

WIGAN CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & WIGAN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

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PROCEDURE FOR COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF) (REFERENCE: CP1.1)

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Revisions (since issue)

Section	Brief Description	Date	Issue	Revision	Approved By
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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- 1.1. Underpin the introduction and operation of the Common Assessment Framework as a set of common processes and integrated working arrangements to enable early intervention by practitioners (in every sector of the workforce) to support any child/young person in the Borough with additional and/or unmet needs to make progress against each/all of the 5 outcomes set out in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and Every Child Matters.
- 1.2. Describe agency and inter-agency working practices to be followed by members of the Children's Workforce (see Section 5) in carrying out 'common assessments'

within the context of the Change for Children and Young People System for Wigan Borough.

- 1.3. Ensure consistency across organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Wigan Safeguarding Children Board in fulfilling duties and obligations in this area of work as prescribed in legislation and guidance.

2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all managers and every member of the Children's Workforce within the geographical boundary of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan.

3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

This procedure applies to all managers and members of Children's Workforce in Wigan, and all service users, regardless of their social identities of ethnicity, physical, cognitive and/or sensory abilities, gender, sexuality, spirituality (Faith), age and/or class.

4 SAFEGUARDING

The CFC & YP system and CAF links into the WSGB procedures and should be read in conjunction with these – Link to www.wigansafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk

5 REFERENCES

- Children Act 2004
- Statutory guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services
- Statutory guidance on the duty to co-operate and on making arrangements to safeguard and inter-agency co-operation to improve the well-being of children under Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004
- CAF: Implementation Guidance for Directors of Children's Services in Local Areas
- CAF: Guide for Service Managers and for Practitioners
- <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/caf>
- The Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Wigan Safeguarding Children Board have agreed that managers and practitioners in Wigan Borough will use the national standard Common Assessment Framework form (with no revisions or adaptations). Managers and practitioners can download this form as a Word template or pdf via the following link: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00004>
- General information about the Common Assessment Framework and easy to use guidance is provided in Wigan's Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Handbook. The Handbook has been produced to enable managers and practitioners to effectively use CAF in their work with children, young people, families and each other¹. An electronic version of the handbook is available via the following link: <http://www.wigan.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0278EFB4-108E-497F-BBE6-D8A8EA56A94A/0/CAFHandbookFINALProof050208CYPS45.pdf>
- How will a 'common assessment' help a child/young person? A 'common assessment' should be a catalyst that enables practitioners working with each other and with children, young people and their families to identify 'additional and/or unmet needs' (see Supporting Document: Definitions and Indicators of Need). The CAF form provides
- A means for recording information about a child/young person and their development, behaviours and/or circumstances that is collected through a structured conversation between practitioners, and the child/young person and their parents/carers.
- Evidence of practitioners' worries about the progress and well-being of the child,/young person.

¹ Copies of the Handbook can be obtained from the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator (01942 828844)

6 DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Please see Supporting Document: [Definitions and Indicators \(Ref: SD Def and Ind.\)](#)

7 STANDARDS

- 7.1 If a 'common assessment' has been completed – contact the Lead Professional
- 7.1.1 If no 'common assessment exists, talk to all those involved (or who may be involved) about carrying out a 'common assessment'.
- 7.2 Managers and practitioners should ensure that they regularly update the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator and Change for Children and Young People Team during the completion of a 'common assessment'.
- 7.3 Once a 'common assessment' has been completed, the manager/practitioner must ensure that they supply a copy of the completed form within 20 days of the CAF being written, to the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator/Team as follows:
- 7.3.1 By first class or internal post (marked Private and Confidential), or fax to
- 7, Worsley Terrace, Standishgate, Wigan, WN1 1XW
 - Fax – 01942 828841
- 7.3.2 If the form has been completed as a Word document – the completed 'common assessment' must not be transmitted by e-mail (because, without encryption software, the personal sensitive information on the form could be 'hacked' in transit).

