

## **Common Assessment Framework**

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met. It can be used by practitioners across children's services in England.

The CAF will promote more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services. It is intended to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of a child's needs and strengths, taking account of the role of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners will then be better placed to agree, with the child and family, about what support is appropriate. The CAF will also help to improve integrated working by promoting coordinated service provision.

12 local areas formally trialed the CAF and the role of the lead professional during 2005-06; trials were evaluated by the University of East Anglia (UEA). Over two-thirds of local authorities chose to use the CAF during the trial year and materials were issued in April 2005 to support implementation. An evaluation report will be made available on the [DCSF research website](#) in the near future.

Alongside the UEA evaluation, we worked with the trialing groups to identify any early lessons, enabling them to share good practice and inform further development of the CAF materials. Following wide consultation, revised CAF materials have been issued, including practitioners' and managers' guides, CAF form, pre-assessment checklist and supporting tools. You can download the National documents below.

All local authority areas are expected to implement the CAF, along with the lead professional role and information sharing, between April 2006 and March 2008.

### **CAF Documents**

[Common Assessment Framework: Practitioners' and Managers' Guides](#)

[The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: Supporting Tools](#)

[Common Assessment Framework: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[How the Integrated Children's System, the Common Assessment Framework and ContactPoint fit together](#)

A short essay on harnessing information for ECM.

[Integrated Working Factsheets](#) - including a factsheet on CAF

[Better Information Sharing in Practice](#)

Case studies showing how the common assessment framework, combined with the

function of the lead professional and multi-agency working, contribute to better information sharing.