

**Schools Forum - 8 December 2009**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Common Assessment Framework**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on progress of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and consult on the arrangements for 2010/11.

**Budget Working Group Discussed**

2. Yes.

**Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities**

3. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for "Combined Budgets" under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant; it is conditional that the Schools Forum agrees the amounts involved.
4. In considering whether to approve a request from a local authority to retain an amount of funding centrally for this purpose, the Forum must ensure that the educational benefit test is met. To do this the local authority must demonstrate to the Schools Forum that there are clear benefits to pupils and schools from the increased contribution.

**Action for Schools Forum**

5. To note the progress of the Common Assessment Framework in Dudley.
6. To approve the ongoing financial support to the CAF programme from the dedicated schools grant in accordance with Schools Forum's powers under the combined budgets provision of the School Funding Regulations

**Attachments to Report**

7. Appendix 1 – Analysis by Township
8. Appendix 2 – Analysis of Activity of Stage 1 Partners
9. Appendix 3 – Short Case Studies
10. Appendix 4 – Feedback from Partners
11. Appendix 5 – Stage 2 Partners

Karen Cocker  
Children's Services Finance Manager  
18 November 2009

**Schools Forum 8 December 2009**

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**Common Assessment Framework**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on progress of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and consult on the arrangements for 2010/11.

**Combined Budgets**

2. The Schools Funding Regulations include a provision for "Combined Budgets" under the types of funding that can be retained centrally from the Dedicated Schools Grant; it is conditional that the Schools Forum agrees the amounts involved.
3. This provision is designed to "recognise the multi-agency work that local authorities already are or will be undertaking in relation to the Every Child Matters agenda and where that work is of direct benefit to pupils and schools."
4. In considering whether to approve a request from a local authority to retain an amount of funding centrally for this purpose, the Forum must ensure that the educational benefit test is met. To do this the local authority must demonstrate to the Schools Forum that there are clear benefits to pupils and schools from the increased contribution.
5. If Schools Forum agrees to a deduction from the Schools Budget under the combined services regulations, then there is no need for the authority to seek the Schools Forum's formal agreement to the continuation of the deduction, but the local authority should report to their Schools Forums on the progress of the joint working.
6. Central government policy clearly envisages a key role for school partnerships in the reform and development of children's services as a whole, working with other providers and agencies to meet the full range of children's needs

## **Background**

7. In 2007/08 the Director of Children's Services presented a proposal to Schools Forum in respect of the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework for Dudley and requested financial support from the dedicated schools grant to support the annual CAF programme.
8. The request met the criteria for a combined budget and was agreed by Schools Forum.
9. The total CAF programme for 2009/10 is £371k; the contribution from the DSG is £246k and other partner funds are £125k.
10. Dudley Children's Trust first started to implement CAF and Team Around the Child (TAC) in January 2006. The roll out of CAF and TAC is a crosscutting priority in the Children and Young People's Plan and led by the Integrated Working Board. The group reports to the 5-13 Partnership.
11. The work of the CAF team, through the integrated service managers, has taken some time to be fully operational due to a delay in staffing appointments and for 2007/08 and 2008/09 the under-spend accrued from the CAF budget was returned to schools in recognition of the partnership working.
12. A progress report titled 'Integrated Services, Information Sharing and Assessment' was presented to Schools Forum in December 2008. This report is a further update.
13. For 2009/10, the Executive Board agreed the strategy in May 2009 to roll out CAF in stages. Progress has been made during the subsequent three months to the extent that the number of children and young people supported has increased from 46 to 103.
14. Members of Schools Forum must be aware that local safeguarding arrangements are being judged as inadequate where there has been insufficient progress on the implementation of the common assessment process

## **Summary of Progress**

15. At 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009, 46 children and young people had been supported through the use of CAF in Dudley at the start of Stage 1. By 18<sup>th</sup> September, this figure had risen to 175 of which 103 children and young people went on to have a full common assessment. The number of children and young people supported has increased by over 380% during the 4.5 months duration of Stage 1.
16. By 18th November, 283 children and young people had been supported through the use of common assessment of which 135 went on to have a full common assessment.
  - Appendix 1 provides an analysis by township, including the organisation initiating the CAF and acting as lead professional.

