

Briefing for Primary Forum 11 May 09: Common Assessment Framework/ Lead Professional / ContactPoint update

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional functions

The Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional functions are new processes all local authorities are required to implement with Children's Trust partners to strengthen integrated service delivery for children and young people. They contribute to positive outcomes by helping practitioners identify children who have additional needs, facilitate their access to support and coordinate intervention where they require help from a number of different services.

Implementing the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional arrangements is a key enabling measure within Kent's Children and Young People's Plan and a top priority identified for CFE in consultation with the Government Office of the South East. Implementation is proceeding through Local Children's Services Partnerships in line with plans agreed by Kent Children's Trust Board, with a view to these new processes being used across all age groups and in all localities by the end of July.

Over 3,000 practitioners and managers so far have been trained in the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional arrangements, with further training available in 2009/10.

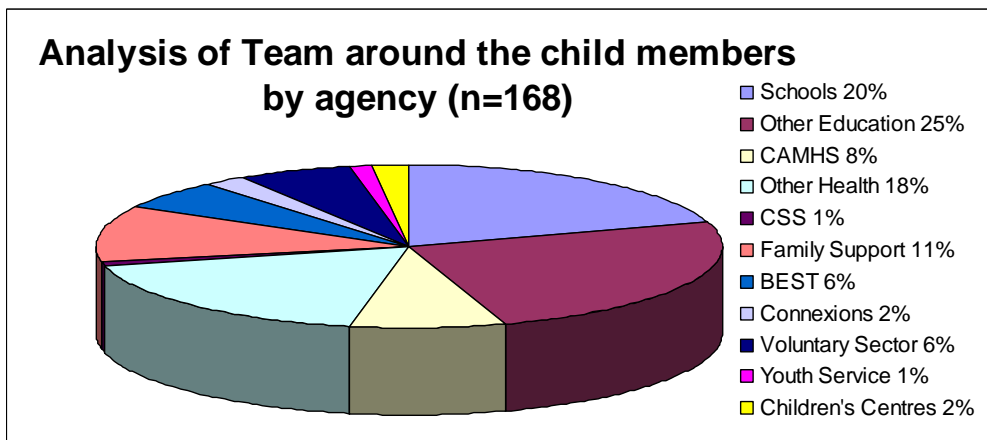
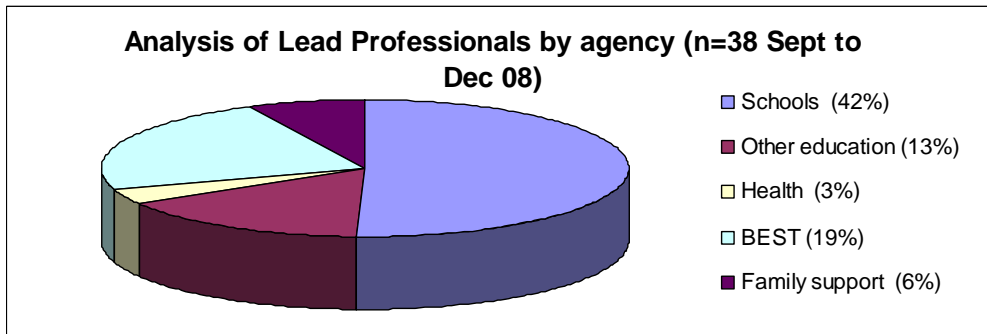
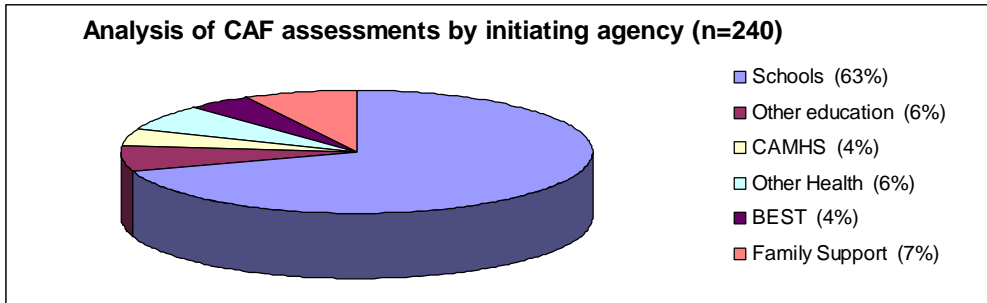
How these processes benefit children and young people

The Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional functions, together with information sharing arrangements, Kent Resource Directory and ContactPoint, are common tools to support practitioners across children's services in joining up service delivery for children and young people, with a particular focus of early intervention. Integrated working offers real benefits for children and their families, and also for the services which support them, including:

- Improved information sharing.
- Joined up services for children and their families.
- Sharing of expertise and skills.
- Reduction of duplication.
- Improved cost effectiveness.

CAF and Lead Professional activity to date in Kent

The number of assessments undertaken using the Common Assessment Framework is increasing as the CAF process is implemented across Kent Children's Trust and embedded in front line practice. Just over 300 CAF assessments have been completed to date, with the level of activity increasing as the process goes live in successive localities. An analysis of assessments shows that 72% relate to boys and 28% to girls. 37% of the children concerned were under 8yrs, 47% were 8 to 13yrs and 16% over 13. Analysis of CAF and related activity data demonstrates the significant role Kent's schools are taking in initiating assessments and, working with others, in delivering joined up "Team around the child" support for children and young people whose needs require the involvement of a range of different services.



Initial evaluation

An initial evaluation of integrated processes in phase 1 has been undertaken to inform the implementation of CAF and related processes in the remaining LCSPs and to identify areas for further development. A strong local involvement of practitioners and managers provided a significant contribution to the evaluation as well as the views of parents/carers and children and young people. The evaluation underlined the benefits for children and their families where these processes are used effectively and identified recommendations to ensure this is the case. The Trust's implementation plan has been revised to take account of these recommendations, with a review of the policy framework, a revised training offer and action to strengthen local coordination and administrative support for the process.

Training available

It is important that staff who will need to use these processes, and their managers, attend the programme of training being delivered through the Children's Trust. It is recommended that Headteachers attend a managers' workshop. The training offer

will continue to develop in response to needs identified as CAF and related processes are embedded. Information about training opportunities for practitioners and managers is published at http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_CAF.cfm

Coordination and administrative support for the CAF process

The need for local co-ordination and administrative support has been highlighted to ensure the effective operation of these processes and to provide consistency across localities. CFE has identified some initial funding in 2009/10 and 2010/11 to enhance the capacity of Local Children's Services Partnerships to do this, in partnership with other relevant agencies. All Kent Children's Trust Board Members have agreed that staff within their agencies will support CAF and Lead Professional arrangements.

Electronic enablement of CAF

Common Assessment Framework records are currently managed in Kent through a paper based process. This approach was intended as a short term solution as Government has outlined a plan for a national electronic eCAF system to support this activity. However, national eCAF is now not due to be available before 2010 and, while enabling us to get started, Kent's current paper based approach does not provide a sustainable approach moving forward. CFE is therefore leading the deployment in 2009 of a Kent eCAF system to take us through to national eCAF.

Kent Resource Directory

Kent Resource Directory provides information about a huge range of services and activities available to children, young people and their parents and carers. This fully searchable database is easily accessed by children and their families, and by practitioners who are seeking support for them, through a website at www.krd.org.uk. The Directory has a login facility that allows partners to include their services on the database and to amend their information as they need to.

ContactPoint update

ContactPoint is a national online directory of children and young people, available to authorised staff who need it to do their jobs, enabling the delivery of coordinated support for children and young people. ContactPoint will enable practitioners to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, making it easier to deliver more coordinated support. It is also a vital tool to help safeguard children, helping to ensure that the right agencies are involved at the right time and children do not slip through the net. Like CAF and Lead professional functions, it is a key element of the Every Child Matters programme to transform children's services by supporting more effective prevention and early intervention.

Over 10,000 potential ContactPoint users and 24 data systems that will feed information into ContactPoint have been identified in Kent. Multiagency procedures have been agreed for shielding records where it is necessary for children in specific circumstances (e.g. children being adopted). ContactPoint will go live in Kent later this year and, like CAF and Lead professional functions, will be supported by an extensive programme of user training.

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