

What is the Common Assessment Framework?

The Common Assessment Framework (or CAF) is a way of working with children and young people. It involves listening to you and your child to find out your child's needs and what is working well in their life. An action plan, agreed with you and your child, is put in place to make sure your child gets the right sort of help. The CAF is voluntary – you and your child can choose whether to be involved

How will the CAF help my family?

The CAF exists to help you support your child. It can lead to a quick solution or help to identify extra support if needed. The CAF will ensure that everyone involved with your child – such as teachers and health visitors – works together to support them. The CAF will help your child receive the right support at an early stage before their needs increase. As the CAF is a shared assessment, you and your child will not have to repeat the same story to different workers.

When is the CAF used?

The needs of most children will be met by professionals with whom they are already in contact. However, a teacher, a health visitor or a worker from another service might be concerned that a child has additional needs that are not being met. This professional will be the one to talk to you about a common assessment. You will need to think about whether this is the right action for your child. A common assessment will only be done where you and your son/daughter give permission (consent). You will also be asked about sharing information with other professionals, either as part of the assessment process or when the assessment is complete.

How does it work?

A worker will ask you and your child some questions to find out what help and support they might need. This information is recorded on a simple form.

You and your child will agree what is put on the form, and you will be given a copy of it. Older children may feel able to discuss their situation on their own with the worker. A young person's wish to keep information confidential from parents may be respected by the worker, where this is in the young person's best interests and welfare.

What happens next?

A meeting called a Team around the Family meeting (TAF) will be called, and an action plan drawn up based on the information you and your child provided. All those who can help your child will work together to provide the support needed. Only workers who need to know about your child will share your child's information.

Who is a lead professional?

If a number of people are providing support to your child, one of these people will be appointed as a 'lead professional'. This person will coordinate all the services working with you, tell you what is happening, and listen to your views. You and your child will have a say in who should be the lead professional.

For further information, please contact one of the CAF Coordinators on 0845 002 0095 if you are a professional or 0845 650 0097 if you are a member of the public or email caf@iow.gov.uk