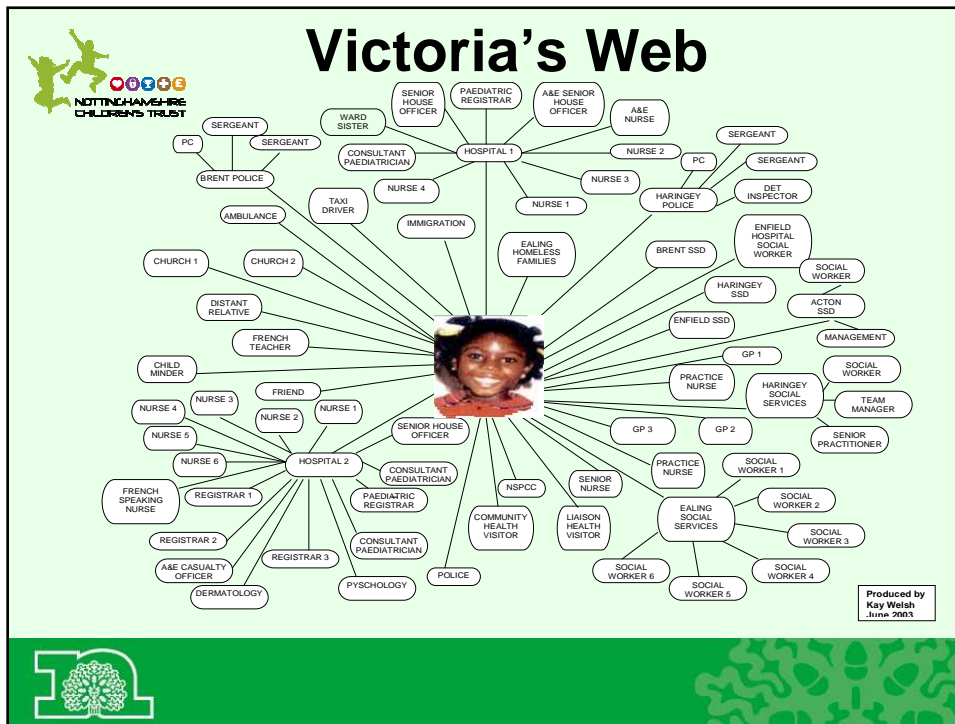
COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK BRIEFING NOTES

This briefing session should take approximately 30 minutes to deliver. You may wish to spend a greater length of time on the discussion sections.

The aim of the session is to provide participants with an overview of integrated working, the principles of the CAF and the process in Nottinghamshire. It does not focus on how to complete an assessment. This is addressed in the half day CAF training session.

Resources

- CAF Form
- Appendix A
- Pathway to Provision Document
- CAF Handbook (optional)
- Child friendly resources (optional)



Approximately 70 professionals came into contact with Victoria Climbié during the 10 months she was in the country. She was known to two housing authorities, four Social Services Departments, two Child Protection Units within the Police, an NSPCC run Family Centre and two hospitals. While Victoria wasn't hidden away, practitioners failed to identify the horrific circumstances in which Victoria was living. Her great aunt and her great aunts partner subject her to significant harm and neglect, ultimately resulting in her death. This included scalding her with boiling water, forcing her to live in the bath in a bin liner and failing to feed her appropriately. Victoria tragically died of malnutrition. The post mortem recorded 128 separate injuries to her body. During the inquiry into Victoria's death, Lord Laming identified a number of opportunities in which practitioners could have intervened to potentially save her life. It also became clear that practitioners did not speak to Victoria herself to find out information. There were many services involved, each carrying out their own individual assessments, all presuming that somebody else was doing something about the situation.

As a result of this inquiry, Lord Laming made a number of recommendations to improve the way in which practitioners work together and share information about children and young people, particularly focussing on early intervention.

