

Foreword



The Every Child Matters framework challenges organisations and services to consider outcomes for children and young people and what they can do to improve significantly the quality of life and overall life chances of children, young people and families in Peterborough.

Our vision is to improve life chances and opportunities for all children and young people in Peterborough by applying consistent tools and processes that ensure the earliest possible intervention, better information sharing and improved joint working arrangements.

A key principle is the development of a preventative approach. This seeks to identify children and young people who need extra support to do well and achieve and intervene early to avoid problems escalating. This underpins the transformation of services through our locality and natural alliance approach to delivering children's services.

In this context, we are clear that no one single institution, agency or service can hope to meet all the five Every Child Matters outcomes alone. We need to work together if we are to make the improvements in outcomes for children, young people and families which we know are needed in Peterborough. We have strong, well developed partnership arrangements in Peterborough underpinned by a shared commitment to partnership working and integration of services. This handbook is a key tool in helping us achieve our vision.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "John Richards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

John Richards Executive Director Children's Services

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Introduction

**What is Integrated Working and Integrated Processes?
Roles and Responsibilities of the Workforce
Every Child Matters Outcomes
Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**



Introduction

About this handbook

Welcome to the Peterborough Integrated Working and Common Assessment Framework Handbook for Practitioners.

This handbook has been developed following consultation with children, young people and their families and a range of practitioners across the children's workforce.

The handbook is intended to be an integral part of the toolkit supporting practitioners in Peterborough. It is relevant for everyone who works with children, young people and families, whether they are employed or volunteers, and working in the public, private or voluntary sectors. It is for staff working in health, education, early years and childcare, safeguarding, youth offending, police, YPS/Connexions services, advisory and support services, leisure and so on. It is also for practitioners who work in services for adults, as many of the adults accessing those services are also mothers, fathers or carers.

This handbook contains materials essential to understanding the process of Integrated Working and reflects the step by step guide which can be found in section 7.

This handbook will support you to:

- **Work in partnership with children, young people and their parents, both mothers and fathers, and carers**
- **Obtain the views of children and young people to encourage their meaningful participation in the decisions that impact upon their lives**
- **Intervene early to support children with additional needs to minimise the need for specialist intervention**
- **Contribute to Integrated Working based around universal services such as schools, health provider services, early years settings as well as other services providing services to children and young people across Peterborough**
- **Share relevant information with other practitioners, on a need to know basis, to ensure accurate and effective assessment of need**
- **Assess whether a child or young person has additional needs and involve other practitioners to provide services to meet those needs**
- **Develop inclusive practice which will ensure that every child, particularly those in danger from exclusion i.e. children with disabilities, children with mental health issues, children from BME communities and disaffected young people, are helped to meet all of the Every Child Matters (ECM) five outcomes and fulfill their potential**

What is Integrated Working and Integrated Processes?

Most children and young people will never become involved with the Integrated Working process. Most families are able to meet the needs of their children or young people with support from extended family, community or universal services.

Being a parent, mother, father or carer can be one of the best jobs in the world - but also one of the hardest. Recognising and acknowledging some of the challenges of raising children is important.

Families may need extra support to ensure that children and young people are able to achieve the five outcomes. Some families may need short or long term support from outside their existing network. Different issues may arise at different times and children's difficulties may include development, financial problems, education, health or social issues within the family or community.

Integrated Working is services working together in a coordinated way to support children, young people and families.

The Integrated processes are to support children or young people who may need extra help than is currently being provided by their family and universal services.

This process includes:

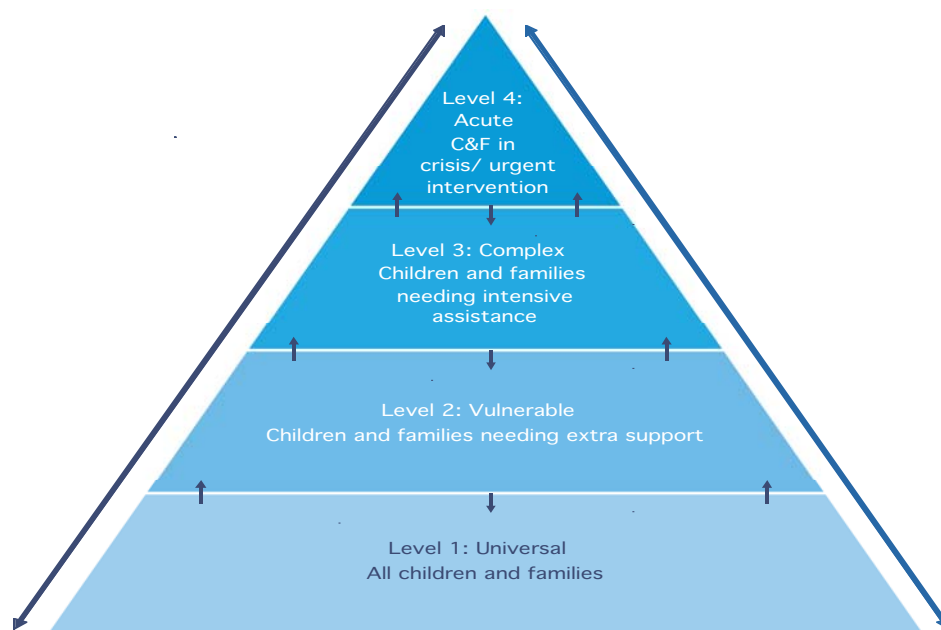
- The pre-assessment checklist
- The Common Assessment Framework
- The Vulnerability Matrix
- The Single Service Referral Form
- The Lead professional
- The Team around the Child
- The Locality Integrated Processes Board
- The Information Sharing Protocol (an I.S flowchart can be found in the appendices at the rear of the handbook)

The Role and Responsibilities of Members of Peterborough Children's Services Workforce

All workers involved with children and their families have a duty to act in the best interest of the child and young person. It is the worker's responsibility to identify and respond to concerns about a child's welfare. The implementation of the Integrated Processes in Peterborough is driven by our vision which reflects the Every Child Matters five outcomes;

“To create an environment where children and young people are safe and healthy, can enjoy what life has to offer and have ambitions and aspirations, where they achieve their goals and make a positive contribution for themselves, their family and their community.”

