

Title of paper:	CAF and Early Help Annual Report 2014/15		
Report to:	Children's Partnership		
Date:	24 th June 2015		
Relevant Director:	Helen Blackman	Wards affected: ALL	
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Tajinder Madahar Gemma Waygood		
Other officers who have provided input:	Sara-Jane Brighthouse Ian Hayes		
Relevant Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) priority or priorities:			
Safeguarding and supporting children and families: Children, young people and families will benefit from early and effective support and protection to empower them to overcome difficulties and provide a safe environment in which to thrive.			x
Promoting the health and wellbeing of babies, children and young people: From pregnancy and throughout life, babies, children, young people and families will be healthier, more emotionally resilient and better able to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.			x
Supporting achievement and academic attainment: All children and young people will leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and will be ready for independence, work or further learning.			x
Empowering families to be strong and achieve economic wellbeing: More families will be empowered and able to deal with family issues and child poverty will be significantly reduced.			x
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):			
A more comprehensive understanding of early help			
For the first time the annual report includes a more holistic understanding around the quality of early help for 2014/15 including:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quantitative data from two separate systems; CAF Central Records and Local Authority CareFirst IT system.NCSCB Audits of Partnership CAFs and Local Authority Vulnerable Children and Families Quality Assurance Framework which evaluate the quality of support.NCSCB workforce consultations evaluating the lead professional role and the effectiveness of CAF.The Partnership data includes valuable information about engagement of parents and carers with early intervention.The Vulnerable Children and Families CAF includes outcome measures including if the child/young person/parent/carers views an improvement at review and closure stage, as well as Signs of Safety scoring.			
What's working well?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">There has been improved quality assurance arrangements, with the NCSCB coordinating dip sample audits of partnership CAF's and the Local Authority Vulnerable Children and Families has developed a QA Framework that tracks improvement (Appendix 1).NCSCB now deliver CAF training to partner agencies and CityCare has delivered internal CAF training from the beginning of 2014.Local Authority CAF assessments include Signs of Safety and need scaling and the partnership CAF's review if the need has been met or escalated.The Local Authority CAF captures child/young person and parent/carers consultations on their views			

and wishes.

What difference has this made?

- A higher percentage of those completing the NCSCB workforce survey are aware of the CAF, understand how it is used in their own agency and have completed CAFs.
- A high proportion of partnership CAF's show children's needs are being met.
- Partnership data shows a reduction of non-engagement as a reason for closure.
- There has been an increase in the quality of CAF's being undertaken by Vulnerable Children and Families evidenced by the quarterly and comparable audit information.
- During this period there was also an increase of 42% in the number of CAFs initiated by Health Visiting from 137 to 195.
- Local Authority CAFs consulted with child/young person/parent/carers and evidenced a high proportion (75-82%) viewed an improvement at review and closure stages.

1.1 Areas of development

- Currently there are two recording systems, CAF Central Records and the Local Authority system CareFirst. Subsequently further work needs to be undertaken to combine the data. The Partnership also needs to consider how to integrate Family Assessments.
- Despite an increase in the workforce feeling more confident about undertaking the Lead Professional role there has been a slight decrease in partnership CAF's being initiated (1%) and a decrease of Vulnerable Children and Families of 10%. This could be attributed to not recording Partnership CAFs on central records and the increase of recording Family Assessments as part of the Priority Families approach.
- During the 2014 inspection, the quality assurance information shows although there has been improved assessment analysis, engagement of children and young people and planning, these themes should still remain a focus for improvement.

Recommendations for discussion and approval:

1	The Partnership to ensure CAF's are recorded on Central Records and closed appropriately
2	To decide if the evaluation of early help will incorporate both CareFirst and CAF Central Records with further consideration about incorporating Family Assessments (Priority Families).
3	The partnership to support the implementation of an electronic CAF with roll out of the new Local Authority case management system.
4	To support focusing on virtuous learning by developing and cascading a good CAF example
5	To support the continuation of the NCSCB CAF training to increase partnership confidence, particularly focusing on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment analysis• Engaging children and families• Planning• Good practice CAF
6	To support the continuation of the NCSCB and Vulnerable Children and Families audits to drive up the quality of CAF's
7	To consider utilising the Vulnerable Children CAF QA to track improvement in quality and re-audit partnership CAFs

1. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

1.1 The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is the process to identify children who have additional needs, assess needs and strengths and to provide them with a co-ordinated, multi-agency support plan to meet those needs.

