

“The Common Assessment Framework (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 all sectors of children's services in England. It will promote more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services and improve integrated working by promoting co-ordinated service provision. 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.”

Parents and carers and children and young people should be at the centre of the assessment. It is important that they are helped to understand the process using the information leaflets for [parents and carers](#) and [children and young people](#), in order that they can contribute in an effective partnership. The process should be experienced by them as helpful and empowering.

The approach to Common Assessment being adopted in Leeds focuses more on solutions than problems. That means taking a particular interest in what is working in people's lives, as opposed to what is not and helping people to work out how to change the parts of their lives that are not running so well. Adopting a [solution focused](#) approach across Children's Services will help embed a common language of need and response.

The Common Assessment is intended to complement rather than replace specialist or statutory assessment processes. Where a child is already undergoing a specialist assessment, that assessment would supersede the Common Assessment. However there may be circumstances where a child is being supported by more than one agency, possibly involving specialist assessment, and the Common Assessment may be able to provide the structure to summarise relevant information into a single, simple format that can be shared quickly and easily, particularly from the perspective of the child, young person, their parents and carers. Similarly Common Assessment may be appropriate as part of an exit strategy from specialist services to coordinate universal and targeted responses as appropriate.

National guidance will identify how common assessment fits with specialist assessments, for example [Connexions](#) has produced guidance on the use of Common Assessment and their current assessment tool Assessment Planning Intervention and Review (APIR.)

Electronic enablement of Common Assessments is a national aspiration. Leeds has developed an interim solution with a database hosted by Children Leeds.

Monitoring and reporting procedures for Common Assessment are linked to the Children Leeds and Local Safeguarding Children Board structures at a local level.

Electronic enablement allows sophisticated reporting available through the IPCs.

Quality assurance processes are supported by electronic enablement. Local IPCs have an opportunity to see assessments and provide support to practitioners on the next steps, as necessary. For summary information on good practice in undertaking assessments link to the [“Quick CAF Guide”](#)