The 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes were introduced to ensure that all five elements were considered when identifying the needs of a child or young person:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Economic Well-being



Duties placed by the Children Act 2004

Section 10 & 11

Co-operation to improve well-being and to safeguard and promote welfare

Each children's services authority in England must make arrangements to promote co-operation between - the authority; each of the authority's relevant partners; and such other persons or bodies as the authority consider appropriate.



Duties Placed by the Children Act 2004

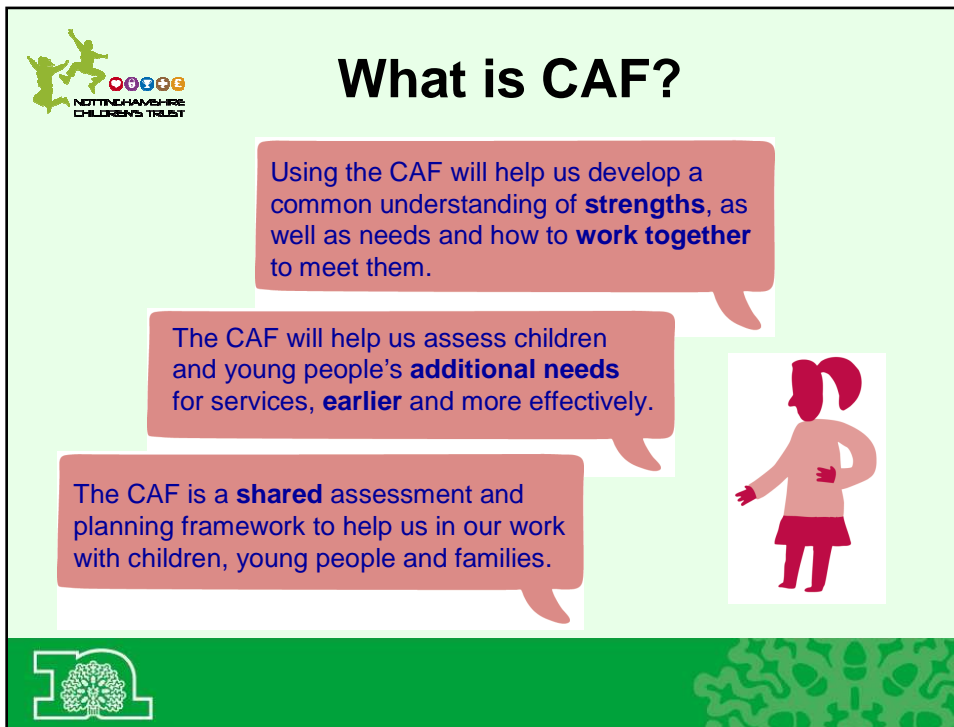
Section 10

A duty has been placed on each children's services authority in England to make arrangements to promote co-operation between:

- The authority
- Each of the authority's relevant partners
- Other persons or bodies as the authority consider appropriate.

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 describes the duty to ensure **cooperation** between agencies to **improve the well being of children and young people** where well being is described by the 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes

Section 11 states that all agencies have a duty to **co-operate to improve the welfare** of children (**the CAF fulfils this responsibility**).