The implementation of Integrated Processes provides a framework to assess the strengths and challenges facing children and young people before problems escalate to a level which requires intensive (and expensive) interventions. The assessment is based on an understanding that children and young people have different needs. This model identifies four different levels of need.



In Peterborough, we have built on this model to develop a vulnerability matrix (see section 1 for guidance and the appendices for the full document).

Every Child Matters Outcomes

The five outcomes of Every Child Matters gives all agencies a simple and coherent view of what it is they are doing and gives responsibility to everyone for a child's well being. For further information www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

The outcomes we want to achieve for all children and young people in Peterborough are:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Economic wellbeing

Children and families are supported most effectively when services and information sharing are planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, to offer integrated support across the continuum of needs and services.

CAF is a key element of Integrated Working.

Statutory Framework

The handbook is based on recognised good practice and influenced by research and local experience.

Here in Peterborough, we are driven by the vision and ambition, for the concerns and aspirations of children and young people and the Children's Trust priorities for improving the life chances of all children and young people. We are influenced by the ten year Children's Plan, Building Brighter Futures, which sets out government's ambition to make England the best place in the world for children to grow up, and a wide range of legislation and guidance which sets out our statutory responsibilities for the well-being and education of children and young people.

The procedures reflect the guidance issued in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 and significant pieces of legislation including:

- Children Act (1989) and
- Children Act (2004)
- Children Act 2004 Information Data base (England) Regulation 2007
- Education Act (1996, 2002)
- Special Education needs and Disability Act (2001)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2005)
- Human Rights Act (2000)
- Data Protection Act (2003)
- Peterborough Children and Young People's Plan
- Common Assessment Framework
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families (2000)
- The Laming Report
- Learning from Serious Case Reviews

Children and young people should have the best possible start in life and the opportunity to achieve their full potential. By working together we will provide flexible services to communities and children, young people and families.

All children who are considered at risk of significant harm should be referred directly to safeguarding and specialist provision services following the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. See www.pscb.org.uk for more information.

Let us have your views

We are committed to learn from experience and want to hear your views. If you have any suggestions or comments on what we should include then please let us know by contacting helpwithCAF@peterborough.gov.uk. We hope you find this handbook useful.

Section 1

Step 1 Identify Need

What is the Pre-Assessment Checklist?

Decision Making Following the Pre-Assessment Checklist

What is the Vulnerability Matrix?

Single Service Referral Form



What is the Pre-assessment Checklist

It's not always easy to know what to do when you are concerned about a child. You may not be sure what the problem is.

The pre-assessment checklist is a tool for practitioners to help them make a decision about whether or not a full assessment should be undertaken. The Pre-assessment checklist template can be found in section 7 and can be photocopied.

Alternatively you can access an electronic version from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00004/

The checklist asks you to consider the ECM five outcomes and answer the questions below. This is intended to be a guide and should not be seen as definitive.

Does the unborn baby, infant, child or young person appear to be healthy?

Children and young people should be physically healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy, sexually healthy, live healthy lifestyles and choose not to take illegal drugs.

Does the unborn baby, infant, child or young person appear to be safe from harm?

Staying safe means that babies, children and young people are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation.

They should be safe from accidental injury and death, safe from bullying and discrimination, safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, have security and stability and be cared for.

This also means helping parents, mothers, fathers and carers to provide safe and stable homes to support learning and to develop independent living skills for children.

Does the unborn baby, infant, child or young person appear to be learning and developing?

This means that young children are ready for school, school-age children attend and enjoy school and children achieve national educational standards at primary school.

Young people should develop personally and socially, enjoy recreation and achieve national educational standards at secondary school.

It also means that parents, mothers, fathers and carers support learning.

Does the unborn baby, infant, child or young person appear to be having a positive impact on others?

Making a positive contribution includes children and young people engaging in decision making, supporting the community and environment, engaging in law abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, developing positive relationships and choosing not to bully or discriminate.

They should develop self-confidence, deal successfully with significant life changes and challenges and develop enterprising behaviour.

It also means that mothers, fathers, carers and families promote positive behaviour

Does the unborn baby, infant, child or young person appear to be free from the negative impact of poverty?

Achieving economic well being means that young people engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school.

Young people should be ready for employment.

Children and young people should live in decent homes and sustainable communities and have access to transport and material goods.

Children and young people should live in households free from low income. This also means that mothers, fathers, carers and families are helped to be economically active.

If the answer is 'no' to any of the areas in the pre assessment checklist you should then consider undertaking a CAF and identify the relevant practitioner who will undertake that assessment.

If a child's progress is satisfactory in the 5 outcomes or needs have already been identified and are being met, a CAF would not be necessary.

When the child's needs are clear and can be met by the family or a single agency a CAF would not be necessary.

Decision making following the Pre-Assessment Checklist

Having completed the Pre-Assessment Checklist, you are faced with three choices.

