

Early Help Quality Assurance Framework

The Early Help Quality Assurance Framework describes how Tameside measures the quality of the Early Help, Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

This framework should be used to guide services and further embed use of the CAF across Tameside. This is important to ensure that children, young people and families in the borough access appropriate support at the **soonest** opportunity to enable **stronger** and sustainable outcomes.

Documents and tools available within this publication have been developed to support practitioners, supervisors and managers across a range of agencies in Tameside in delivering **smarter** interventions that meet needs of individuals and families.

Capturing the journey and the voice of the child and family are key underpinning objectives of the Quality Assurance Framework. This is crucial in helping us improve our response to children and families with additional need in a **safer** and joined up way.

Early Help Assessment Quality Standards

The CAF Quality Standards have been developed to support the improvement of practice relating to the quality of assessment and intervention in early help. The Standards and associated tools provide managers and practitioners with clear guidance to drive the application of the CAF to maximise support given to children and families. The tools can be used by a range of agencies and provides a consistent approach to quality assurance and audit.

Quality Assurance Process

- Heads of Service/Service Unit Manager/ Headteacher

The CAF Checklist has been developed as an aid for managers to assess how well the CAF is embedded in their service, agency or organisation. This tool can be used initially to benchmark current practice and then form part of the regular quality review process.

- Line Manager/Supervisor

The CAF QA Audit Form should also be used by managers to carry out dip sampling of CAFs across the service. This will support thematic learning and review regarding uptake and embedding of quality CAF processes across the borough. There is an expectation that a **5%** dip sample will be audited monthly within services and the findings summarised and shared with the CAF Team. This tool, together with the Line Manager/Supervisor Early Help Assessment Checklist can also be used in supervision or other 1-2-1 sessions with practitioners to highlight training or support needs.

- Practitioner

The CAF Practitioner Self- Assessment Checklist is intended to be a prompt for the practitioner, highlighting key questions at the various stages of the assessment framework. It should be considered in conjunction with the QA Standards and not be seen as a stand-alone document.

- CAF Support Team

The CAF team will undertake a minimum of **20** dip sample on a monthly basis of multi-agency CAF assessments using the CAF QA Audit Form. This is to improve and embed the consistency of common processes and shared values as outlined in the 'Working Together' statutory guidance

Following audit, the CAF Team will provide feedback directly to the service manager based on the findings. This mechanism has been designed to promote consistency in the application of CAF and to support services working with children and families to use common processes.

In addition, the CAF Team will collate a quarterly report on key themes from the outcome of the audits and feedback to TSCB to inform future training needs. The CAF team will coordinate six monthly **Multi Agency CAF Champion meetings** to review a cross section of audits to improve consistency of assessment practice. These moderation meetings will also ensure that learning is built into workforce development and service improvement plans.

Quarterly Service Returns

All services will feedback data to the TSCB on a quarterly basis to measure implementation and quality of CAF to inform thematic reviews and support continual learning.

Evidence of how the checklist tools are being used across the borough is an important part of the strategic quality assurance process of CAF.

The CAF team will support services with this process

Governance

TSCB will collate the CAF data and audits and together with the CAF advisers analyse and report through to Early Help Strategy Group

Ownership of CAF by all partners delivering services to children and their families is crucial in order to steer effective development and maximise uptake of the CAF across a range of agencies and organisations. The outcomes of the Quality Audits, identifying areas for improvement and actions to be undertaken are reported through to the TSCB.

Child and Family Voice

Capturing the views of children and families is an essential element of both the CAF process and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Early Help Framework in the borough. The evidence gathered from evaluations will be used to influence and

shape delivery of services and inform service improvement plans. Examples of tools available to enable consistent capture of the views of children are in the appendices.