8 PROCESS - CARRYING OUT A 'COMMON ASSESSMENT'

8.1 Making the decision to 'do a CAF'

- 8.1.1 **'When to do a 'common assessment''** – Practitioners should carry out a 'common assessment' when, in their opinion, a child/young person is unlikely to achieve progress against the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. The CAF is central to early intervention, and should be used when:
- 8.1.1.1 A practitioner is concerned about the progress being made by a child when compared with a 'similar child'
- 8.1.1.2 The needs of the child/young person are unclear, and/or cut across a number of different aspects of their life.
- 8.1.1.3 A 'common assessment' would enable a worker to identify the needs of a child/young person and/or facilitate work with other services to meet such needs.
- 8.1.1.4 If a practitioner has concerns about more than one child in a family, they should carry out a 'common assessment' for each child/young person.
- 8.1.2 **'When not to do a 'common assessment''** – There is no reason why practitioners should carry out a 'common assessment' on every child/young person they work with:
- 8.1.2.1 If a practitioner believes that a child/young person has experienced or is likely to experienced 'significant harm' they must follow Wigan Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures - and contact the Children's Duty Team on 01942 828300.
- 8.1.2.2 Children who are making progress when compared with a 'similar child' do not require a 'common assessment'.
- 8.1.2.3 A 'common assessment' is not required where the needs of a child/young person are obvious to workers involved, where needs have been assessed using an agency's assessment tools, and/or the

workers service/team is able to meet the full range of the child/young person's needs.

8.1.3 **Tools to support decision making** – Tools have been developed nationally and locally to enable managers and practitioners to make effective decisions about doing CAFs. These are:

8.1.3.1 The CAF pre-assessment tool developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/TP00004>

8.1.3.2 The 'Needs Profile' (Analysis and decision making framework) created by a multi-agency group of managers and practitioners in Wigan (see Profile and Supporting Document: Definitions and Indicators of Need).

8.2 **Managing Common Assessments**

8.2.1 Effective arrangements are vital in enabling members of the children's workforce to undertake 'common assessments' within inter-agency practices in Wigan Borough.

8.2.2 Managers in the Children's Workforce who manage employees or volunteers who carry out 'common assessments' must be:

8.2.3 Fully aware about 'common assessments' and the demands which carrying out such assessments may place on workers,

8.2.4 Able to effectively monitor the caseloads of workers, and have the authority to re-allocate cases if necessary,

8.2.5 Competent and capable of directing other members of their team/agency to assist and support colleagues carrying out 'common assessments',

8.2.6 Able to constructively challenge workers about progress in a specific case,

8.2.7 Able to effectively deal with complaints (from children, young people, their parents/caregivers or other managers/practitioners) or performance issues, and escalate the level of intervention if necessary,

8.2.8 Able to plan and deliver effective models of supervision (see Section 10 (below) and procedure for supervising multi-agency assessments), and

8.2.9 Able to work with members of their team/agency to identify appropriate training and support opportunities for staff, and enable staff to access those opportunities.

8.3 The time and workload implications of carrying out 'common assessments' will vary according to the scale and complexity of the identified needs of the child, young person, their parent/caregiver, the number of practitioners involved and the duration of the intervention. Managers will need to take the following into account:

8.3.1 Carrying out a 'common assessment' may be more time-intensive than straightforward casework, though no more time-intensive than carrying out assessments within the usual span of a worker's practice. 'Common assessments' will not always be carried out by the same member of a team - and any time pressures involved can be set against the work of the team as a whole where the demands on time may be less intense.

8.3.2 There may be specific implications for staff working part-time in a multi-agency setting and part-time in their base agency. Clear communication is essential between managers in both services so that the worker is not overwhelmed with 'common assessments' in different settings.

8.4 Supervising casework in carrying out 'Common Assessments'

Organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Safeguarding Children Board will regularly audit their arrangements for supervising the casework of practitioners carrying out 'common assessments'.

8.4.1 Arrangements for supervising the casework of staff in their agency carrying out 'common assessments' will need to be integrated into the organisation's existing policy, procedures and practice for supervision of casework

8.5 Consistent support across the Children's Workforce for staff who carry out 'common assessments' could involve:

8.5.1 Modifying the frequency of casework supervision for less experienced members of the children's workforce during 'common assessments',

8.5.2 Ensuring flexible arrangements are in place to enable workers to request additional casework supervision if there are specific issues or demands in carrying out a 'common assessment' in a particular case,

8.5.3 Developing models for dual supervision where:

- A 'common assessment' is overseen by an identified manager in an agency to which a member of the children's workforce is seconded.

- Practice aspects of their work are overseen by usual line management and supervision arrangements in their base agency.

9 RESPONSIBILITIES AROUND 'COMMON ASSESSMENTS' IN SPECIFIC CASES

9.1 Practitioners carrying out 'common assessments' will be identified from amongst workers involved with the child, young person or their parent(s)/caregiver(s). It is expected that in most cases the person co-ordinating a 'common assessment' would be agreed from within that group of practitioners

9.1.1 If agreement cannot be reached, workers must inform their line managers immediately, and within 2 working days of the discussions taking place (see Section 11 of this procedure).