1.2 As part of the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework and Reviews of Safeguarding Board's, children who have been the subject to a common assessment will be audited to evaluate the impact of early help. This is crucial to ensure services achieve positive outcomes for children and families by providing timely and proportionate support and divert them from statutory services.

1.3 This report provides insight into the quantity, quality, impact and areas of development focusing on the CAF.

1.3 Quantitative

- 1.3.1 There are currently two systems where CAF's are recorded. The Local Authority host CAF Central Records (CCR), where the partnership provide information on CAF initiations and closures, as well as information if the need is met or risk escalated. To improve recording for Vulnerable Children and Families, in 2014, the facility to record CAF's was developed on CareFirst. The two systems have resulted in improved recording for Local Authority CAF's and a refresh of the assessment to include Signs of Safety scaling and assess if the level of need has reduced. A third system captures Families Assessments (Priority Families Portal).
- 1.3.2 However this has meant some duplication and a reduction in the numbers of CAF's recorded on CCR despite the early intervention activity continuing as they are held on a different system. Therefore the quantitative data presented in this report has been run for the first time from both systems, which has raised some further data reporting and comparative issues. The Local Authority has been requested to undertake some further analysis of the CAF data that will be published in the NCSCB Annual Report.
- 1.3.3 This is evidenced by the following: 864 initiated CAFs were recorded on CAF Central Records (CCR) across the partnership in 2014/15, which represents a 21.8% decrease on the number initiated in 2013/14 of 1104.
- 1.3.4 However when including all Local Authority CAF and early help assessments recorded with CareFirst by Vulnerable Children and Families teams not registered on CCR, the total is 1489 in 2014/15 down from 1657 in 2013/14 (a decrease of 10%). This could be attributed to Priority Family Assessments being undertaken in place of a CAF. The Partnership need to consider how these assessments will be incorporated in the future.

Initiation by Agency / Organisation

- 1.3.5 When analysing both CareFirst and CCR, Vulnerable Children and Families initiate the highest proportion of CAF's at 70.3% (1117).
- 1.3.6 Excluding the CAFs initiated by Vulnerable Children and Families, there has been a slight decrease of the number of CAFs initiated by the partnership between 2013/14 and 2014/15 of around 1%.
- 1.3.7 Outside of Vulnerable Children and Families, the other largest service/organisation initiators of the CAF remain Health Visiting and Primary and Secondary Schools.
- 1.3.8 Between 2013/14 and 2014/15 there was a 29% decrease in the number of CAFs initiated by Primary Schools (151 to 107), and a further decrease of 24% of those initiated by Secondary Schools between those periods (72 to 55). This decrease can be partly attributed to the Family Support Workers being based in schools who are employed by partly funded by schools and record on the Local Authority CareFirst System. In addition the NCSCB workforce survey confirmed some schools felt "it was not their responsibility to initiate a CAF", although other staff within the school undertaken the Lead Professional role and they also contribute to early help assessments.
- 1.3.9 During this period there was also an increase of 42% in the number of CAFs initiated by Health Visiting from 137 to 195.

Initiation by Reason

- 1.3.10 The largest area of CAFs initiated in 2014/15 against the Family Support Pathway dimensions were within:
- Education and Learning with 212 (25%).
 - Emotional and Behavioural Development with 170 (17%),

- Health with 134 (16%)
- Basic Care and Protection with 125 (15%)

1.3.11 This is a pattern reflected in the previous year with the above 4 dimensions been the most prevalent.

1.3.12 In regards to the four main agency initiators of CAF against those main initiation reasons there is a degree of variation in terms of proportion.

Outcomes

1.3.13 Taken from CCR, across the partnership as a whole, the percentage of cases closed where needs were identified as being met was 77.9% for 2014/15 which is an increase on 2013/14 where needs met was 64.1%.

1.3.14 The proportion of cases closed in 2014/15 due to increased risk/need was 12.6%. Increased risk / need covers escalation to a range of specialist services, the majority of which is escalation to Children's Social Care but also covers transfer to YOT, FIP and Specialist CAMHS.

1.3.15 The percentage of those closed due to increased risk / need is lower compared with the previous year, with 18.9% closing with increased risk / need in 2013/14.

1.3.16 The proportion of cases closing due to non-engagement is lower compared with the previous year, with 7.7% closing in 2014/15 compared with 11.7% in 2013/14.