Tameside Early Help Assessment Quality Standards

<p style="text-align: center;">Section One – Early Help Assessment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The assessment is holistic and identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet needs / concerns – vulnerabilities and adversities • Strengths – protective factors and resilience 2. The assessment is factual, evidence based and focused on improving outcomes for the child/young person in the context of their family 3. The assessment is logical, concise and jargon free 4. The assessment includes information from a range of agencies as appropriate 5. The assessment explores and addresses the impact of age, disability, ethnicity, faith/belief, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation 6. The voice of the child/young person is explicit in the assessment process 7. The voice of the parent(s)/carer(s) is explicit in the assessment process (if appropriate) 8. A critical analysis and evaluation of the information gathered from the child, young person and family is present in the assessment 9. The assessment shows an understanding of the history and wider family context and the impact of this on the child or young person 10. The assessment identifies any potential safeguarding concerns and evidences how professionals and the family are managing these 11. The assessment is child centred and continuous.
<p style="text-align: center;">Section Two – Early Help Assessment Plan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely (SMART) and outcome focused 2. The Plan involves the child/young person, their parents/carers (and others affected by the plan) in the decisions taken and encourages them to take on actions themselves where appropriate 3. The Plan recognises risks and outlines how risk can be responded to or reduced 4. The plan should be led by the needs of the child and family and not the needs of the agency
<p style="text-align: center;">Section Three – Early Help Assessment Review Meeting</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The review date and time takes into account the specific circumstances of the child/young person and their family 2. The review considers any newly identified needs and strengths and uses them to inform the next steps 3. The child/young person is present at the review meeting (if appropriate). Their views are sought on planning the next steps and their comments are recorded 4. The parents/carers are present at the review meeting (if appropriate). Their views are sought on planning the next steps and their comments are recorded 5. The outcome of each review is clearly recorded and the next review date identified (if the Early Help Assessment is not closing) 6. The initial review meeting is set six weeks after the Team around the Family meeting. Subsequent reviews are timely according to the specific needs and actions identified in the plan. 7. The reason for the closure of the Early Help Assessment is clearly evidenced

Quality Assurance for the EARLY HELP ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Early Help Assessment Framework quality assurance will be undertaken as outlined below to ensure consistency of process across services and at all levels of the workforce in Tameside.

Service Manager/Head of Service/ Headteacher

Who	When/How often	Tools
Service Managers/Heads of Service will ensure that the Early Help Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes are being established and embedded in their services.	Annual review of the checklist and improvements to be incorporated into the service planning process. Quarterly returns of the CAF data to TSCB Quality Audit and themes	Head of Service / Service Unit Managers Early Help CAF Checklist 2

Line Manager/Supervisor

Who	When/How often	Tools
Line Managers/Supervisors of practitioners using the CAF process. This tool can be used within one to one/supervision sessions to ensure that the CAF process is understood and to highlight any further training or support needs.	To be introduced and discussed with new staff during Induction and any probationary period. To support new staff when first using the CAF process. Monthly dip sampling of CAF which have been completed by team members (practitioners) . Monthly dip sampling of CAF closures	Line Manager/Supervisor Early Help CAF Checklist 3 CAF Quality Audit Form Outcomes framework

Practitioner

Who	When/How often	Tools
Practitioners using the CAF process. The purpose of the checklist is to help develop an understanding of what is required in terms of quality.	Use the checklist every time the CAF process is used	Quality Audit Standards CAF Practitioner self - assessment checklist 1 CAF support guidance

CAF Support Team

Who	When/How often	Tools
CAF Advisers will ensure that the CAF processes are being established and embedded in services.	Monthly dip sampling of multi- agency CAF. Information off the checklist on improvements to be incorporated into the service planning process. Monthly CAF surgeries Support services when using CAF process for the first time Attendance at CAF meetings	CAF support team checklist CAF audit form CAF support guidance

Feedback to Senior Management Team and TSCB

Who	When/How often	Tools
Tameside Families Together manager and CAF Manager	Following quarterly Multi-agency Quality Audit Panels. In line with reporting requirements set by TSCB TSCB Data returns - Quarterly	CAF reports CAF Quality Audit Summary Sheet.

Child/young person and family feedback

Who	When/How often	Tools
Practitioners will ask parents/carers and/or children and young people to complete the appropriate questionnaire. Feedback from child/YP and/or parent/carer will help practitioners assess how well the CAF process is going from the family's point of view.	At third CAF review meeting and the point of closure of Early Help Assessment Framework, practitioners will ask families to complete the questionnaire. Completed feedback sheets should be sent to the CAF support team to inform further guidance and training and report on families' views	Young Person's Feedback sheet Parents/Carer's Feedback sheet

Early Help Common Assessment Framework Practitioner Self-Assessment Checklist 1

If you are new to the Early Help Common Assessment Framework process, use this checklist and refer to Tameside Family CAF Support Guidance for Practitioners every time. If you are experienced in using the CAF, you should be checking your quality at least once every 3 months.