Option 1

A more thorough assessment is required leading you to complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

If you have made this decision, you should contact the parents/young person and say why you have come to that decision and seek their consent for undertaking a full CAF. Once you have agreement, you should contact the Integrated Processes line (see contact details in section 6) and register to get the unique reference number for the CAF.

Option 2

The second option is that there is a specific need which can be met by one service.

In these cases, you should seek agreement from the family/young person and refer to the single service using the Single Service Referral Form (SSRF) (see section 7 for full guidance).

Option 3

The third option is that there is no need to take further action at this time.

In these cases, it is advisable to keep the child/young person under review using your own organisation's processes.

What is the Vulnerability Matrix

The Vulnerability Matrix can be used to identify when a child may be at risk of poor outcomes such as truancy, bullying, exclusion, substance misuse, early antisocial behaviour, teenage pregnancy and mental health problems. The matrix helps practitioners communicate using a common language and understanding of different levels of need.

It is to help practitioners work with families who access universal services by assisting them in identifying when a child may have additional needs: this means they are unlikely to meet the 5 outcomes without additional support or intervention.

Using the Vulnerability Matrix

The Vulnerability Matrix gives specific examples of indicators of need based on the three dimensions of the Common Assessment Framework: the child's development; the capacity of parents and carers and family and environmental factors.

The indicators are not an exhaustive list of all likely or possible concerns, and are purely indicative. They are not a substitute for assessment and judgement of practitioners who will need to consider the combination of many factors. Children and young people may have different levels of need at the same time. In addition children's needs change overtime.

Children at Risk of Significant Harm

Peterborough's Specialist Services focuses on providing services to children and young people whose situation falls in level 4 of the 'triangle of need' and children and young people who have a combination of needs falling into level 3. The matrix can be used to identify criteria that trigger initial and core assessments by Children's Social Care. This can lead to longer term allocation either via a child protection or a child in need plan.

Professionals are reminded that they need to use their professional judgement when using these criteria and if in doubt to consult with a designated senior officer/manager to decide what action to take.

Where an assessment under the CAF has been completed, this should provide the basis for referrals and information sharing between agencies. However, where practitioners have concerns about significant harm during the course of a common assessment they need not complete their assessment before contacting Children's Specialist Services as any delay could be potentially damaging for the child or young person.

Single Service Referral Form

The Single Service Referral Form (SSRF) should be used to make a referral to a specific service.

The SSRF should not be used if:

- It is a Child Protection concern when the safeguarding policies of the Safeguarding Board should be followed
- Needs have already been identified and are being met
- A child/young person's needs are not clear or which agency has the lead responsibility (use Common Assessment Framework - CAF)
- The help of two or more services is needed (also use CAF)

The guidance for completing the SSRF can be found in section 7 at the rear of this handbook.

All children who are considered at risk of significant harm should be referred directly to safeguarding and specialist provision services following the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. See www.pscb.org.uk for more information.

Section 2

Step 2 Assess Need

What is the Common Assessment Framework?

When to do a Common Assessment

When Not to do a Common Assessment

Working with a Common Assessment
Completed by Another Practitioner

Completing a Common Assessment

The Common Assessment
Domains

Decision Making Following the CAF

CAF Dos and Don'ts



What is the Common Assessment Framework?

The CAF is an assessment tool for use across all children's services for children and young people with additional needs. It will help early identification of need, promote coordinated service provision and reduce the number of children and young people being referred for specialist or targeted assessments.

The CAF will be utilised in a wide range of settings and circumstances. It provides agencies with the same standard baseline assessment from which more specialist assessments can be developed. Where such specialist assessments are required, however, the availability of the CAF will support this work by providing good quality background information.

Every practitioner working with children, young people and families should understand the 5 outcomes for all children and know about the CAF.

Every organisation offering services to children should ensure that their team are equipped to complete Common Assessments.

Why complete the CAF

The purpose of completing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is to identify any additional unmet needs of vulnerable children and young people. The CAF helps practitioners assess the needs of children and young people consistently and to coordinate the support required from partner agencies into one plan, with a Lead Professional as the single point of contact between the family and those providing the support.

The processes in each agency for gathering information, planning and providing the appropriate support to meet the needs of an individual family are integrated into one process.

The completion of the Common Assessment will ensure information follows the child between services, so that each agency builds on the current assessment to reduce duplication and reduce the potential for a child to 'fall through the net'.

When to do a Common Assessment

Having completed a Pre-Assessment Checklist and if you believe a child will not progress towards the five Every Child Matters outcomes without additional services you should look at carrying out a Common Assessment. The Peterborough Integrated Processes Flowchart (found in the section 7) will help to guide you through this decision making.

The CAF is an important tool for early intervention and is designed for use:

- when a routine post-natal visit causes the practitioner to be concerned about the living circumstances of a newborn;
- when a practitioner believes a child may have additional needs and wants to understand better what they are and what the appropriate response is.
- when a practitioner is considering a referral to another service (e.g. to local authority children's social services, Child & Adolescent Mental Health services or a youth service);
- to provide more holistic information to augment decision-making at School Action or School Action Plus in cases where needs are not such as to require a statutory SEN assessment;
- as the basis for integrated case-working within multi-agency teams or targeted support in universal services, e.g. within extended schools or children's centres and other early years settings;
- to identify Lead Professionals and help them to build up and maintain an overview of needs and strengths;
- when a child is displaying aggressive behaviour, e.g. in relation to bullying, truancy, withdrawal or other behavioural and emotional issues;
- when a child is exhibiting problematic or anti-social behaviour and where the underlying cause may be hidden (e.g. substance abuse/misuse);
- when a child appears to have additional needs, but is unlikely to be eligible for support under existing threshold criteria for specialist services e.g. local authority children's social services or a statement of SEN.
- as an exit strategy from specialist involvement

The list above is not meant to be exhaustive. Also, the presence of one or more of these elements does not in itself mean that the child has additional needs – each child should be considered on its own merits.