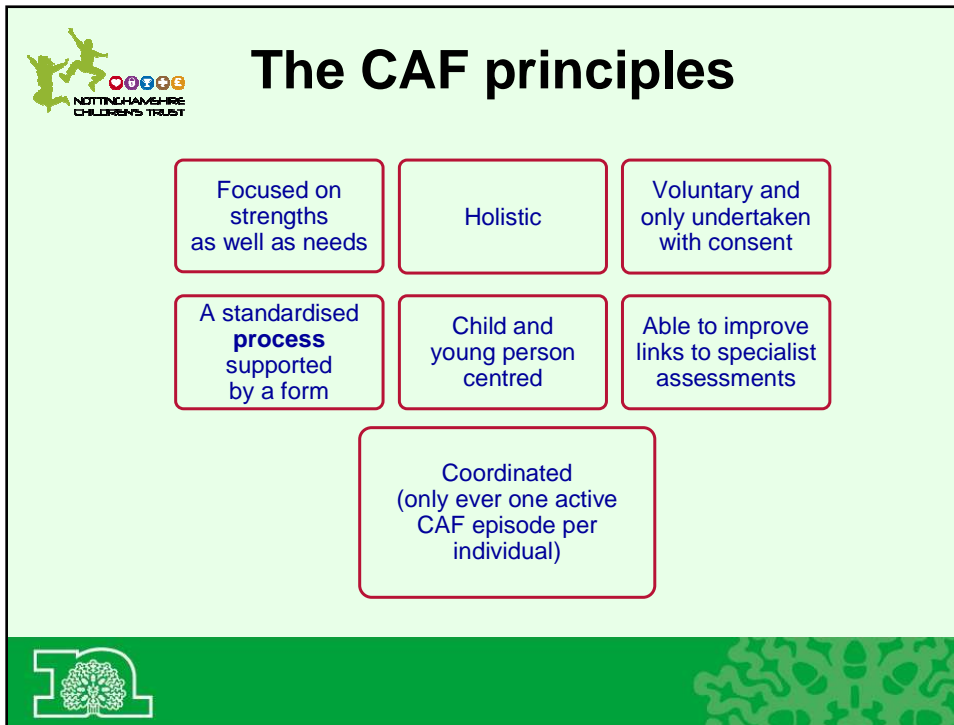


The Common Assessment Framework is an assessment tool that can be used by all practitioners working with children and young people from pre-birth to age 19.

It has been designed to gather information about their strengths as well as needs. The CAF aims to build a single shared picture of what is working well in a child/young person's life and where some support might be helpful.

Additional needs are those that are not addressed by the universal services that all children have access to. It is important that we begin to identify these needs earlier, shifting the focus from dealing with the consequences of difficulties in children and young people's lives to preventing things from going wrong in the first place. Early intervention means that resources are put into identifying needs as early as possible.

The CAF both encourages and enables practitioners to work together more effectively in a more integrated way. CAF is a common process, supported by a common form to record information. This includes discussions with the child/young person and their family as well as information and observations from relevant practitioners and services. This single shared picture is then used to plan a way forward. This improves communication, encourages the development of common language and supports information sharing.



Child and young person centred – The CAF is completed in partnership with the child/young person/family at all stages. They should be kept at the centre of the process and provided with a copy of the completed assessment.

A holistic assessment – The CAF considers all areas of a child/young person’s life. Practitioners must look beyond immediate presenting issues and explore areas fully to ensure needs are identified.


Focused on strengths as well as needs – The CAF creates a balanced picture of a child or young person’s strengths and needs. The CAF builds up a history of a child/young person’s situation and can be shared with other who may work with them.

Voluntary and can only be undertaken with consent - The child/young person/parent carer must consent to engage in the CAF process. It is important to consider how the CAF is introduced to families. Leaflets for parents and carers are available at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/commonassessmentframework Consent is needed when you wish to share the CAF.

A standardised process supported by a form - Assessment information will only need to be gathered once, with the hope that appropriate support can be offered in a timely manner.


Able to improve links to specialist assessments – Information from the CAF will help inform specialist assessments where appropriate and vice versa.

Coordinated so there is only ever one active CAF episode for an individual child or young person - A child should only ever have one active CAF. There is a system in place to ensure that a child or young person only has one CAF at any given time. This will be explained when we look at the CAF process. A child or young person can have more than one episode at different points in their development/life.



