

Welcome to a new way of helping children and young people

A message for **parents** and **carers**.



If you want to know more please contact:
Geraldine Marin, CAF Co-ordinator
Children's Services,
Room 4.3, Fourth Floor, Civic Centre,
Sunderland SR2 7DN
Tel: 0191 561 1324
E-mail: geraldine.marin@sunderland.gov.uk

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact the The Children's Service Communication Service on 0191 520 5555 or email childrens.services.info@sunderland.gov.uk for help.

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When your child needs extra support, we want to find the best way forward as soon as possible.

What is the Common Assessment Framework?

The Common Assessment Framework (or CAF) is a new way of working with children and young people. It involves listening to you and your child to find out your child's needs, and what is working well in your child's life.

An action plan, agreed with you and your child, is also put in place to make sure your child gets the right sort of help.

The CAF is voluntary - you and your child can choose to be involved.

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How will the CAF help my family?

The CAF exists to help you support your child. It can lead to a quick solution or help to identify extra support if needed.

The CAF will help ensure that everyone involved with your child - such as teachers and health visitors - work together to support your child.

The CAF will help your child receive the right support at an early stage before the problem gets bigger. As the CAF is a shared assessment, you and your child will not have to repeat the same story to different workers.

When is the CAF used?

The CAF can be used if you or someone who works with your child would like your child to receive extra support. It will help to identify your child's additional needs and other workers who are required to support your family.

How does it work?

If you and your child agree, a worker will ask you and your child some questions to find out what help and support your child might need.

This information is recorded on a simple form. You and your child will agree what is put on the form, and you will be given a copy of it.

Older children may feel able to discuss their situation on their own with the worker. A young person's wish to keep information confidential from parents may be respected by the worker, where this is in the young person's best interests and welfare.

Confidentiality

As a rule the information which you and your child provide will only be shared with your family's consent.

However there may be certain times when the people working with you need to share information.

For example:

- when they need to find out urgently if a child is at a risk of harm
- to help a child who is at risk of harm
- when an adult is at risk of harm or to help prevent or detect a serious crime.

What happens next?

Based on the information you and your child provide, all those who can help your child will work together to provide the support your child needs. Only workers who need to know about your child will share your child's information.

Who is a lead practitioner?

If a number of people are providing support to your child, one of these people may be appointed as a 'lead practitioner'.

This person will keep you informed, listen to your views and support you. The named person will also co-ordinate all the services supporting your child.

You and your child will have a say in who should be the lead practitioner.