When not to do a Common Assessment

A Common Assessment should not be completed if the child and/or their parent/carer does not want one. It is good practice however to ensure that you remain in contact with a family where consent has been refused and their circumstances are regularly reviewed as long as the initial concerns remain in place. This means that all agencies must ensure that they have systems in place for logging all contacts with families. Managers especially must ensure that through their regular supervision of staff all cases where there are concerns are reviewed and discussed.

There is no need to do a Common Assessment for every child you work with. Children who are progressing well, or have needs that have already been identified, do not need one.

You do not need to do a Common Assessment where it is clear that there is a single service response required, or you have already assessed them using your agency's assessment tool, and your service can meet the full range of those needs.

The Common Assessment is not for when you are concerned that a child may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm. In those circumstances you must follow the Child Protection procedures.

If you are worried that a child may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm, you should follow established Child Protection procedures without delay. You should not stop to do a Common Assessment. See **www.pscb.org.uk** for more information.

Working with a Common Assessment Completed by another Practitioner

1. If you work in a targeted service, such as a children's social care team, you may receive a Common Assessment as part of the referral process or you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the assessment with other practitioners.

In these cases, you should discuss the Common Assessment with the practitioner who completed it. Discussing the child with the assessing practitioner will enable you to pool your knowledge and expertise and reach a shared, better informed view of the child's needs. If you are responsible for undertaking specialist assessments, you should use the Common Assessment to inform your own specialist assessment. This should save the child/parent repeating themselves unnecessarily, help you be better informed and make the best use of your time. However, it will be important to check that the information is accurate and up to date.

2. After you have completed a pre-assessment and you have been informed that a CAF has already been undertaken you should make contact with the Lead Professional to pass on your concerns.

Completing a Common Assessment

Planning

This step involves talking with the child or young person and, as appropriate, their family, and discussing the assessment with them. You will need to make sure they understand what information you are recording and what is going to happen to it.

You should discuss your concerns with the child and/or their parent before deciding on a Common Assessment, you might also use the pre-assessment checklist.

Always check whether a Common Assessment exists before proceeding by contacting the Integrated Processes Team. You should talk to others involved with the child and if you are still unsure you should discuss the case with your line manager or the CAF Coordinator.

You should consider the child or young person within the context of their family relationships and their community, including their cultural and religious context, and their place within their own family.

It will help to use plain, jargon-free language which is appropriate to the age and culture of each person, explaining any unavoidable technical and professional terms.

Remember the discussion does not have to be highly formal or presented as a 'big event'. You will want to use a method and style that suits you, the child/parent and the situation. Apart from a prenatal assessment, it is not possible to do a Common Assessment without seeing or involving the child.

There is a template which you can photocopy in section 7. Alternatively you can access an electronic template of the CAF form from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice

When preparing to undertake a Common Assessment you should consider, if a child has a disability, whether there are any special communications requirements, such as signing, or access requirements.

The key points to remember about your discussion are:

- **it is collaborative – you are working with the family to find solutions – they will often know better than you**
- **you should consider the child or young person's strengths as well as needs and these should be recorded (please see the Protective and Resilience Factors in section 7)**
- **you should make use of information you have already gathered from the child or young person, mothers, fathers and carers or other practitioners so they don't have to repeat themselves**
- **if the child and/or their parent don't want to participate, you can't force them – it is a voluntary assessment**
- **if you are worried about a child's welfare or safety or your own safety, act accordingly. If you're not sure, seek immediate advice from your Line Manager or the CAF Coordinator**

Gaining Consent

The Common Assessment (CAF) and Integrated Working process is a voluntary agreement between the child, family and agencies. In order to carry out a Common Assessment, develop a plan of action and utilise the supporting tools, consent must be obtained from the child/young person and/or family.

Consent must be gained from the child, young person or family to:

- **Carry out a Common Assessment. Consent is recorded by the child/young person/family signature on a completed assessment**
- **Share information with additional agencies that were not agreed to and recorded in the initial Common Assessment. This is recorded as an update to the original Common Assessment and held in the child's records**

A young person aged 16 or over, or a child under 16 who has the capacity to understand and make their own decisions, may give (or refuse) consent for the assessment to take place. You should always encourage children under 16 to involve their mother, father or carer as appropriate.

If consent to share information or complete an assessment is withheld, services should still be offered/ provided to the family where appropriate; however, you will be unable to share information about your work with the family with other agencies unless the family agrees for this to happen.

Gaining informed consent for the CAF supports families and practitioner in being clear about what information is shared and who it is shared with.

It is good practice however to ensure that you remain in contact with a family where consent has been refused and their circumstances are regularly reviewed as long as the initial concerns remain in place. This means that all agencies must ensure that they have systems in place for logging all contacts with families. Managers especially must ensure that through their regular supervision of staff all cases where there are concerns are reviewed and discussed.

Where consent is withheld, it is the role of the practitioner to explain the CAF process in a way that enables the family to understand the benefits of sharing information and working in partnership with other agencies. The person carrying out the CAF should be able to explain that sharing of information with other agencies and practitioners will enable services to work more effectively together to support the child/ young person.