Early Help Assessment Framework Process	Y	N
Did you explain to the child/young person and/or their parent/carer the reason/s why you would like to carry out the assessment?		
Have you explained to the child/young person and/or parent/carer the purpose of the Early Help Assessment Framework process?		
Information Sharing and Consent		
Have you agreed with the child/young person and/or parent/carer who the information will be shared with and how it will be recorded? Or – if not, are the reasons clear?		
Assessment		
Are all sections of the CAF fully completed		
Does the assessment focus on what the child/young person and/or their parents want to achieve? Have you included both the strengths and needs of the child/young person and family in the assessment?		
Is the assessment comprehensive and relevant; have you collected enough information for all those involved and from other professionals involved with the family?		
Have you used guidance tools, where needed, to support your assessment?		
Conclusions, Solutions and Analysis		
Does the conclusion identify what needs to change and how this will be achieved? Does this relate to your original reason for using the Early Help Assessment Framework process?		
Have you identified how you will know when things have improved?		
Action Plan		
Does the Action Plan identify clear tasks for each member of the team around the child including the child/young person and/or parent/carer if relevant?		
Have you agreed when to follow up and review the Action Plan?		
Have you identified a Lead Practitioner?		
Review		
Have you identified if there is any new information that needs to be shared and reviewed the Action Plan?		
Are you clear about whether to continue with the CAF process or close it?		
Handover		
If you are no longer able/need to continue in the role of the Lead Practitioner (e.g. all your actions have been completed or Transition from Primary School to Secondary School). If there are still outstanding additional unmet needs have you agreed to a new Lead Practitioner from an appropriate agency and with the consent of the child/young person and/or parent/carer.		

Head of Service/Service Manager / Headteacher Early Help Common Assessment Framework Checklist 2

This tool is intended to help services identify how well they have established Integrated Working to embed the Early Help Strategy and Common Assessment Framework. It is included here to support service managers to implement and review quality processes in their service or organisation.

Key Questions	Y	?	N
Has your service / organisation adapted/adopted new procedures which incorporate the CAF?			
Do managers of Integrated Working processes support the use of the CAF and explain the benefits to their staff?			
Have all managers attended the CAF Training?			
Do managers understand the Tameside Threshold Guidance?			
Do you know how the CAF /Lead Practitioner (LP) Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings will be used in your organisation?			
Do you provide CAF awareness raising as part of your induction for all new staff?			
Do staff working with children and young people have access to and attend CAF Training?			
Are supporting documents and tools available to all relevant staff?			
Do managers use the Annual Performance Review & Development or equivalent process to recognise existing skills or identify gaps in core competencies and ensure that training is accessed?			
Is it agreed who is likely to undertake and CAF in your service and when?			
Do you know when staff have completed CAF's, are LPs or are involved in TAF Meetings?			
Do you have mechanisms in place to monitor the quality of CAF completed by your staff and that Action plans are SMART and outcome focused?			
Do you have processes in place to supervise and support practitioners who act as Lead Practitioners and contribute to TAF meetings and Action plans?			
Do managers ensure that procedures are in place for the safe and secure storage of CAF's?			
Do managers ensure that CAF completed by their team can be accessed and transferred if a member of staff leaves?			
Do managers ensure that LP responsibility is transferred appropriately when needed?			
Do managers ensure CAF /LP and TAF activity for the service is monitored and outcomes are measured?			
Do managers understand when and how to resolve or escalate disputes?			
Do managers encourage staff to regularly seek service user feedback and act upon this when using CAF /LP role/TAF?			
Have you identified a CAF Champion for your service/ organisation?			
Head of Service/Service Manager's Actions for Improvement	Timescales		

Line Manager/Supervisor Early Help Common Assessment Framework Checklist 3

Key Questions	Y	?	N
Does the practitioner know when and why they should complete a CAF and are they confident in applying the Tameside Thresholds.			
Is the practitioner aware of the importance and benefits of early help, in particular to the child/young person and/or their family?			
Is the information in their assessments useful, relevant, practical and comprehensive?			
Do action plans relate to assessments and lead to effective change being/or potentially being achieved?			
Have any training or support needs been identified for the practitioner, if so have they been actioned?			
Is the practitioner aware of the procedures in place for safe storage of CAF (electronic and any hard copies)?			
Has the staff member ensured that any hard copies of the CAF can be accessed by their line manager/designated deputy if they have an extended absence (school holidays, sickness, maternity etc)?			
Does the practitioner understand the process for ensuring a smooth transition when a child/young person changes schools, moves home, leaves the area etc? Are they aware who is responsible for ensuring it is carried out?			