- Appendix 2 provides an analysis of the activity of Stage 1 partners from 5<sup>th</sup> May to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Stage 1 partners are responsible for starting 38% (49) of all CAFs during this period.
- Appendix 3 has short case studies from Stage 1, which indicate a positive impact on outcomes for the children, young people, parents and carers involved.
- Appendix 4 summarises feedback from partners on the support provided by the Integrated Services Managers (ISMs) during Stage 1.
- Stage 2 of the programme started on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009. Stage 2 partners are listed in Appendix 5.

## **Risks and Issues**

17. A number of key issues remain:

- CAF tends to be used with children and young people with complex needs or who are experiencing a crisis;
- There is an unclear fit between CAF and some existing processes;
- Resources are required to continue the Integrated Service Manager (ISM) posts from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010;
- Partners have supported a very low number of children and young people using CAF.

18. There are a number of significant risks associated with these key issues; there is a high risk that:

- Significant numbers of children and young people may fail to achieve good outcomes;
- Failure to develop an effective standardised approach based on prevention and early intervention;
- The number of children and young people with complex needs may not reduce and will place an increasingly high demand on scarce resources;
- A lack of clarity over thresholds for CAF may result in practitioners and operational managers failing to embed the process because it becomes over complicated;
- The project management of CAF programme out could fail without dedicated support.

## **2010/11**

19. The continuation of the CAF programme is reliant on partnership funding.

20. For 2010/11 the programme requirements have been reviewed and the costs rationalised. The impact of this for the DSG is that the annual contribution can be reduced from £246k to £157k. The budget reduction of £89k will be redistributed to

schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB).

21. Schools Forum is asked to support this ongoing programme by contributing £157k for 2010/11 and future years.

### **Finance**

22. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2008.
23. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
24. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG)

### **Law**

25. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

### **Equality Impact**

26. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

### **Recommendation**

27. Schools Forum is invited to approve the reduced annual contribution of £157k required to support to the Dudley CAF programme from the dedicated schools for 2010/11 onwards.



**Mark Wyatt**  
**Director of Children's Services**

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**Appendix 1**

**Analysis of activity on CAF and lead professional by township (18<sup>th</sup> November 2009).**

<b>Township</b>	<b>Dudley Central</b>	<b>CAF Initiator</b>	<b>Lead Professional</b>
	Connexions (Inc Prospects)	11	11
	Schools		
	Holly Hall Secondary	1	1
	Kates Hill Primary	1	1
	Northfield Road Primary	2	2
	Children's Centres		
	Woodside CC	1	1
	Netherton Park CC	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Township</b>	<b>Dudley North</b>	<b>CAF Initiator</b>	<b>Lead Professional</b>
	Connexions	2	2
	Schools		
	Bramford Primary	5	5
	Queen Victoria Primary	1	1
	Sycamore Green PRU	1	1
	Northfield Road Primary	1	1
	High Arcal Secondary	6	6
	Ellowes Hall Secondary	2	2
	Christ Church Primary	1	1
	Cotwall End Primary	1	1
	Children's Centres		
	Queen Victoria CC	1	1
	Gornal Parent & Children	1	1
	Coseley Children & Family	2	1
	Priory CC		1
	Health		
	Physiotherapy	1	1
	CAMHS	1	
	Respect Team		1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