The Common Assessment Domains

Explain the purpose of the assessment

Explain why you are recording information and what will happen to it. Make sure the child/family understands who else will see their information.

Make sure they understand that the CAF is a process to help them access services.

Check they fully understand and consent to what is proposed. You should always encourage children under 16 to involve their parent as appropriate.

Do not assume that children with a disability or learning disabilities are not capable of understanding.

Page 1 – Identifying details

Complete page 1 of basic details about the child.

Page 2 - Assessment information

- It may be helpful to include the relationship to the child of any person listed in the section 'People present at assessment'.
- If you have consulted other services before completing the assessment you may want to add this information to the free-text box 'What has led to this child being assessed?'
Remember to reference the source of the information you record.

Page 2 - Details of parents/carers

- Complete details of the parents/carers and use the check boxes to indicate whether they have parental responsibility for the child.

Page 2 - Current family and home situation

- This is a free text section which you can use to record the child's family and home situation (e.g. who they do and don't live with – mothers, fathers, siblings and other significant adults).
- You may also wish to include addresses and contact numbers, where appropriate.

Page 3 – Details of person(s) undertaking assessment

- Complete the details of the person conducting the assessment and, if appropriate, the lead professional.

Page 3 - Services working with this infant, child or young person

- Complete details of the universal services working with the child.
- Also complete the details of other services working with the child that are relevant to the assessment.

Pages 4, 5 and 6 - CAF assessment summary: strengths and needs

Go through the main assessment areas. You should consider each of the three broad groups separately:

- development of child: how well a child is developing, including their health and progress in learning;
- parents and carers: how well parents are able to support their child's development and respond appropriately to any needs;
- family and environmental: the impact of wider family and environmental elements on the child's development and on the capacity of their parents.

Page 7, 8 and 9 - Conclusions, solutions and actions

- With the child and/or parent, record your overall analysis including aims, conclusions with evidence behind them (including strengths and needs), changes needed and how this will happen.
- Agree what you say with the child and/or parent and record any major differences of opinion. Identify solutions and actions.
- Try to focus on what the child and family can do for themselves.
- If they need more support, think about where they could find it; if it is appropriate to your role, see if you can provide it.
- Or see if targeted support is provided within your service.
- If the child and family would benefit from support from other agencies, use the Peterborough Service Directory to see what is on offer, and try to broker this support.
- Do not make any promises of support on behalf of other services.
- Agree who will do what and when you will review progress.
- Record the child or parent's consent to record and share the assessment information with other agencies.
- Make sure they understand what is proposed.
- Use your own professional judgement to define what should be recorded and who should see it.
- Give a copy of the assessment to the child or family and explain that they can show it to other services if they wish to, so they don't have to keep repeating their experiences.

To note: To accompany the CAF form there are some example questions in Section 7

Timescales

It is expected that the process from the issuing of a CAF number to the completion of the CAF should be completed within 4 weeks. If it appears that this process will take longer than this, please inform the CAF line.

Decision making following the CAF

Having completed a Common Assessment you will be faced with the following options:

Option 1

You have decided that there is no need to take further action at this time. In these cases, it is advisable to keep the child/young person under review using your own organisation's processes. It is good practice to share your concerns with the parent and young person.

Option 2

You decide that there is a need for additional support and you are able to provide that from your own service. In these cases, you plan further support in consultation with the parent/young person.

Option 3

Your assessment highlights that there is one specific need which can be met by one service.

In this case, you seek agreement from the family/young person and refer to the single service using the Single Service Referral Form (see section 7 for further guidance).

Option 4

Your assessment shows that there are further interventions required from a range of agencies and there is a need to convene a Team Around the Child to respond to the needs identified. At this stage, you need to go to Section 3

As of January 2010 a copy must also be downloaded securely on the Learning Platform for quality assurance and monitoring purposes. Please go to www.klp.rm.com and visit the Children's Services, IP and CAF section for more information. This is subject to review and the implementation of the eCAF.

The process of undertaking a Common Assessment should not prevent services being provided as required. However since resources to pay for services are finite, Common Assessment cannot offer a guarantee that services will be delivered. However, it should increase considerably the likelihood that services will be delivered, because decisions will be backed up by evidence and more referrals will be directed to the right place.

If you are concerned that your service or another service is not responding to the needs identified, take the matter up through your manager or CAF Coordinator.

The completed Common Assessment record remains the responsibility of the originating agency to retain in accordance with each agency's own record keeping procedures.

A copy of the completed Common Assessment should be given to the parents of the child/young person and the child/young person themselves, taking into account their age and understanding.

Consent must be obtained to share the common assessment record with other practitioners and agencies as appropriate except where it is referred to Safeguarding Services on the grounds that the child is at immediate risk of significant harm.

The Common Assessment is not for those circumstances when you are concerned that a child may have been harmed or may be at risk of harm. In those circumstances you must follow the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

See www.pscb.org.uk for more information.

CAF Do's and Don'ts

- You should explore areas around your immediate concern, so as to look behind the presenting issues and come up with a holistic view.
- You are not expected to diagnose problems in a professional field other than your own. But you must consider the whole child, not just your own service focus.
- You should focus on areas of strength in the family, not just needs.
- The discussion should be supportive and non-threatening.
- Don't be put off by the language in which some of the elements are expressed. These terms are used in existing assessment frameworks.
- Wherever possible, you should base the discussion and your comments on evidence, not opinion.
- Opinions should be recorded and marked accordingly (for example 'Michael said he thinks his dad is an alcoholic').
- Evidence would be what you have seen, what the child has said and what the family members have said.
- In recording information on the form you should be mindful of how the information will be used and who will see it.
- You should include what is relevant to your assessment but you should not include confidential information (e.g. from health records) unless it is directly relevant and the child/parent explicitly agrees that you should.