9.2 The following factors are relevant to agreeing which members of the children's workforce should co-ordinate a 'common assessment':

9.2.1 What is the principle need of the child, young person or their parent(s) caregiver(s)?

9.2.2 Which agency has principle responsibility for addressing the needs of the child, young person or their parent/caregiver - including any statutory responsibility for providing services to meet the principle need?

9.2.3 Does any member of the network of practitioners have a previous or ongoing relationship with the child, young person or their parent/ caregiver?

9.2.4 Does any member of the network of practitioners have an ongoing responsibility to carry out an advocacy role for the child, young person or their parent/caregiver?

9.2.5 Which member of the network of practitioners has the skills and knowledge to provide a leadership and co-ordination role in relation to other practitioners involved with the child, young person or their parent/caregiver?

9.2.6 Does any member of the network of practitioners have the ability to draw in, and influence, universal and specialist services?

9.2.7 Does any member of the network of practitioners have an understanding of the support systems which are available to manage and sustain this?

9.2.8 Which member of the network of practitioners has the capacity to take on the role?

9.3 Arbitration in the case of disagreement between agencies about 'Common Assessments'

9.3.1 Members of the Children's Workforce are not expected or required to individually resolve complex, difficult inter-agency issues.

- 9.3.2 In the first instance, responsibility for resolving any disagreement about any of these (or other) issues remains with the line managers of the workers involved in the particular case.
- 9.3.3 If line managers are unable to reach agreement to resolve such issues, they must promptly involve the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator in reaching a decision.
- 9.3.4 If a line manager (or agency) disagrees with the decision reached with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator, they can lodge an appeal with the Executive Group of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership.
- 9.3.5 The decision by the Executive Group will be binding on all organisations involved.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

9.4 Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services

- 9.4.1 To work with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to ensure the implementation and monitoring of this procedure.

9.5 Chief Officers of the organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership

- 9.5.1 To identify the Senior Managers in their organisation who will identify members of their operational teams who will carry out 'common assessments'.
- 9.5.2 To ensure information about the Common Assessment Framework is actively disseminated within their organisation
- 9.5.3 To promptly address issues raised by feedback about their organisation's implementation of the Common Assessment Framework.

9.6 Senior Managers

- 9.6.1 To require managers of operational teams within their span of control to identify members staff to take part in training on 'common assessments'
- 9.6.2 To ensure managers of operational teams within their span of control have put in place effective arrangements (aligned and integrated with existing policy, procedures and practice) for the management support and supervision of staff carrying out 'common assessments'. This includes ensuring access to training and ongoing support for such staff; workload monitoring, and the quality assurance of practice.

9.7 Team Managers

- 9.7.1 To identify members of their team who will carry out 'common assessments'.
- 9.7.2 To put in place effective arrangements for the management, support and supervision of members of their team carrying out 'common assessments'. This includes:
 - Identifying staff with the skills and experience to access training and ongoing support to undertake such assessments
 - Actively monitoring the workloads of team members carrying out such assessments
 - Ensuring arrangements for support and supervision that are flexible to meet the needs of staff carrying out such assessments
 - Ensuring arrangements are in place to quality assure interagency practice by staff carrying out such assessments.

9.8 Members of the Children's Workforce

- 9.8.1 To attend training and ongoing support to carry out 'common assessments'
- 9.8.2 To report promptly any issues or difficulties that impact on their role undertaking 'common assessments'.

10 MONITORING

- 10.1 The Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator will monitor the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework - as described in this procedure - by the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Wigan Safeguarding Children Board.

11 EVALUATION

- 11.1 The Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator will commission regular audits to explore and report on the compliance the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Wigan Safeguarding Children Board with this procedure, and use that information to identify areas for service development and improvement.

12 REVIEW

- 12.1 A review (and where necessary, revision) of this procedure will take place at least annually by the Children, Young People and their Families Executive Group at a designated meeting. The Director of Children and Young People's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services will work closely with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to authorise and implement changes intended to improve practice in the area of work covered by this procedure.

13. FORMS/LETTERS/RECORDS

<u>No.</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1	CAF Form (see link in section 5 References)		DCSF
2	CAF Pre Assessment (see link in section 8 Process 8.1.3.1)		DCFS
3	The Needs Profile	2 Years	Change for Children Co-Ordinator

14. CHANGES TO THIS PROCEDURE

- 12.1 To suggest changes or modifications to this procedure please contact the named author.

**Wigan Children, Young People & their Families Strategic Partnership & Wigan
Safeguarding Children Board**