

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY PANEL

COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF)

9 SEPTEMBER 2010

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a core element of the Every Child Matters Agenda. In Plymouth we are striving to ensure that all children in need of additional support receive the support they require in a timely manner. To facilitate this Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust have agreed that we should be working towards using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as the primary method of assessing these needs and identifying when a multi-agency response is required. The CAF process enables practitioners from all agencies and the voluntary sector to work together to assess and meet the needs of children, young people and their families who require targeted, multi-agency support.

The CAF Coordinator had been in post for just over a year and the distance travelled for Plymouth regarding embedding the CAF process has been considerable. We have moved from a City with few assessments completed and very little practitioner confidence in the process, to a City where many agencies now use the CAF as an integral part of their day to day activities.

Training

We have now trained over 1600 practitioners across the City. The new training calendar is now available and we are currently taking bookings up to December 2011. These include three additional courses which will start in September 2010

- CAF Refresher Training
- Chairing a CAF Meeting
- 'SMART' CAF Action Planning

Although the CAF training courses have been very popular there has been less interest in *Introduction to Information Sharing* and *Information Sharing for Practitioners*. Additional information is being produced to advertise the importance of these courses and to encourage agencies to increase attendance.

We are also delivering a range of in-house training across agencies and have recently delivered sessions within several Doctors Surgeries, the Community Nursing Team and Children's Centres.

We have been working closely with partner agencies to ensure that all practitioners working with children have access to training and to ensure that the use of the CAF is embedded within their policies and practice.

Feedback from practitioners who have undertaken the training has been extremely positive. Practitioners have stated that they have found the training enjoyable and informative and are now more confident in using the common assessment process and many have recommended the training to colleagues.

Multi Agency CAF Developments

A year after the re-launch of the CAF process in Plymouth many agencies are now using the CAF assessment and pre-assessment as part of their day to day identification of unmet needs. We have been working closely with statutory and targeted services to ensure that the CAF is considered as part of the exit strategy from these services. This has already been established as part of the exit plan for children coming off of a Child Protection Plan and discussions are underway with the Youth Offending Service to ensure that the CAF is considered for young people at the end of court orders.

A major development has been the introduction of the Pre-CAF assessment as part of the new electronic booking in system for Midwifery, which is due to go live shortly. This will mean that when every woman is booked into the midwifery system the Pre-CAF will be completed to identify any potential problems for the family, which can then be addressed via a full CAF assessment and multi agency support. Plymouth has approximately 4800 live births each year, the use of the Pre-CAF will enable early identification and prevention work to be put in place around those families in need of additional support.

The Youth Service is also introducing the use of the CAF for all young people who receive targeted youth support. Although to date very few assessments have been initiated by youth services, it is envisaged that once the Pre-CAF is used in this way it will highlight greater numbers of young people in need of multi agency support, who will then be supported via the CAF process.

We are working very closely with a multi-agency forum that has been established to look at how we can better support parents with Learning Disabilities in Plymouth. The CAF process will form a vital conduit to join agencies together to offer wrap around care and support to these families. It is the intention that via the CAF process long term support will be available to these parents which will adapt as the needs of the family and child change.

Data Collection Update

The number of CAF assessments is steadily rising with more families benefitting from a multi agency approach to offering them swift access to the support that they require.

Since July 2009 we have started to gather more robust data regarding the commencement of CAF assessments. We have also started to break the data down enabling us to see any emerging patterns across agencies and localities. This analysis will be expanded further to enhance future development of the CAF process across the City.

We are developing a quality assurance framework to monitor the effectiveness of the CAF assessments that are in place to assist children and their families. Work is underway to examine outcomes for children who have been subject to the CAF process of multi agency support.

The Number of CAF Assessment

2010 by Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
No of Children Assessments relate to.	40	35	51	36	43	43	30

The Number of Families the Assessment relates to:

2010 by Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
No of Families Assessments relate to.	34	30	41	29	39	35	30

Amanda Paddison
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