Outcome by Ethnicity

1.3.17 In respect of outcomes by ethnicity, the proportion of cases closing with needs met in 2014/15 classified as:

- White British is 74% (201/271),
- White other is 67% (14/21),
- Asian ethnicity is 90% (26/29),
- Black ethnicity is 56% (20/36),
- Dual heritage is 72% (48/67).

Outcome by Age

1.3.18 For 2014/15 across the age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and 15-18, broadly speaking, the number for each outcome after intervention are consistent. For example, all age groups broadly have the same proportion where needs are identified as being met, non-engagement and increased risk/need.

Levels of Need and Signs of Safety

1.3.19 The Local Authority CAF captures and tracks progress of levels of need and signs of safety. This information has not previously been recorded in the CAF assessment.

- 50.8% of cases demonstrate a reduced level of need at review.
- 50.4% of closed CAFs show a reduction in Level of Need since the Assessment stage.
- 36% of cases demonstrate an improvement in signs of safety at review.
- 50% of cases demonstrate an improvement in signs of safety at closure.

(Further analysis is being undertaken the Local Authority regarding how this data is recorded and what the outcomes are after closure).

1.4 Qualitative

- 1.4.1 In February - March 2014 38 CAF's completed by the following agencies were audited by the NCSCB:
- Nottingham City Council, Social Care, and Family Community Teams
 - City Care Partnership (Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership, School Nursing)
 - Nottingham University Hospitals (Midwifery)
 - Nottingham City Schools
- 1.4.2 The audit findings included all agencies / service areas found issues with the storage and retention of the CAF documentation; it was inconsistently stored within agencies and across agencies and there is an issue with agencies recording on CAF Central Records. Service improvements have already been made for Vulnerable Children and Families CareFirst recording system, but further work needs to be undertaken to ensure partnership record on CAF Central Records to consider the improvement with the Local Authority IT update which may have improved partnership functionality.
- 1.4.3 The NSCBC audit positively identified appropriate partnership agency involvement in the majority CAFs selected for audit. This included Police, Probation, Housing, YOT, CAMHS, and adult services (for example specialist substance misuse services.) There was one case which would have benefited from housing being included.
- 1.4.4 The Local Authority Vulnerable Children and Families Service has implemented a Quality Assurance Framework since 2014 which tracks the quality and effectiveness of the key stages of a child's journey, from assessment and planning, through intervention and review to closure and outcomes. An example is found in Appendix 1. It is used to evidence a worker's individual performance and development, as well as triangulating themes with the NCSCB audits to inform strategic improvement.
- 1.4.5 The audits provide tracked and comparable information based on 65 questions framed on the Ofsted inspection identifying areas of improvement and quality of provision. To date nearly 200 audits have been completed and compared on a quarterly basis to effectively track improvement in each stage of a child's journey.
- 1.4.6 Positively there has been improvement in a number of areas. This includes taking a family centred approach to intervention with all CAF's being graded as good or outstanding. Although there has been improvement further work needs to be undertaken with engaging with the young people.
- 1.4.7 For both the partnership audit and the Vulnerable Children and Families audit there needs to be improvement to the assessment quality (45% partnership, 48% were not good or outstanding).

1.5 Engagement with frontline staff

- 1.5.1 In terms of the CAF, a higher percentage of those completing the survey are aware of the CAF, understand how it is used in their own agency and have completed CAFs. As outlined in the Partnership CAF Performance 2013/14, a communication plan was delivered across the Partnership to raise awareness of CCR and the revised processes. This increase could also be attributed to the NCSCB now delivering CAF training to partner agencies and the fact that CityCare has delivered internal CAF training from the beginning of 2014.
- 1.5.2 There is a slight increase in the number of practitioners who are 'confident' or 'very confident' in taking on the role of lead practitioner. However, this still leaves 25% of practitioners as feeling 'unconfident' or 'not at all confident'. And the NCSCB audit identified that CAF training is not consistently being delivered across partnership agencies. One agency has a long established CAF

training programme, one has a recently developed training programme, and the others are not in receipt of routine access to CAF training.

