

<b>Title of paper:</b>	Common Assessment Framework (CAF) progress report.	
<b>Report to:</b>	Children's Partnership Board	
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2009	
<b>Director(s)/Corporate Director(s):</b>	Ian Curryer – Director of Children's Services	<b>Wards affected:</b> All
<b>Contact Officer(s) and contact details:</b>	Susan Twemlow – Head of Commissioning & Partnership. 915-0095, <a href="mailto:susan.twemlow@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">susan.twemlow@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Other officers who have provided input:</b>	Andrew High – acting Common Assessment Framework co-ordinator 915 0953, <a href="mailto:andrew.high@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">andrew.high@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Relevant Children and Young People's Plan objectives:</b>		
Provide early, effective support and protection to children, young people and families		Yes
Nurture and support strong, healthy families		Yes
Increase children and young people's emotional resilience and the maturity of their decision-making		Yes
Ensure that all our children, young people and families are provided with a sound foundation for lifelong learning and progression into skilled economic activity		Yes
Reduce deprivation and its impact on children and young people		Yes
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):</b>		
<p>This report outlines the current progress on the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework and future steps to embed this as an integrated working process for all agencies and partners.</p> <p>The total number of Common Assessments initiated in Nottingham – as notified to CAF Central records - from October 2006 to the end of May 2009 is 647: 121 from October 2006 to March 2008; 466 from April 2008 to March 2009; 60 in April and May 2009.</p> <p>Reporting on Common Assessment initiations is an area of ongoing development.</p> <p>Evidence of the impact of the Common Assessment Framework has yet to be developed – both nationally and in Nottingham.</p>		
<b>Recommendations:</b>		
1	All partner agencies should commit to fully embedding the Common Assessment Framework and associated Lead Professional processes, including identifying a senior officer who will take lead responsibility for this within the agency.	
2	All partner agencies to commit to using a standard Common Assessment Framework Performance Framework to monitor their engagement and to report on a quarterly basis with regard to numbers of staff trained on the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional processes, the number of Common Assessments initiated and the number of Common Assessments for which the agency is undertaking Lead Professional responsibility.	

## **1. COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF) PROGRESS REPORT.**

### **2. REASON**

Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families" (DCSF 2008) states that "Processes such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the lead professional role should be fully embedded."

Lord Laming's recent report - "*The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*" - notes that "all agencies need further help in using the CAF effectively and consistently". The Government's response to Lord Laming includes the impending issuing of updated guidance on the Common Assessment Framework that will "help local authorities and their Children's Trust partners to implement CAF as part of the development of integrated working locally".

A finding of Nottingham's Annual Performance Assessment 2008 was "Slow progress on the development of the Common Assessment Framework". Nottingham City has been embedding the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional processes since March 2008 and is making steady progress. As of June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, 647 Common Assessments had been initiated (as notified to CAF Central Records).

### **3. SUMMARY**

The Common Assessment Framework is an integrated process that supports our approach to safeguarding and the delivery of integrated frontline services. It is a shared assessment process for use across all services for children in England and helps facilitate the early identification of need.

The Common Assessment Framework consists of:

a common process to enable practitioners to undertake a common assessment and then act on the result; a standard form to record the assessment; a pre-assessment checklist to help decide who would benefit from a common assessment.

The assessment covers three domains: development of the child; parents and carers; family and environment.

The Lead Professional is a new role that is central to the successful implementation of the Common Assessment Framework. This person acts as the family's main contact and ensures that they are fully involved in the process: the Lead Professional oversees the production of a coordinated package of support.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

All partner agencies should commit to fully embedding the Common Assessment Framework and associated Lead Professional processes, including identifying a senior officer who will take lead responsibility for this within the agency.

All partner agencies to commit to using a standard Common Assessment Framework Performance Framework to monitor their engagement and to report on a quarterly basis with regard to numbers of staff trained on the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional processes, the number of Common Assessments initiated and the number of Common Assessments for which the agency is undertaking Lead Professional responsibility.

## **5. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS**

In Nottingham, the standard training “Using the Common Assessment Framework and understanding the role of the Lead Professional” is provided on a multi-agency basis. Basic training and awareness sessions are also provided to individual agencies. Follow-up training on the Lead Professional is offered. Nottingham City Councils’ three Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional Managers provide this training, supported by a multi-agency training pool.

CAF Central Records is the only point of information capture about the Common Assessment Framework process in Nottingham. Information is provided by workers initiating a Common Assessment. This allows reports to be produced on the numbers of initiations by age, gender, initiating agency and other basic information. The use of the standard CAF Performance Framework by all agencies would provide considerably improved information about Common Assessment and Lead Professional practice in Nottingham.

It is too early to say how effective the Common Assessment Framework processes are in achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families. Nottingham City Council is participating in a national exercise led by the Local Authority Research Consortium to evaluate the impact of the Common Assessment Framework. The report of this work will be produced in late 2009 and will advise continued development both nationally and in Nottingham.