Township	Brierley Hill		CAF Initiator	Lead Professional
	Connexions		7	6
	Schools	Pensnett High	2	3
		St Mary's Primary	1	1
		Calvery Pre	1	1
		Crestwood Secondary	2	2
		Summerhill Secondary		1
	Children's Centres	Woodside CC	1	1
		Brierley Hill CC	1	1
	Health	Brierley Hill HC	1	
		Child Psychology	1	
		Health Visitor	6	7
	Social Care	Brierley Hill Team	1	
	Out of Borough Referral	Blackpool Social Services	1	
	LP to be allocated			2
	Total		25	25

**Appendix 2****Activity of Stage 1 partners from 1st May to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009.**

<b>Township</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>No. of CAFs Started</b>	<b>No. of Lead Professionals</b>
Borough Wide	Connexions	15	7
Dudley North	Bramford Primary	6	4
	High Arcal School	7	4
	Roberts Parent & Family Centre	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>
Stourbridge	Hob Green Primary and Children's Centre	5	5
	Mount Pleasant Primary School	3	3
	Pedmore High School	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
Halesowen	Caslon Primary	1	1
	Olive Hill Primary and Children's Centre	3	2
	Windsor High School	4	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
Brierley Hill	Belle Vue Primary	0	0
	Wordsley High School	0	0
	Brierley Hill Children's Centre	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Dudley Central	Netherton Park Children's Centre	2	2
	Priory Primary and Children's Centre	0	0
	Hillcrest High School	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>



### **Short case studies and quotes from Stage 1.**

#### **The following case studies have been provided by practitioners and managers involved in the cases.**

**Case Study 1:** A 14 year old had been having difficulties in her relationships at home particularly with her mother. The CAF was suggested by a member of the school pastoral team as she had started to truant from school. A number of agencies had been involved including the Police, school health advisor, school, community learning practitioner and a member of the pastoral team. The young woman and her mother were involved throughout the whole process.

A plan was agreed to:

- support the young woman to develop her self-esteem and confidence;
- improve school attendance;
- improve relationships with her peers.

As a result of the CAF:

- she is meeting new friends;
- she and her mother have been referred for family support to improve their relationship;
- her school attendance is good and no longer an issue;
- she has one-to-one mentoring from the community learning practitioner in school and in a youth club setting;
- she feels confident enough to attend the youth centre without support and is learning new skills;
- both student and Mum feel supported and listened to.

**Case Study 2:** K is in Reception Class at Primary School. The Head Teacher, because of K's behaviour difficulties and aggression in school, including biting, kicking and punching and the subsequent risk of being excluded, suggested a Common Assessment. K's mother was also finding her behaviour at home very challenging.

The CAF identified that K had experienced a very chaotic start to life, involving domestic violence, by her Father to her Mother. Having moved several times to live with various family members she now lives with her Mother and her Mother's partner who has two older children. K was referred to CAMHS, who now work with the family. During the CAF, it became apparent that Mum was receiving conflicting advice regarding behaviour management. K's weight was becoming an issue and her reluctance to involve herself in physical activities could be a contributing factor. Mother informed the meeting that K had to sleep in her parent's bedroom, as the window in her bedroom was unsafe and she couldn't afford to buy a bed.

A plan was agreed to:

- Formalise a combined approach to behaviour management.
- Apply to DSS for a loan for a bed and contact the council about the window to enable K to move into her own room.
- School Health advisor to enrol K on an out of school exercise programme.

As a result of the CAF:

- A common approach to behaviour management is agreed across organisations working with K.
- K has her own bedroom.
- K regularly attends and enjoys an out of school exercise programme.

At the TAC meeting, Mum commented:

*"It's like I've been to the supermarket and bought a new kid!"*

### **Quotes:**

*"It has helped me to change. I can also see things from everyone's point of view."* (Young Person).

