

## Every Child Matters: Change for Children

### **The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

This is the second of a series of Briefing Notes to keep you up-to-date with CAF developments. The first briefing note gave a summary of the Common Assessment Framework. The CAF has been developed for use by practitioners in all agencies working with children, so they can communicate and work more effectively together. It is intended to provide a simple, non-bureaucratic process for a holistic assessment of a child's needs and deciding how these needs should be met.

This Briefing Note aims to provide more information about the role of the Lead Professional, developments within Hampshire and how the CAF, Information Sharing Index and Integrated Children's system work together

### **Role of Lead Professional**

Guidance on the role of the Lead Professional is given on the DfES site:  
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/leadprofessional/>

The Lead Professional:

- Can be from any agency, or could be the parent of the child(ren)
- To act as a trusted, single point of contact for the child, their families and practitioners
- Ensure needs are identified, plans are made and reviews take place regularly
- Be accountable and responsible.

Over the next few months, we will be looking at how the role of the Lead Professional will be developed within Hampshire. A workshop is being organised for managers from various statutory and voluntary agencies on 18<sup>th</sup> November to enable them to discuss the implications of the Common Assessment Framework for their own agency and define the role of the Lead Professional and what challenges they face and what preparations need to be made.

### **Lead Professional Working Group**

There is a Lead Professional Working Group which has been set up to coordinate the work across the agencies, ensure the working practices of their practitioners are taken into account, and champion the Common Assessment Framework and the definition of the role of the Lead Professional within their organisation.

There are already representatives from the voluntary sector, Connexions, health, early years provision and Hampshire County Council departments, including schools - but if you wish to nominate someone from your agency, please contact: [Dave.Watson@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.Watson@hants.gov.uk) , Tel: 023 8087 7727

### **Partner news:**

On 15<sup>th</sup> August, the Hampshire Children's Services Department was created and John Coughlan joined Hampshire County Council to become the first Director for Children's Services. As a result, the Education and Social Services Departments ceased to exist. For more information about these changes, go the [www.hants.gov.uk/childrenact/childrenact-extranet](http://www.hants.gov.uk/childrenact/childrenact-extranet). This extranet is being developed for partners where information specific to work in progress relating to the Every Child Matter agenda will be posted. If your organisation is not on the registration list, please contact [penny.ford@hants.gov.uk](mailto:penny.ford@hants.gov.uk)

## **Training Working Group**

The Multi-agency CAF/Information Sharing Training Working Group has members representing Primary Care Trusts, the Children's Society, Connexions, the Children's Fund as well as various teams within the Children's Services Department. Their activities include:

- A training day to familiarise nominated representatives from partner agencies with Train the Trainer material produced by the DfES,
- Working with and encouraging each agency to increase basic awareness of CAF and the Lead Professional role by providing high-level information as an integral part of any induction or training relating to children's services. Slides for use at internal training sessions are available and should be requested from [caroline.sheahan@hants.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.sheahan@hants.gov.uk), Tel: 01962 847176

Agencies wishing to nominate representatives to be part of the Training Working Group should contact [sue.m.smith@hants.gov.uk](mailto:sue.m.smith@hants.gov.uk), Tel 01962 847188

## **Communications Work Group**

Currently there are representatives from Connexions, the PCTs, the Children's Fund, Colleges and the various branches of Children's Services. We are particularly interested in having representatives who can provide a front-line perspective on communications, so if you would like to nominate a representative from your organisation to attend, either an operational or communications specialist, please contact [penny.ford@hants.gov.uk](mailto:penny.ford@hants.gov.uk) , Tel 01962 845226

\*\*\*\*\*

## **The Information Sharing (IS) Index, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Integrated Children's Systems (ICS) – how do they all fit together?**

With all these new terms and acronyms, it can be confusing!

**The Information Sharing Index** will work using information technology to allow a small amount of core data on every child in England to be held. It will not hold sensitive data, but allow a practitioner with worries about a child to discover more easily who else is working with the child and access contact details for those practitioners, for example, their G.P. or school. This will enable connections to be made quickly and to see the whole picture.

**The Common Assessment Framework** is a process for gathering and recording information about a child for whom a practitioner has concerns in a standard format, identifying the needs of the child and how the needs can be met. If a Common Assessment already exists, this will be identified within the Information Sharing Index, and the practitioner can update the existing CAF based on discussions with the child and his/her family and make contact with the other practitioners already working with the child.

**The Integrated Children's System** in its current phase is a means of receiving , managing and presenting information about children with complex needs. The ICS is specific to specialist services such as are currently provided by social workers. In Hampshire, the ICS implementation will build on SWIFT which is already used by social care . The development planning, which is being overseen by an interagency steering group, is in its early stages and further information will be provided in due course.

More information on all these elements of the Every Child Matters agenda are available on the DfES web site: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/ics/>

Contact [penny.ford@hants.gov.uk](mailto:penny.ford@hants.gov.uk) for more copies of this Briefing Note, or for suggested future topics.