

TOGETHER: Understanding the Common Assessment Framework, thresholds and early intervention.

ISSUE 4

This is the fourth briefing for staff and it focuses on Luton's new threshold model for identifying the needs of a child or young person and then providing the most appropriate support and intervention.

Introduction

Early identification and intervention are the most appropriate and cost effective ways to support children, young people, their parents and carers to achieve positive outcomes. However, some children and young people have greater needs and require more specialist support. The challenge for us all is to ensure they are given the right level of support at the right time and that any immediate child protection concerns are prioritised as necessary. Luton's model for managing needs is described in the new guidance document ['Meeting the needs of children, young people and their families in Luton'](#).

The Luton model below shows a continuum of 4 levels of need, in which children and young people can move across the different levels according to their needs over time. All professionals working in Luton should be using the thresholds described in the guidance document as a basis for their work.

Level 1 - Children and young people in this level have emerging needs, best met by a single agency from within universal services such as an early years or children's centre setting, school, or by a GP etc.

Level 2 - Children and young people with additional or complex needs are identified at this level where targeted services work alongside universal services to deliver, review and monitor a support plan. Practitioners may consider a CAF helpful at level 1, but it is essential at level 2.

Level 3 & 4 - Where children and young people have complex and/or safeguarding needs they require specialist assessments that may sit alongside the baseline information from a CAF if their needs were previously at level 2. Where risk of significant harm is indicated, children's social care will carry out a specialist safeguarding assessment without delay.



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What do we know?

CAF

- The Local Authority Children's Services process around 200 CAFs per year (LA data 2010/11). CAFs are used in many cases to access multi agency support for children and young people with various low levels of needs, usually at level 2 of the continuum of need. In Luton approximately 30% of CAFs are for children with disabilities. The main initiators of CAFs are schools (59%) and health service providers (23%).
- The numbers of CAFs are increasing slowly, year on year, as are the number of CAFs logged to the Multi Agency Family Support Panels.

Social Care

- The Local Authority Children's Services received 1,387 social care referrals in 2009/10 (CIN data 2009/10). Of these referrals to social care, 74% led to an initial assessment which indicates that our thresholds are understood by referring agencies.
- During 2010/2011 there has been an increase in the number of referrals to the Initial Assessment Team and the number of initial assessments processed has increased on the previous year by 50%.
- The main source of referrals to social care is the police, with the main presenting issue being domestic abuse. By source, the main presenting issues are:

Police - Domestic Abuse	}	38%
Emergency Duty Team - Domestic Abuse		
Schools - Childcare Concerns	}	24%
Local Authority - Childcare Concerns		
Primary Health - Childcare concerns		
Secondary Health - Child Protection Issues	}	16%

What do we need to do more of?

Early Intervention

1. Further increase the amount of early identification, assessment and support to children, young people and their families, using the guidance document 'Meeting the Needs of Children, Young People and their Families in Luton', using the CAF and Team around the Child model of working to assist with assessing escalating and/or Level 2 needs.

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2. However, in order that CAF should become a more effective early intervention tool we need to:
 - a) generate CAFs earlier, as soon as additional needs are first noticed. Currently, too many CAFs are being generated when needs have been present for some time or become very complex. Earlier CAF assessment and logging will help track outcomes, intervention, support and progress more effectively, identifying those children and young people who may need more specialist support. Early intervention is about not only intervening positively in the early years of a child's life, but also offering support at an early stage, before the situation has developed to a point that it requires a more invasive or costly intervention. This will be within the context of 'Team around the Child' working practices as soon as a need involving more than one agency is identified.
 - b) become more skilled at identifying achievable outcomes and developing robust CAF delivery plans by working together with parents, carers and young people where appropriate in multi-disciplinary teams. Where social work led support is offered the lead professional is the allocated social worker. Where support is delivered through practitioners from other specialist and universal services, practitioners need to work together to agree who will take on the role of lead professional and log this with the CAF administrator.
 - c) ensure that practitioners from both specialist and universal, voluntary and community services involved in supporting children, young people and their families come together at regular intervals. This is important when working across all levels of need to review plans, rethink evidence, challenge practice, reassess risk, record any changes within the family and to close formally or facilitate transfer of a period of support and intervention. This is particularly important when there is a need to "step up" the level of support or when "stepping down" from social work led support.
 - d) ensure that managers embed discussions about casework and support through individual practitioner's involvement in specialist and safeguarding assessments, CAF, Team around the Child working practices and the role of the lead professional so that all practitioners feel more supported and confident about their role in delivering outcomes across all tiers.

Supporting Children in Need

1. We need to provide a proactive step down referral approach to children, young people and their families, when they no longer need intensive social work intervention, down to Level 2 using the CAF and MAF support processes.

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Training opportunities

Free training courses are available to support practitioners in the use of the CAF and running multi agency meetings as follows:

- CAF in Luton
- The Lead Professional in Practice
- Managing Multi Agency Meetings
- Partnership Working with hard to Reach Families
- Introduction to CAF and Lead Professional

For information on these free courses go to [multiagency training and development opportunities](#) on the CYPP website www.cypp.luton.gov.uk

Supporting documents, policies and procedures and websites

- 1) Click here for link to [Meeting the needs of children, young people and their families in Luton](#)
- 2) Go to [working together to improve services](#) on the CYPP website www.cypp.luton.gov.uk to access policies, procedures and guidance materials on the CAF, Lead Professional and the MAF panels
- 3) The Children and Families Information Service provides information on a wide range of services that may be helpful to families, from birth to age 19 including childcare, activities, benefits and much more. Visit the website www.luton.gov.uk/cfis, access the online directory of services www.luton.gov.uk/childservicesdirectory, email cfis@luton.gov.uk, or call 01582 54 88 88.

LSCB web site for policies and procedures www.lutonlscb.org

Children and Young People's Trust Board www.cypp.luton.gov.uk

For more information, please speak to your line manager