Areas for Improvement	Timescales	
Line Manager's Actions		
Practitioners Actions		

Child / Young Person's Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Feedback Sheet:- are we on target?

My worker is from _____ service. I am _____ years old. I am Male Female

Date _____ Completed at: Review or when the CAF was closed _____

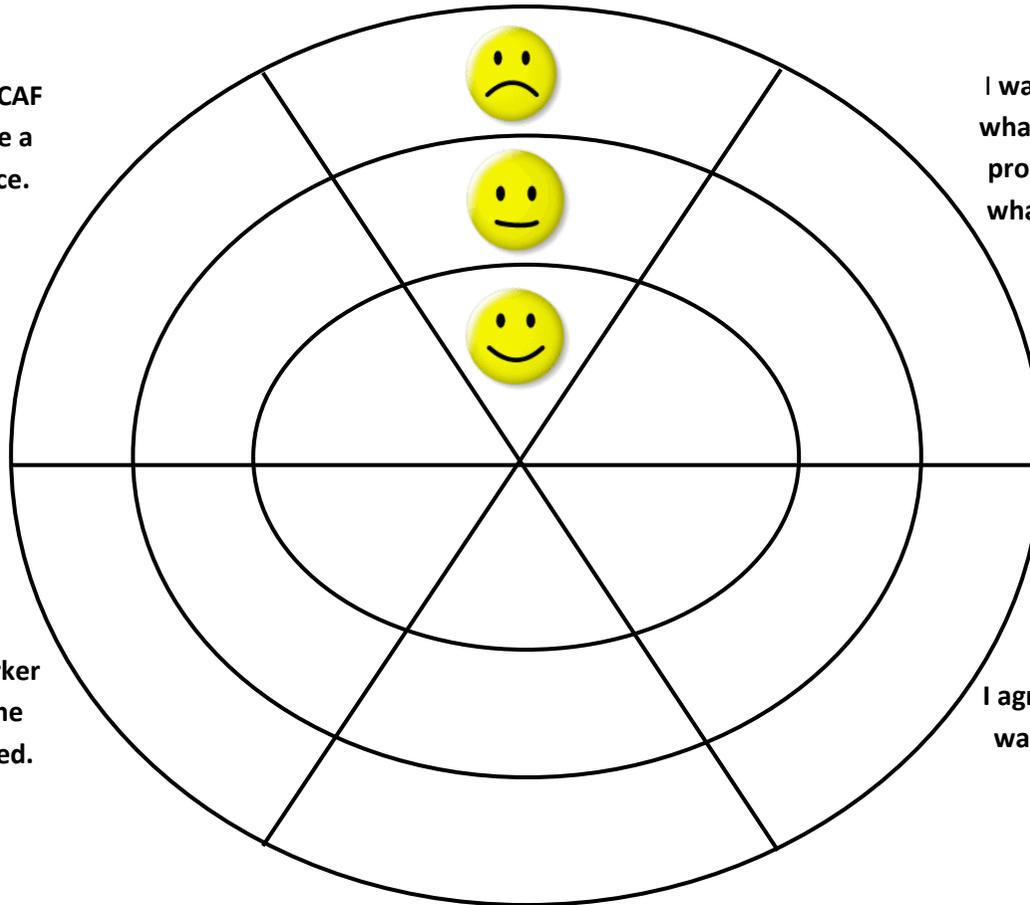
Having a CAF has made a difference.

My worker kept me informed.

I agreed who my information could be shared with.

I was asked about what I thought the problem was and what would help.

I agreed with what was in the action plan.



Is there anything else you would like to tell us?



Parent/Carer Early Help Common Assessment Framework Feedback Sheet

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been introduced to help when you need extra support with your child or family. It should allow you and the workers involved with your child/family a shared understanding of their/your needs. It should help us to share information and mean that you should not have to repeat your information lots of times. We are trying to find out how well we are doing using the CAF in Tameside. Your opinion will help us to find out what we need to do better – we will use this to inform workers and improve our training and guidance.

Which service helped you to complete the CAF? How old are your children?