Content of the CAF: Assessment of Strengths and Needs

<p><u>Development of Child</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Emotional and social development • Behavioural development • How the child feels about his or her self • Family and social relationships • Self-care skills and independence • Learning 	<p><u>Parents and Carers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic care, ensuring safety & protection • Emotional warmth & stability • Guidance, boundaries & stimulation
	<p><u>Family and Environmental</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family history, functioning & well-being • Wider family • Housing, employment & financial considerations • Social & community elements and resources, including education



The assessment section of the CAF is split into three sections:

- **The development of the child/young person**

This gives an opportunity to discuss all elements of a child/young person's development including health, behaviour, independence and learning

- **Parents and Carers**

This section considers the dynamics within the family including relationships and boundaries

- **Family and Environmental**

This sections allows a discussion to take place about any wider issues that may be having an impact on the family

Hand out copies of the CAF form and discuss the format of the assessment

- There may be some sections where there aren't any particular issues. Record a strength to state that everything is working well in this area
- You may need to record more information in some sections than in others, just record what you know
- Record information where it seems to fit best, don't worry that it may not be in the correct box
- Appendix A provides guidance and prompts which you may wish to consider when completing the assessment



Joint Access Teams (JATs)

- Joint Access Teams are Nottinghamshire's key mechanism for early intervention and prevention
- 42 JATs covering 45 Families of Schools
- Referral to JATs use the first two pages of the Common Assessment Framework form
- JATs provide an opportunity for a single conversation about a child or young person (aged 0-19) with early intervention or targeted needs
- The core membership of the JATs are made up of practitioners from a range of agencies working within the geographical area of a family of schools

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jointaccessteams



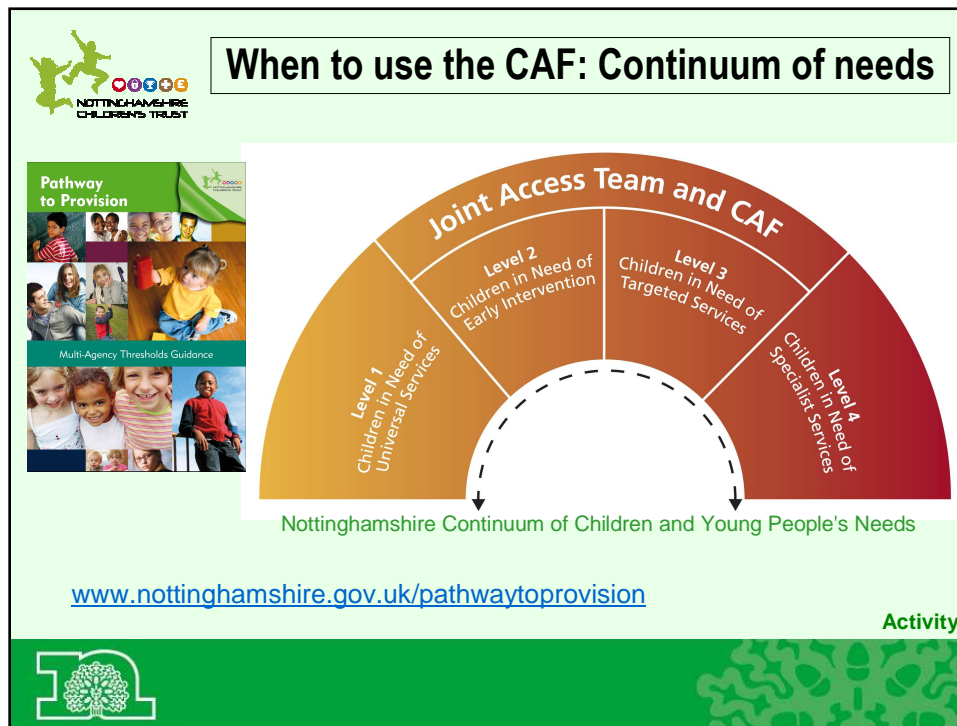
Every family of schools across Nottinghamshire has a Joint Access Team.

Each JAT has a core membership of approximately 15 practitioners. Membership was decided based on the predominant needs within a geographical area of a family of schools e.g. high teenage pregnancy rate, anti-social behaviour, level of need for under 5s etc.

Joint Access Teams meet monthly to discuss children and young people, identifying ways in which needs can be met. Any practitioner can request to discuss a child or young person, the minimum requirement is that the first two pages of the CAF form along with the consent section on page 6 of the CAF form are completed.