## **6. RISKS**

Both nationally and locally, there appears to be some concern that the Lead Professional role will be difficult and onerous. The Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional Managers offer training and support to all agencies to support appropriate use of the Lead Professional function.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In the long term, the Common Assessment Framework process is intended to facilitate early intervention and so reduce the need for more expensive specialist services. Some initial costs may be incurred in changing individual agency working practices to reflect Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional processes, documentation and performance management.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Common Assessment Framework is one of the elements in the delivery of integrated frontline services, outlined in the statutory guidance supporting section 10 (interagency co-operation) and section 11 (safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children) of the Children Act 2004.

## **9. CLIENT GROUP:**

The Common Assessment Framework exists to facilitate early intervention for all children and young people whose needs cannot be met by a single agency.

## **10. IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES**

Nothing identified.

## **11. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED**

The Common Assessment Framework and associated processes affects all Children and Young People's Plan strategic objectives and priorities.

## 12. CONTACT DETAILS

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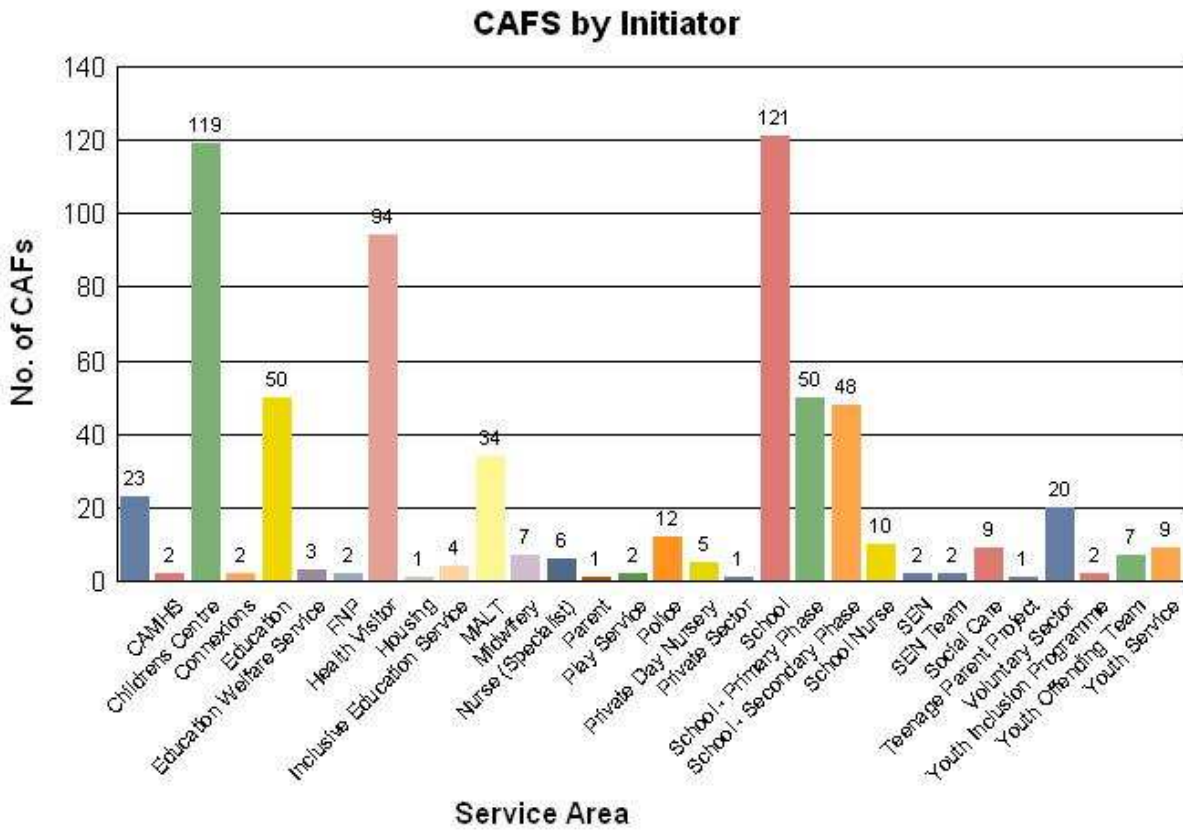
**Further background documents, for reading after the meeting, can be tabled on the day if required. Please lists relevant papers and inform colleagues if they need to undertake additional research on this paper BEFORE the meeting.**

*“Children’s Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families”*. DCSF 2008