My worker and I discussed the worries that we each have about my child and I was able to give my views?			
We talked about all aspects of my child's life - what is going well as well as the problems			
We agreed a plan of action that I thought would improve things for my child and our family			
I agreed who the information could be shared with			
We received the help we needed			
Having an CAF has made a difference			
Please tell us anything else you think we need to know:			

Date Completed at: Review or when the CAF was closed

Common Assessment Framework Quality Audit Form

Audited by	Name: Role Agency:
Date of audit	
Name(s) of children/young people	
Lead Practitioner (s)	Current: Past:

Section one - Assessment

(this is not applicable if the has been opened following a single assessment being completed by Childrens Social Care or the family have been stepped down from Childrens Social Care following a child in need plan ending)

The CAF assessment	Not met	Partially met	Met
The assessment is holistic and identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet needs/concerns – vulnerabilities and adversities • Strengths - protective factors and resilience 			
The assessment is factual, evidence based and focused on improving outcomes for the child			
The assessment is logical, concise and free from jargon			
There is evidence that information from other agencies has contributed to the assessment			
The impact of age, disability, ethnicity, faith/belief, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation has been considered			
There is evidence of appropriate and quality involvement of the children/young people in the process			
There is evidence of appropriate and quality involvement of the parents/carers in the process			
The information gathered has been critically analysed and evaluated			
The assessment has considered the wider family context, family history and the impact of this on the child/young person			
The assessment has identified any potential safeguarding concerns and evidences how professionals and the family are managing these concerns			

Comments/evidence of good practice				
Overall grade for section	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding

Section Two – Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Action Plan				
The CAF Action Plan	Not met	Partially met	Met	
The CAF action plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely (SMART) and outcome focused				
There is evidence that the views of the child/young person has informed the actions in the plan				
There is evidence that the views of the parent/carer has informed the actions in the plan				
The CAF action plan recognises risks and outlines how risk can be responded to or reduced.				
The Team around the Family plan identifies how improvements will be evidenced				
Comments/evidence of good practice				
Overall grade for section	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding

Section Three – CAF Review Meeting

The CAF Review Meeting	Not met	Partially met	Met	
The review date and time takes into account the specific circumstances of the child/young person and their family				
The child/young person is present at the review meeting (if appropriate) and their views on the actions and next steps are recorded				
The parent/carer is present at the review meeting (if appropriate) and their views on the actions and next steps are recorded				
The outcome of the review is clearly recorded and the next review is identified (unless the CAF is closing)				
The review date is within an appropriate timeframe (within 6 weeks for the initial review or appropriate to the timeline for the actions in the plan for subsequent reviews)				
At the final review meeting the reason for the closure of the CAF is clear and agreed by all contributing to the assessment and plan.				
Comments/evidence of good practice				
Overall grade for section	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding

Section Four– Feedback summary

Overall grade	Inadequate	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Overall learning points including any recommended actions				

Useful Links

CAF Practitioners Guidance – Contact your CAF adviser

Area	CAF Adviser	Contact Details
Ashton	Paul Mottershead	07813441344
Denton/ Droylsden/ Audenshaw	Wayne McConnell	07580978684
Staylbridge/ Dunkinfield/ Mossley	Katie Legg	07800917117
Hyde/ Hattersley/ Longendale	Joanne Allcock	07870872335

TSCB website - <https://www.tamesidesafeguardingchildren.org.uk>

Service Information Directory - <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/sid>

Appendix 2

Role of CAF Champion

- To maintain a record of CAF activity within their organisation
- To maintain details of the families who their organisation has completed a CAF on
- Respond to requests to share the CAF assessment from CAF Champions in other agencies or from CAF Advisors
- Submit quarterly data returns to TSCB on previously identified data collection dates
- To quality assure their internal service CAF's against the Quality Assurance Framework
- Attend CAF surgeries and CAF Champion meetings
- Keep a log of staff within their service who have attended training
- Keep up to date with CAF and QA
- Work with CAF Advisers to ensure quality CAFs and outcome focused

CAF Advisors role

- Support partners and agencies to engage families in the benefit of the CAF, support with initial meetings and ensure quality of CAF's are outcome focussed.
- Support partners and agencies with CAF reviews to ensure a SMART action plan and avoid drift
- To quality assure CAF's against the Quality Assurance Framework and gather data to be reported to the TSCB
- Supporting professionals with signposting to relevant agencies
- Delivering one to one/group CAF training, monitor and record attendees
- Responding to Level 2 threshold queries via email and phone calls
- Attend regular multi agency meetings providing advice and guidance
- To manage and attend CAF Surgeries
- Attend regular Team Meetings and training
- Maintain record keeping within own organisation
- Maintain and keep up to date CAF support pack
- Analysis of data and impact reporting to TSCB and Early Help Strategic Group