You may wish to complete further sections of the CAF in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the child/young person's strengths and needs. Once you have completed the relevant sections of the CAF, this should be submitted to the chair of the JAT (this may be where the child lives, goes to school or accesses services). Meeting dates, times and contact details for the chair can be found at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jointaccessteams. The chair requests that information is submitted a week prior to the meeting date where possible in order for notes to be distributed to other members of the JAT.

Consent is required to discuss the family's needs at the JAT. The worker who completed the CAF will usually attend the meeting to discuss the case. Families are welcome to attend if they would like to sit in the meeting for their discussion.



It was highlighted in the inspection report of Children's Services in 2010, that multi-agency threshold guidance needed to be put in place in order for children and young people to access appropriate services and to ensure practitioners understand the levels of needs and the most appropriate course of action.

Nottinghamshire's Continuum of Children and Young People's Needs identifies four levels of needs that a child/young person may be experiencing.

Level 1 (Universal Services) – A large proportion of children in Nottinghamshire will achieve/develop as expected for their age by accessing universal services such as midwives, health visitors, GP, Schools etc. They do not have any additional needs.

Level 2 (Early Intervention) – Early intervention means that support is provided as soon as needs begin to develop regardless of the child's age. The child may be slow in meeting developmental milestones, at risk of exclusion from school, inconsistent boundaries, may look after younger siblings etc.

Level 3 (Targeted Services) - At level 3 the child/young person's needs are more significant. There may be some concerns around mental health, offending or regular anti-social behaviour, parent struggling to provide adequate care, family is socially isolated etc.

Level 4 (Specialist Services) – Children/young people at level 4 require support from a specialist service. This may include Children's Social Care, the Youth Offending Service, SEN Strategic Services, CAMHS.

Share copies of the Pathway to Provision document
Handbook can be downloaded from www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pathwaytoprovision



Discussion

Consider the children/young people within your setting:

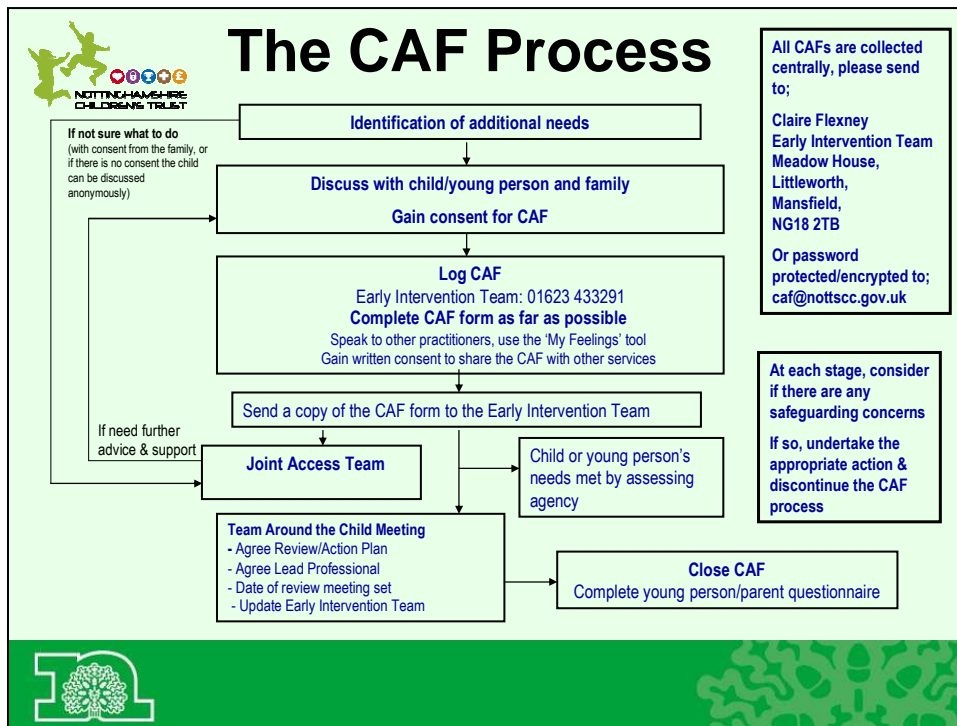
- Discuss their level of need using the Pathway to Provision document
- How effectively are their needs being met using your current processes?