*"I was sceptical at what a CAF might achieve. However, having been involved in a CAF for one of my students, I now see the importance of formulating a common approach to bringing about a successful conclusion for someone who is experiencing serious problems."*

*My student has received more intervention than any other individual I have known in all my years in teaching. She was receiving intervention from many different agencies, much of which was duplication. The principal reason for this was because no one was coordinating the intervention and even though it was well intentioned it was occurring in isolation."*

*The CAF obligated all agencies to come together under the direction of a lead professional. Specific discussion brought about a consolidated approach, which focused the intervention on the specific needs of my student thus avoiding any duplication. In addition to this, the regular meetings, which were scheduled, meant that communication occurred and the progress being made could clearly be reviewed leading to amended strategies where appropriate when something was not working."*

*In conclusion, my student and her family have benefited from the CAF. Remarkable progress has been made in all areas and she is looking forward to gaining some good GCSEs and embarking on a suitable course at college. I feel that this would never have happened if the situation that existed prior to the CAF had been allowed to continue."* (Head Teacher).

*"The CAF is beginning to make a difference to the lives of several children and families and I have found the response to it from all agencies to be very positive."* (Head Teacher).

*"Before the CAF each agency would only look at their involvement and not the needs of the individual concerned. In short, what the CAF has brought to us is a driven approach with a 'lead officer' that is respected by other professionals and the help that our son needs is directed when and where it is needed."*

*Our family knows it is early days, but we all feel that if this had been done many years ago we would have all benefited, especially our son."*

*To all those that have assisted the CAF process we can only say 'Thank you'"* (Parent).

**Feedback from Stage 1 partners.**

“Our ISM was very helpful and necessary to start with, just to 'model' the whole process for us. My one area of major concern is that we cannot CAF those who are known to Social Care, even on a low level - this is a real missed opportunity to support the work of social care.”

**Assistant Head Teacher**

“Having received the original bout of training when CAF was first introduced (before the ISMs were in place), I have to say that this has been a much more successful approach. It has enabled us to embed practice in school by developing a core group of professionals to lead and make it happen. This pool of professionals has gradually increased during the last 6 months of support from Roz, our ISM.

The CAF is beginning to make a difference to the lives of several children and families and I have found the response to it from all agencies to be very positive.

I am a little worried that as more and more schools take it on board however there is a danger that professionals will spend a great deal of their time in team around the child meetings and not actually on the ground delivering services. I also found that our 6 month period bridging the summer holidays was not helpful as we did not have the working time that following tranches will have.

Roz has been exemplary throughout this period and has been instrumental in the success we have had with the CAF to-date and we now feel confident to progress this further with less support.”

**Head Teacher**

"We have found the role of Integrated Services Manager 100% beneficial and useful. The CAF has enabled our school to have case feedback about younger siblings and given a wider picture of the family's needs.

The ISM role has had a twofold impact; it focused us on actually doing the CAF instead of just talking about it and the support given to us by the ISM has helped us through the process and given us the confidence to get in underway.

The CAF has helped us link with other agencies and has brought them into the school when they might not have done so before. We like the ISM role to continue to support us beyond the Stage 1 roll out."

**Assistant Head Teacher**

**Stage 2 partners (1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010)**

<b>Township</b>	<b>Partner</b>
Borough Wide	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Midwives</li><li>2. Health Visitors</li><li>3. Children's Centres</li><li>4. Russells Hall Hospital (Children's Ward and Neo-natal)</li><li>5. Dudley North Children And Families Assessment Team</li></ol>
Dudley North	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Queen Vic Primary School</li><li>2. Coseley Secondary School</li><li>3. Education Welfare Service</li></ol>
Stourbridge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Rufford Primary School</li><li>2. Thorns High School</li><li>3. Dudley Young Carers</li></ol>
Halesowen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Tenterfields Primary School</li><li>2. Leasowes Community College</li></ol>
Brierley Hill	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hawbush Primary School</li><li>2. Blandford Mere Primary School</li><li>3. Pensnett High School</li></ol>
Dudley Central	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Woodside Primary School.</li><li>2. Russells Hall Primary School</li><li>3. Castle High School</li></ol>