You should not just use CAF as a means of referral and then 'sign off'

Where there is nothing further you or your service can do or there are needs identified you cannot meet, you may need to engage the support or advice of a more specialist service or practitioner, or several services. Share your Common Assessment with them (agencies will expect a request for services to be supported by a CAF form) but remember to get consent to share.

Section 3

Step 3 Plan and Deliver Services

What is the Team Around the Child (TAC)?

Arranging a TAC



What is the Team Around the Child (TAC)?

A Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting is convened whenever a Common Assessment identifies that the child has needs requiring the support of more than one agency or service. The CAF Coordinator and/or the Peterborough Service Directory will assist you in identifying the appropriate support.

The Team Around the Child (TAC) operates as a supportive team. In this way there is direct benefit to parents who have new opportunities to discuss their child and family with key practitioners all in one place and to practitioners who might otherwise feel isolated and unsupported in their work with the child and family.

Team Around the Child meetings should include:

- **The mother, father and/or other significant carer;**
- **The child/young person, subject to their age and understanding;**
- **Any agency or service which provides a targeted service to meet tier 2 and above, which has been involved with the family over the previous 12 months;**
- **Any relevant agency which may be required to undertake a specialist or targeted assessment;**
- **Any relevant agency which may be required to deliver support;**
- **Any person currently actively involved with the child /young person and family.**

The TAC meeting will be chaired and recorded by the convening agency (unless otherwise agreed in advance). The CAF Coordinator is available for support and can assist if necessary (please see section 6 for more information).

The views of the parents, mothers, fathers and carers of the child/young person, must be available at the meeting. It is the responsibility of the convening agency to ensure this happens.

The purpose is to pool knowledge and reach a shared view of what should happen next by agreeing:

- **The identified needs of the child/young person;**
- **Whether any specialist or more comprehensive assessment is required**
- **Who will be Lead Professional (See Section 5 - Lead Professional for more guidance).
Consideration must be given to the views of the child/young person and/or family.**
- **The Team Around the Child delivery plan and identify roles and responsibilities.**
- **Identify what needs cannot be met**
- **Notify the CAF Coordinator of the above**
- **Feedback the outcome of the meeting to the child/young person if they chose not to attend.**

A TAC meeting checklist is included in section 7 to act as an aide that practitioners may find useful when chairing a TAC meeting (It does not replace or influence professional decision making in any way).

Arranging a TAC Meeting

The practitioner and agency that carried out the Common Assessment is responsible for convening the initial Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting and deciding who should be invited. The Peterborough Service Directory will assist you in identifying the appropriate support and you can find an invitation template in section 7. (To access the Peterborough Service Directory visit www.peterborough.gov.uk)

The practitioner who initially identified the additional needs of the unborn, baby, child or young person will take on the role of the Lead Professional until it is decided who is most appropriate to take on the lead through the TAC meeting.

The practitioner who completed the Common Assessment should begin discussions with relevant practitioners before the first meeting with a view to exploring who would be most suitable to undertake the Lead Practitioner role. In addition the Common Assessment documentation should be shared.

The Team Around the Child (TAC) should be organised as far as practicable to facilitate parent, and /or child/ young person attendance. Contact the CAF Coordinator if you are unsure or require further advice.

The meeting can be arranged by telephone and then followed up in an invitation.

Every agency invited to the TAC meeting should make every effort to attend. If this is not possible you should submit a written report identifying what needs they can meet, and whether they consider it is appropriate for them to take on the role of Lead Professional.

If consideration is being given to whether a specialist assessment is needed an appropriate representative of the relevant agency should be invited to the meeting.

A specialist assessment can be any of the following:

- Children in Need assessment – Safeguarding & Specialist Provision
- Assessment of Special Educational Needs - Learning
- ONSET – Youth Intervention Project
- ASSET – Youth Offending Team
- Specialist Psychological assessment – CAMHS/EPS

A TAC cannot be held without inviting or informing the parents of the child/young person and the child/young person themselves (taking into account their age and understanding). The meeting would instead be classed as a professionals meeting.

Section 4

Step 4 Monitor/Review

Reviewing the Team Around the Child (TAC)

Ending a TAC Intervention

Locality Integrated Processes Board



Reviewing the TAC

The Lead Professional will convene further TAC meetings as often as necessary, but at a minimum of every 3 months. The mother, father, carer or child/young person can request a review at any time as can any practitioner involved.

Reports must be submitted to the TAC by any service that cannot be represented at the meeting in person.

The Lead Professional must make a record of the review using the review section of the CAF.

If you are concerned that your service or another service is not responding, take the matter up through your manager or CAF Coordinator. They will look at resolving the matter or escalating to the Locality Integrated Processes (LIP) Boards (more information later in this section).

The review must ensure that;

- Each action specified in the plan is reviewed against the stated desired outcome;
- The views of the child, young person and their parents mother, father or carers have been considered;
- The outcome of any specialist assessment is considered;
- The action plan is revised;
- Any identified unmet needs are recorded and reported to the CAF Coordinator.

Ending a TAC Intervention

The process outlined below should be used for finalising and completing a Common Assessment and ending a Team Around the Child (TAC).