1.6 Engagement with service users and their families

- 1.6.1 The partnership data indicates the number of families not engaging as closure reason has reduced from 99 in 2013/14 to 36 in 2014/15. However this reduction might be explained by the total number of CAF's not been closed on central records, which has been identified as an issue in the data cleansing activity undertaken in 2013/14.
- 1.6.2 The Local Authority CAF captures the views of the child/young person and the parent/carer at review and closure stages of intervention. In 2014/15 the following views were recorded:
- Reviews where child/young person views an improvement is 81.1% (587/724)
 - Reviews where parent/carer views an improvement is 75.9% (431/568)
 - Closure where child/young person views an improvement 81.2% (782/963)
 - Closure where parent/carer views an improvement 76.7% (601/784)
- 1.6.3 The Local Authority CAF assessments include signs of safety views and captures child/young person and parent/carer consultation on their views and wishes. In 2014/15, 71% of children/young people have been consulted on their views and wishes and 93% of parents/carers have been consulted on their views and wishes.
- 1.6.4 As part of the NCSCB audits, attempts were made to contact families. One parent responded and their feedback reflected a very positive experience, she felt as a result of the CAF her children were happier, better behaved, and had developed friendships, she felt her relationship with the children had improved, and her relationship with professionals had also improved, she no longer wanted to "*run away from the.*" and didn't "*feel alone*". She did wish that the CAF had started sooner.

1.7 Conclusion

- 1.7.1 The 2014/15 Annual Report there has been a slight decrease of CAF activity. As identified in the body of the report CAF information is now stored on separate systems. We need to agree a way forward regarding the recording of CAF, Family Assessments and early help support across the partnership to ensure all activity is recorded. The implementation of the Local Authority IT system will present a solution and the Partnership should support its roll out.
- 1.7.2 There has been improved training arrangements and increase in partners undertaking the Lead Professional role.
- 1.7.3 There are improved quality assurance arrangements and mechanisms to gather if children/young people/parents/carers view if there has been an improvement and assess if intervention has made a difference. It is recommended to build upon good practice.
- 1.7.4 The quality assurance work evidences an increase in oversight and understanding around the quality of early intervention and Common Assessments. The audits evidence there has been an improvement in the all areas of the child's journey, although there are still areas of development around assessment and engaging children, these have shown improvement.

2 RISKS

- 2.1 The risk is not recording on the system, therefore not accurately evidencing the activity, provision and impact of early help.
- 2.2 There is a risk of duplicate and parallel system developing unless the Partnership supports the implementation of Project Evolution (the Local Authority IT solution).

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There is a body of research that evidences the increase in cost and statutory services unless there are timely and effective early intervention services.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified

5 CLIENT GROUP

- 5.1 All children, young people and their families who have been subject to early help and intervention across the partnership through the CAF.

6 IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES

- 6.1 The report data includes specific analysis and appreciation of CAF intervention and associated outcomes across the protective factors to ensure there is oversight of patterns or issues of disproportionate outcomes within minority groups.

7 OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED

- 7.1 Effective delivery of early intervention through the CAF and equivalent early help assessments is fundamental to achieving all of the Children and Young People's plan objectives and priorities.

8 CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1 (Example of the Vulnerable Children and Families QA Framework)

4.5 Intervention and Review

4.5.1 Positively there has been improvement in a number of areas. This includes taking a family centred approach to intervention with all CAF's being graded as good or outstanding, although further work needs to be undertaken with engaging with the young people.

4.5.2 Intervention and review has seen an improvement in taking an evidenced based approach to reflect on the level of need. Overall there has been improvement.

Selected Area	July to Sept 2014		Oct to Dec 2014		Jan to Mar 2015	
	No. of responses	% good or outstanding	No. of responses	% good or outstanding	No. of responses	% good or outstanding
24. To what level is it evidenced that the child/young person understood and was involved in the design of the intervention they received?	18	67%	27	81%	18	61%
25. To what level is it evidenced that the parent/carer understood and was involved in the design of the intervention they received?	24	71%	30	90%	24	100%
27. To what level are the decisions, actions and engagement of the child/young person/parents carers/other professionals clearly ordered?	24	71%	31	81%	25	96%
29. Is the identified progress or worsening Levels of Need supported by sufficient evidence?	18	78%	29	93%	25	92%
30. Is the identified progress or worsening Signs of Safety supported by sufficient evidence?	19	74%	24	79%	25	84%
35. What is the overall quality of the Intervention?	24	67%	31	74%	25	80%
39. What is the overall quality of the Review?	22	68%	31	74%	24	75%
40. What is the overall quality of the case at the Review stage	22	55%	31	74%	25	80%