

# Understanding CAF thresholds



This booklet is aimed at helping practitioners working with children and young people in Richmond upon Thames understand levels of need and CAF thresholds to access services.

It explains our 'step-up step-down' approach to safeguarding, early intervention and prevention and it adheres to the London Continuum of Needs, in agreement with the Pan London CAF Protocol and Standards. It establishes a consistent approach for timely and effective integrated intervention to support additional needs identified through holistic assessment.



## Understanding CAF thresholds

Understanding thresholds and how they relate to the support of identified needs, is vital to providing a solid integrated intervention that will help children and young people achieve their outcomes. Children's needs change and as they move through the continuum interventions should reflect the 'step-up' or 'step-down'. A smooth transition through the continuum is essential to support their journey.

This model adheres to the London Continuum of Needs as defined by the London Safeguarding

Children Board, and a full description of the indicators is available online at [www.richmond.gov.uk/caf\\_forms\\_and\\_guidance](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/caf_forms_and_guidance)

Integrated working is a national initiative. Children and young people should receive the support they need independently of where they live or access services. A lot of work has been done across London to ensure this. The Pan-London CAF Protocol was launched in April 2009 with all 32 London local authorities plus the City of London signing up in agreement.

### Level 1: Universal

- Children with no additional needs accessing universal services such as: education (school or early years setting), children's centre, health visitor, school nurse, GP, play service, integrated youth support services, police, housing, voluntary and community sector.
- Children with emerging developmental needs which can still be met within universal services or single agency involvement
- Children on point of transition

#### Assessment process:

- Request for Involvement form (RfI) for single agency involvement. Please check [www.richmond.gov.uk/caf\\_forms\\_and\\_guidance](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/caf_forms_and_guidance) for a list of services using this form.



### Level 2a: Targeted support - low level needs

These children have low level additional needs that are likely to be short term, and that may be known but are not being met. Children whose needs are not clear, not known and not being met could also be in this group. Involvement may be single agency or multi-agency.

Universal and targeted support required for example: youth crime prevention services, drugs and alcohol, Educational Psychology, Education Welfare, specialist play services, Integrated Youth Support Services, Family Support Services.

#### Assessment process:

- CAF is an appropriate way to conduct a holistic assessment of strengths and needs at this stage.
- The CAF pre-assessment checklist can be used to see if a CAF could be useful.



## Level 2b: Targeted support - vulnerable

- Child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met.
- Child with additional needs requiring multi-agency intervention, lead professional and Team Around Child (TAC)

### Assessment process:

- CAF is an appropriate way to conduct a holistic assessment of strengths and needs at this stage.
- Consider the CAF interface with other assessments described in the last page of this booklet. A more in-depth description is available in Pan-London CAF Protocol Annex 3, which is available at [www.richmond.gov.uk/caf\\_forms\\_and\\_guidance](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/caf_forms_and_guidance)



## Level 3: Complex needs

Children with high level additional unmet needs, likely to require longer term intervention from statutory and/or specialist services.

This is also the threshold for Child in Need (Section 17), which may require children's social care consultation or intervention.

Additional key services involved at this level include children's social care, other statutory services e.g. special educational needs, specialist health or disability services, Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISP), Youth Offending Team (YOT), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

### Assessment process:

- Statutory or specialist assessments (remember the CAF must not replace specialist assessments).



If a CAF exists, the information in the CAF can inform a specialist assessment.

- The CAF can be used as supporting evidence to involve specialist support.
- The CAF may also be completed to support the step-down from complex and acute needs.

## Level 4: Acute needs

Children requiring statutory integrated support.

This is the threshold for child protection (Section 47) which requires children's social care intervention: children experiencing significant harm who may also need to be accommodated by the local authority either on a voluntary basis or by way of court order. Please bear in mind that Section 47 interventions can be over in a short period of time, and practitioners should consider whether a step-down is appropriate. Additional key services involved at this level include children's social care, specialist health or disability services, YOT, CAMHS, Family Support Services.

### Assessment process:

- Statutory or specialist assessments (remember the



CAF must not replace specialist assessments). If a CAF exists, the information in the CAF can inform a specialist assessment.

- The CAF can be used as supporting evidence to involve specialist support.
- The CAF may also be completed to support the step-down from acute needs.

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## CAF and other assessments (in accordance with Pan-London CAF protocols)

Sector	Assessment	CAF
<b>Education</b>	Early years or school action	CAF could trigger action
	Early years action plus or school action	CAF could trigger action plus
	Assessment relating to learning difficulties	CAF can provide supporting evidence
	Pastoral support programmes	CAF should be completed as part of PSP ( <i>Improving Behaviour and Attendance Guidance on Exclusions from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, DCSF 2008</i> )
<b>Youth sector</b>	ONSET/ASSET	CAF should be completed for YISP interventions. CAF does not replace ASSET but can bring in additional support from other services or as step-down from youth justice intervention
	Substance misuse	CAF should be completed as early or first assessment tool; if it raises concerns about substance misuse, screening tools, such as DUST and SMART, should be undertaken by trained practitioners. Also, substance misuse specialist should complete CAF if: first contact made by young person, or request for involvement doesn't come from Children's Services or as step-down at the end of their treatment.
	Assessment Planning Intervention Review (APIR)	CAF should be completed by all Connexions advisers
<b>Children's social care</b>	Where there are child protection concerns, practitioners should contact the SPA immediately on 020 8891 7969	CAF can provide supporting evidence for involvement
<b>Health</b>	Early support	CAF can be used to enable specialist early support services
	CAMHS	CAF should be completed as an early or the first assessment tool. Also, CAMHS specialist should complete CAF if: first contact made by young person, or request for involvement doesn't come from Children's Services or as step-down at the end of their treatment.
	Adult mental health	Adult services should consider using CAF as recommended in the National CAMHS Review
	Health visitors, midwives and community nurses	CAF should be completed when integrated support is needed
	GPs	CAF should be completed when integrated support is needed
<b>Metropolitan Police</b>	Police staff that work in multi-agency teams like Safer Schools and YOT may collaborate on CAF or become member of the Team Around the Child	
<b>Note:</b> Please check Pan-London Annex 3 for a full description on the interface between the CAF and other assessments		