Reasons for closing a CAF may be:

- The child or young person's needs have been met
- The outcomes identified in the CAF are achieved
- The family no longer wish to engage with the process*
- The family have moved out of the area**
- The issues have been raised to a statutory level and specialist assessments are replacing CAF

When the Lead Professional or TAC reviews the CAF with the family or young person, they may feel that all the issues that have been raised in the CAF are dealt with and the CAF can be closed. It is important that this is agreed by everyone involved with the child or young person.

The Lead Professional should provide a summary of the activity of the TAC and this should include information about the reasons for closing the CAF and any ongoing actions for the family or practitioners. A final copy of the CAF needs to be given to the family, members of the TAC, the Lead Professional, and a copy provided to the CAF coordinator who will then update the database.

Copies of closed CAFs should be kept by the agency that owns the CAF. **It will be the responsibility of the CAF author to retain a copy of the CAF for the appropriate length of time according to the policy of each individual service.** Services should follow their own policies around retention.

*After reviewing the CAF, the family may choose to withdraw from the CAF process. They may not agree with the practitioner undertaking the CAF about the level of need of their child, consider the needs of their child to be met, or that they can meet the need themselves within their own resources. At this point the practitioner needs to decide whether their concern is that the child or young person is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing significant harm. If so, Peterborough Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures should be followed.

**If the family/young person is planning a move out of the area, every possible effort should be made to identify a new CAF owner from an appropriate agency in the new area and a copy sent to that person. If the move is sudden or unplanned, the process would be followed as if they no longer wish to continue with the process and the CAF would be closed. Please contact the Integrated Processes Team if a family move out of the area.

Locality Integrated Processes (LIP) Boards

The Terms of Reference for the LIP Boards can be found in the appendix section at the rear of this handbook, however for a quick guide please see below

Role and function

The Locality Integrated Processes (LIP) Boards are multi-agency forums for information sharing, action planning, review, evaluation and promotion of effective integrated working. Their central role is to support vulnerable children, young people and families in Peterborough by ensuring an appropriate package of support is in place to deliver their needs. It does this by:

- Reviewing cases where there are particular difficulties in relation to the identification, assessment and delivery of service
- Ensuring the effective implementation of Integrated Processes across agencies in each locality including the implementation of the Pre-Assessment Checklist, CAF and implementation of the Lead Professional role

There will be three LIP Boards in Peterborough in line with the three designated localities, covering North West Rural, Central & East and South. The Boards will have the responsibility for ensuring the implementation of integrated processes for the appropriate group of children and young people (0-19) and for young people with additional needs up to 25. These groups are identified by the following:

- 0-5 living in the locality
- 5-19 attending a school within the locality
- 5-19 year olds not attending a school and living in the area.

Section 5

The Lead Professional

Role and Responsibilities of the Lead Professional in CAF

Accountability of the Lead Professional

How is the Lead Professional Identified?



Role and Responsibilities of the Lead Professional in CAF

The Lead Professional is a key element of the CAF. The role of the Lead Professional is to take the lead to coordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child or young person and their family when a range of services are involved and an integrated response is required.

Appointing a Lead Professional is central to the effective frontline delivery of services for children with a range of additional needs. It ensures that professional involvement is rationalised, coordinated and achieves the intended outcomes.

What is a Lead Professional?

Where a child or young person with multiple additional needs requires support from more than one practitioner, the Lead Professional is someone who:

- Acts as a single point of contact that the child or young person and their family can trust, and who is able to support them in making choices and in navigating their way through the system
- Ensures that they get appropriate interventions when needed, which are well planned, regularly reviewed and effectively delivered
- Reduces overlap and inconsistency from other practitioners

Lead Professional Functions and Tasks

- **Build a trusting relationship with the child or young person and family**
- **Ensure that the child, young person and their family remain central to any decisions made about them,**
- **Provide the child, young person or family with sufficient information to empower them to make their own decisions**
- **Use the outcome of the assessment of the child, young person or family to:**
 - agree a 'solution focused' package of support
 - ensure that the child, young person and family are involved in agreeing this process and ensure that it is focused on the delivery of support
- **Facilitate TAC meetings and following TAC reviews**
- **Complete and circulate copies of the TAC delivery plan to child/young person and family and agreed workers**
- **Act as a key conduit and contact point between the child, young person and family, and other practitioners involved in delivering more targeted and universal services**
- **Ensure that progress is monitored via regular TAC reviews, taking into account:**
 - the changing circumstances and needs of the child, young person or family over time
 - progress made
 - the child, young person or family's experience of or satisfaction with services/support received
 - the views of other practitioners on the effectiveness of support
 - whether support or services should be changed and whether more specialist support may be required
 - whether the child or young person's needs have been met and they no longer require additional support

- **Update Contact Point (when implemented) and the Peterborough Integrated Processes Team**
- **Reconvene a TAC meeting when needs are not met**
- **Refer to the LIP Board if all the above actions are not meeting the needs of the Child/young person and family**

When working collaboratively with specialist services:

- **the Lead Professional continues to support the family while any more specialist assessments are carried out**
- **an effective 'hand over' takes place when a new Lead Professional is required to deliver and co-ordinate the ensuing support.**

In order to carry out these functions, it is vital that any practitioner who agrees to become a Lead Professional has access to high quality professional supervision and line management support from their home agency, and where appropriate additional training to enable them to make appropriate decisions regarding:

- The child, young person and family's need/s
- Those areas where they have the skills and knowledge to intervene
- Those areas where they need to gain support from practitioners with more specialist skills or knowledge
- Those areas where other practitioners are required to carry out direct work with the child, young person or family

Accountability of the Lead Professional

Each Lead Professional is accountable to their home agency for delivery of:

- Their part of the action plan
- The Lead Professionals functions and tasks (see previous page)

The Lead Professional is NOT responsible or accountable for services delivered by other agencies. A clear line of accountability for Lead Professionals would run from the practitioner through their line management within their home agency.