Using the Pathway to Provision document, consider the needs of a child or young person you are working with. Identify the level of the predominant needs. Are their needs being met or do they required additional support?

Could anything further be done to assess/meet the child/young person's needs?

(consider confidentiality if discussing in groups).



Additional needs are identified under the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. It may be useful to speak to a line manager or colleague when deciding to undertake an assessment.

If you would like further advice at this stage it is possible to discuss the child or young person's situation at the Joint Access Team.

Gain verbal consent to start the CAF.

Phone the Integrated Services Team to check if a CAF has already been initiated for the child or young person you are working with. If a CAF is ongoing they will give you the contact details for the lead professional. If there is not a CAF in place for this child, the Integrated Services team will record that you are going to start the CAF.

At this point you will begin to gather information for the CAF assessment, it is important to arrange a time to speak to the child/young person/family to gather their views. With permission you may also contact other workers who have been involved with the family to gain a holistic understanding of the child or young person's strengths and needs.

You will then decide the next course of action. It may be possible to meet the child/young person's needs within your service. If you need further support you can attend the Joint Access Team or you may arrange a Team Around the Child meeting, inviting practitioners who are currently working with or may be able to offer support to the child/young person.

A copy of the CAF form should be sent to the Integrated Services team.



Lead Professional

Vision: All children and young people with additional needs who require support should experience a seamless and effective service in which one practitioner takes a lead role to ensure that services are co-ordinated, coherent and achieving intended outcomes

Core Functions

Act as a single point of contact for the child or family

Co-ordinate the delivery of actions agreed by the practitioners involved

Reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received



The role of the Lead Professional is to ensure that there is a single point of contact for children/young people/families. If they have any questions or would like to speak to somebody they would contact the Lead Professional.

The lead professional is also a central contact for other practitioners working with the child/young person. If a practitioner is unable to attend a TAC meeting, they would let the lead professional know and provide an update.

This will reduce overlap and inconsistency as a number of practitioners will not be carrying out similar tasks and discussions.

All other duties relating to team around the child meetings e.g. chairing, writing an action plan, booking venues etc are a joint responsibility.



What does this mean for you?

Please consider the following:

- What is your role within the CAF process?
- Is the CAF process within your agency clear?
- What further steps do you need to take to be confident in triggering a CAF within your agency?





Further Development

- CAF Training (1/2 day)
- Lead professional Training (2 hours)
- Briefing sessions
- CAF Champions Events
- NSCB training – County Council
- Attend and observe a JAT meeting



To book a place on CAF or Lead Professional training, please contact:

Rachel Radford
01623 433291
rachel.radford@nottscc.gov.uk

For briefing sessions for to enquire about CAF Champions Event, please contact:

Integrated Services Team
01623 433181
caf@nottscc.gov.uk

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board training can be found at:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/learningandwork/caringforchildren/socialcareandhealth/nscb/workingwithchildrenyoungpeopleadultsandfamilies.htm>

If you would like to attend a JAT to gain an understanding of their function, please contact the JAT chair.



Useful Information

Local Links

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/commonassessmentframework
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pathwaytoprovision
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/jointaccesssteams
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb

Families Information Service

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fis
www.parents.info/nottinghamshire
Tel: 0800 781 2168 or 01623 520694 - for people calling from a mobile

National Links

www.education.gov.uk
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/integratedworking
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/sharestreet



All documents and resources relating to CAF can be found on the CAF web page. You can also find training dates and further information about Champion Events.

The Families Information Services Directory is linked to the Pathway to Provision document. This web pager allows you to search for services in your area. Results are linked to the four levels within the Pathway to Provision document.



Contacts

Early Intervention District Managers

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Newark and Sherwood – Liz Lowe - liz.lowe@nottsc.gov.uk
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