

Do I have to take part?

- The common assessment is entirely voluntary, so if you don't think it is right for your child, then you don't have to complete a common assessment.

Is it confidential?

As a rule, the information you provide will only be shared with people with your consent. There may, though, be certain times when the people working with you may need to share the information

For example:

- If a child or adult may be at risk of harm.
- To prevent a serious crime.

Where possible, this would be discussed with you beforehand.

What are the benefits?

- A 'joined up' approach to supporting your family.
- An assessment that can be shared with all services, meaning you don't have to keep giving the same information to everyone you meet.
- A lead professional to keep you informed every step of the way, and to answer any questions you may have.
- A process which is centred on the needs of your child.

If you are interested in finding out more, you can speak with a professional already supporting your child, or you can contact us:

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This leaflet can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from the Family Information Service.

Common Assessment - an offer of early help



A leaflet for parents and carers

Common Assessment

What is CAF?

- The common assessment framework is a process which aims to identify the needs and strengths of a child or young person, and then make sure they get the right help to have their needs met.

When should common assessments be used?

- Common assessments are normally used when a child/young person would benefit from some extra support.
- It could be that you as a parent ask for extra support, or it could be that a professional working with your child suggests extra help might be useful.
- The earlier a common assessment is completed, the sooner extra support can be explored.

Who gets involved?

Your child and your family are at the centre of the process, but there are others who will be involved.

- Anyone working with children and young people can be involved with a common assessment.
- It could be a teacher, a school nurse, a health visitor, a youth worker or a scout leader or anyone else your child is currently working with.

What happens next?

Once you have agreed that a common assessment might be useful, there are a number of things that happen.

- The assessment will be completed with a professional you know. Completing the form is the next part of the process, and will identify the needs and strengths of your child. Your child will also be included in the assessment. A lot of families feel this is a great chance to tell their child's story and really be listened to.
- After the form is completed, a team around your child meeting will be arranged. This is usually the team that are already supporting your child, but there may be some new faces who are also able to offer further support.
- During the meeting an action plan is put together. This formalises the support being offered, and lets you know exactly who is going to do what, and when. A lead professional will also be agreed.
- Review meetings will usually take place 8-12 weeks after the first meeting. Review meetings are there to make sure the support being offered is working, and address any problems. It could be that further actions are added to support your child. The assessment is a working document, and updates can be made at any time.

What is a team around the child/ family meeting? (TAC/TAF)

- TAC/TAF meetings put your child at the centre of discussions and decisions.
- They are a way of bringing together all agencies and individuals involved in supporting your family.

What is a lead professional? (LP)

- The lead professional is normally someone you already know, who takes on the role of coordinating the support being offered. This helps stop professionals repeating work that has already been done, or doing the same work as someone else.
- The lead professional will ensure you are able to have your say at every stage.
- The lead professional can also act as the main point of contact for your family. It can be hard to remember everyone if there are lots of people supporting your child and family, so having a lead professional helps with this.
- You and your child will have a say in who the lead professional will be.