Expectations of the Lead Professional will also be dependent on the needs of the children/young people.

More detail of the principles and aims of the process can be found on the Every Child Matters website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Although the Lead Professional will usually have the fullest picture of the child's needs and the impact of the delivery plan, it is the responsibility of all practitioners involved to ensure that the child is protected from significant harm. Therefore if any practitioner believes the child is at immediate risk of significant harm they must refer to the Child Protection procedures.

Where they think there is a risk of significant but not immediate harm they must advise the Lead Professional. It will be the responsibility of the Lead Professional to discuss the concerns with all those involved and either to:

- Convene a meeting/or
- Make a referral via the Child Protection Procedures

How is the Lead Professional Identified?

Who can be a Lead Professional?

Many practitioners in the children's workforce could take on the Lead Professional role, as the skills, competence and knowledge required to carry it out are similar regardless of professional background or role. The role has been defined by the functions and tasks, rather than by particular professional or practitioner groupings.

For most children and young people with additional needs requiring support from a Lead Professional, we anticipate that the person carrying out this role will be drawn from the range of practitioners who are currently delivering effective early intervention support.

This could include (but is not limited to) personal advisers, health visitors, midwives, youth workers, family workers, substance misuse workers, nursery nurses, educational welfare officers, community children's nurses, school nurses and support staff such as learning mentors working in schools. The person who takes on the role of Lead Professional will vary according to the specific needs of the child.

How is the Lead Professional identified?

The Lead Professional is identified from the TAC team of practitioners working with the child, young person or family. They are chosen through a process of discussion and agreement between those practitioners who are involved.

The Lead Professional is not necessarily the first person to be involved or the person who undertook the CAF. They will be the practitioner most relevant to the child or young person and with the skills to carry out this role. Remember that Lead Professionals can change over time as the needs of the child or young person change.

It will be a matter for each agency to decide which of its staff can act as a Lead Professional. They must ensure that they are able to fully support the overall development of the Lead Professional role, through appropriate supervision for instance. The numbers of staff available for the task must be proportionate to the volume of work of the agency.

Where practitioners cannot agree who should be the Lead Professional, the matter will be referred to the CAF Coordinator in the first instance. If not resolved this will be referred to the Locality Integrated Processes Boards.

The criteria for identifying the Lead Professional will include:

- The predominant needs of the child or family?
- Which agency has main responsibility for addressing the child or family's needs, including statutory responsibility?
- Does anyone have a previous or potential ongoing relationship with the child or young person?
- Does anyone have an ongoing responsibility to carry out an advocacy role for the child or young person?
- Who has the skills and knowledge to provide a leadership and coordinating role in relation to other practitioners involved with the child, young person or family?
- Who has the ability to draw in and influence universal and specialist services?
- Who has an understanding of the surrounding support systems which are available to manage and sustain this?
- Who has capacity to take on the role?

Section 6

Help and support

The Role of the CAF Coordinator

Contact Details

Children's Workforce Development Team



The Role of the CAF Coordinator

There are 3 CAF Coordinators assigned to each of the following localities;

- North West and Rural
- Central and East
- South

The CAF Coordinators role is to support and manage the development and implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) across Peterborough.

The CAF Coordinators work across all ages and can provide support to those practitioners requiring specialist advice and guidance on children and young people aged 0-19, to ensure better coordination and family focused support where there is identified unmet need.

They have practical skills in engagement and participation of children & young people especially in the CAF process. This includes a working knowledge of resources to support young people in the process.

The CAF Coordinator functions include:

- **Planning and co-ordinating CAF implementation.**
- **Supporting practitioners and managers in universal services to use the CAF.**
- **Providing support to the Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings, including independent chairing, if necessary.**
- **Help practitioners and the TAC, to identify who is best placed to become the Lead Professional and play a brokering and troubleshooting role where required.**
- **Assistance in the formulation of clear action plans to ensure that the identified needs are met.**
- **Ongoing support for the practitioner carrying out the Lead Professional functions, to ensure effective delivery.**
- **Escalating those issues when required for resolution.**
- **Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance.**
- **Training managers and practitioners as part of the Integrated Processes training programme.**
- **Working with key partners including NHS Peterborough, schools and community and voluntary agencies to establish models for delivering locality based multi- agency support.**

Contact Details

To register a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or for advice and guidance on the CAF process, contact:

The Integrated Processes Team
Peterborough City Council
4th Floor
Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough
PE1 1HU
Tel: 01733 863649 or email HelpwithCAF@peterborough.gov.uk

If you are concerned about a child, contact:
Peterborough Referral and Assessment Team
Children's Social Care
Tel: 01733 864180/864170

Emergency Duty Service
Tel: 01924 326489

Out of Hours – Evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays

Police - Non urgent
Tel: 0845 4564564
24 hours

NSPCC Helpline
Tel: 0808 800 5000

Childrens Workforce Development Team

There is a training pathway in place to support the Children and Young People's Workforce implement Integrated Working Processes. The pathway begins with an 'Introduction to Integrated Processes' which leads onto other modules including:

- Handling confidential information and information sharing in practice,
- using CAF in practice,
- Lead Professional in practice
- Managers Master Class - Leading and Managing Integrated Services & Teams

To find out about more information on Integrated Processes training available please contact cs.training@peterborough.gov.uk