

Do I have to do this?

No. The common assessment is an entirely voluntary process, so if you don't think it is right for you, then you don't have to take part. However, it is designed to be helpful to you, so why not give it a try? You might be surprised just how much help is out there if you ask!

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 someone 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 helping and supporting you and 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 focused on you, your strengths and your needs.

If you are interested in finding out more, you can speak with someone from where you picked up this leaflet, or, contact us directly on the numbers below:

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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 children and young people

Common Assessment

What is Common Assessment?

The Common Assessment Framework, often called a CAF, is a way of offering you some extra help in life, if and when you need it. With your agreement people that might be able to help can meet with you to work out the best way of offering you some support when life is a bit tricky. The CAF is not a magic fix but, if used properly, should be able to get you some help when things are a bit tough.

The CAF is completely voluntary and will only happen if you agree to it, even if someone else is suggesting it would be a good idea, although if they are maybe it is worth thinking about. You can even suggest a CAF yourself, the best way to do this is probably by speaking to who ever gave you this leaflet. If that person can't help then they will know someone who can.

Who gets involved?

You, and if needs be your family, are very much at the centre of the CAF process, but there are others who can be involved. Anyone that works children and young people can be involved with a CAF. Whether that's from a local authority organisation, like a school, or from a less formal group, like a youth club.

What happens next?

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

- You will meet up with someone that you know and trust to have a chance to tell your story, say how things are for you at the moment. Together you will fill out a CAF form so that other people, with your permission, can also read about how things are going for you.
- After the form is completed, there will be a meeting where people that might be able to offer you some help get together to work out how they can best work as a team, to support you.
- During that meeting an action plan is put together to make it clear how things are going to move forward. This lets you know exactly who is going to do what, and when. It will also be agreed with you who is going to keep a check on things in the plan to make sure they happen, this person will be called the lead professional.
- There will usually be a review meeting held every 8-12 weeks. Review meetings are there to check the plan is actually helping, and to make changes if not.

What is a TAC or TAF meeting?

This stands for team around the child or family and is just the shorthand name for the group of people that can be offering you some help and support. It is not a fixed group of people and the group will probably change over time. There should be no one in this team that you are not happy about having there, but give people a chance, they might be able to help in ways you didn't expect!

What is a lead professional?

The lead professional is normally someone you already know, who takes on the role of co-ordinating the support you are being offered. This helps stop people getting in each others way and should mean that you are not having to see too many people all at the same time.

The lead professional will make sure that you have your say at every stage.

The lead professional can also act as the main point of contact for you and your family. It can sometimes be hard to remember everyone if there are lots of people supporting you, so having a lead professional helps with this.

Most importantly, the lead professional should be someone you trust and are happy to meet with and talk to when ever you need to, not just at the organised meetings.