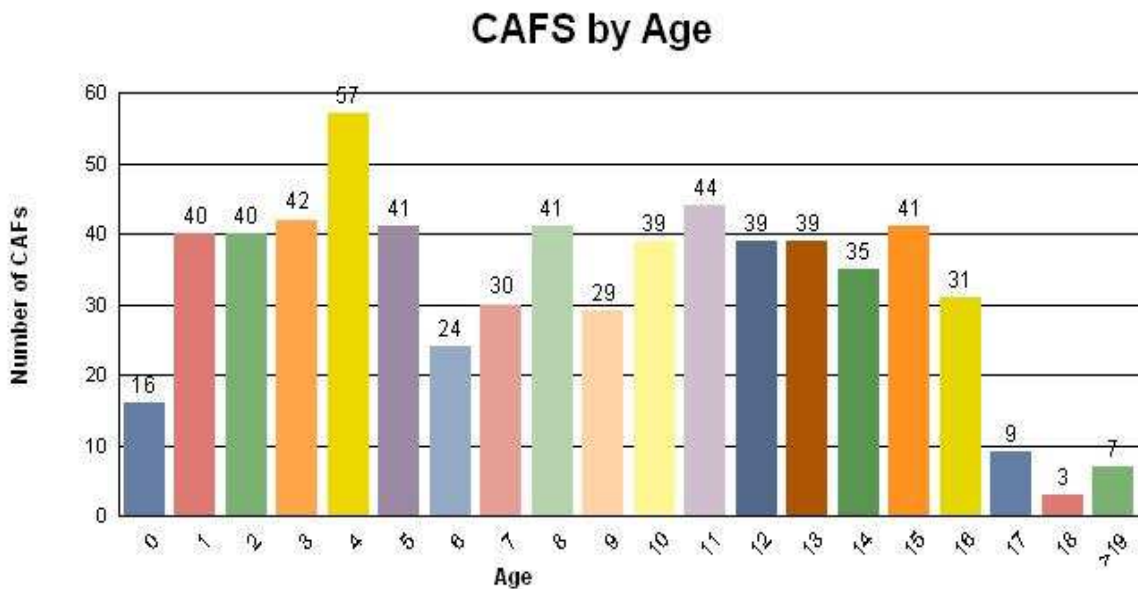
*“The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report.”* The Lord Laming, March 2009

*“The protection of children in England: action plan. The Government’s response to Lord Laming”*. DCSF 2009

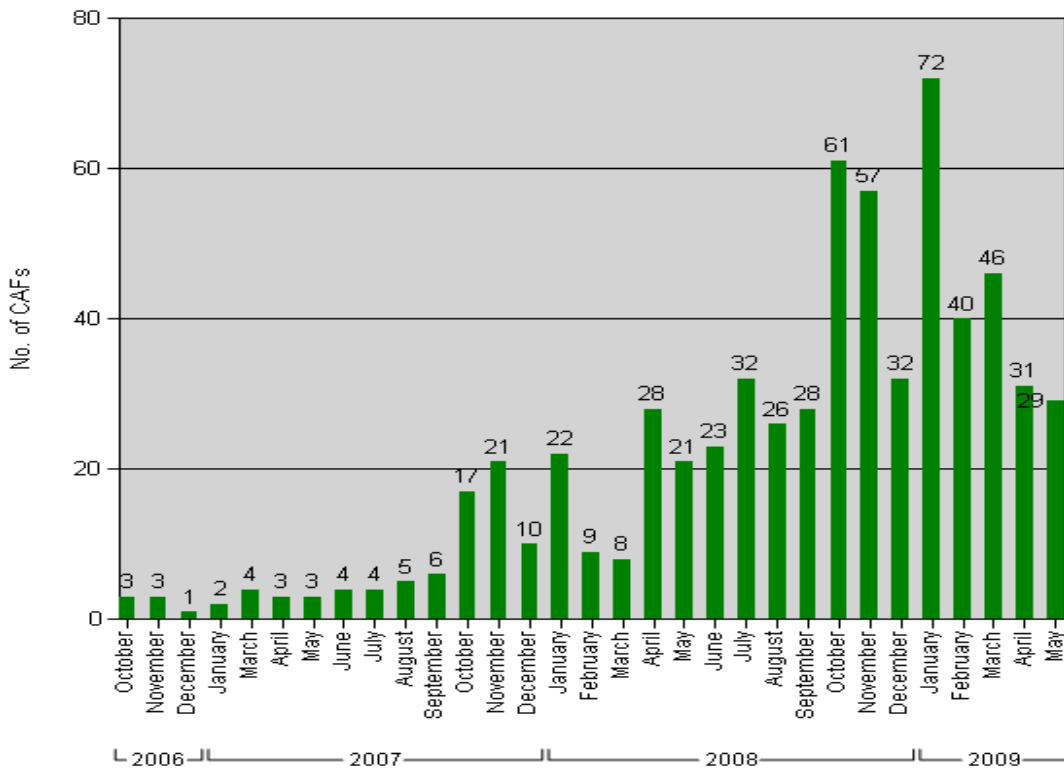
**Summary CAF data  
(from CAF Central records)**



(N.B Service Area definitions have been changed several times. Some historical data cleansing remains to be undertaken).



### CAFs by month



### CAFs by ethnicity

