Family CAF and TAF Quality Assurance Framework

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board
November 2015

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There is a good system in place for multi-agency auditing of CAFs and team around the child work.

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Partnership Statement of Intent

We, the multi-agency partnership of the Children’s Trust and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board realise the importance of an effective early help offer in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. We support the workforce in various ways to enable professionals working with vulnerable children and families to work collaboratively, share information safely and undertake the roles and responsibilities that support effective multi agency working.

This toolkit is part of this support system.

Agencies involved in the Family CAF and TAF processes will adhere to these principles and ensure they attend the training provided and use this QA framework as our standard QA approach. It is recommended that the first 2-3 assessments undertaken by a practitioner use both the self assessment and quality supervision tools.
Introduction
Wirral Local Authority and its partners in the Children’s Trust are responsible for introducing and maintaining satisfactory Early Help arrangements which ensure that the Family Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes are being conducted in a high quality way across the partnership (for example, children’s centres, schools and organisations in the voluntary, community and faith sector etc).

This framework contains the WSCB guidance, developed to meet the national standards for a CAF Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), needed to monitor and improve the quality of the CAF process and help to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

The framework contains samples of quality assurance tools (plain user versions are contained in the accompanying toolkit) and is designed to be used by practitioners and agencies who complete the CAF as well as by the CAF Quality Assurance Group who audit the process to ensure the highest standards of assessment are achieved.

Background
CAF is well embedded and widely used by agencies across the children’s workforce in Wirral. A QA group whose membership is drawn from a variety of agencies has met monthly to audit a sample of CAFs since April 2009. The findings of the group are reported bi-monthly and sent to all agencies. The QA reports have formed the basis of guidance and recommendations from the group.

The QAF aims to build on the work of the CAF QA group by increasing practitioner involvement in the quality assurance process. It is envisaged that the QA group will remain to provide oversight and moderate a sample of CAFs and TAF episodes each month.

It is hoped that the development of the quality assurance process will help in improving outcomes for children and young people across Wirral, as well as increasing participation in, and ownership of the CAF process by practitioners and their agencies. As well as the improvement in outcomes the adoption of the Wirral QAF aims to:

- Promote more effective and earlier identification of additional needs at levels 2 and 3 on the Wirral Continuum of Need (see Guide to Integrated Working)
- Help practitioners to be better placed to agree, with the child and family, about what support is appropriate
- Enhance the established use of CAF data to identify need and inform on service provision across Wirral and within localities
- Improve information about the quality of CAFs to support reflective supervision practices
- Provide feedback to inform future developments and guidance to improve the CAF and Team Around the Family (TAF) process.
Objective of the CAF Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

The objective of this QAF is to provide good quality consistent implementation of the Common Assessment Framework across all agencies in Wirral. The QAF will improve use of the CAF with identification of the needs of children, young people and their families, and improve early intervention to support those needs. The QAF will also help multi-agency children’s services in identifying the training needs of practitioners by highlighting examples of good practice and areas requiring improvement in agencies across Wirral.

The QAF covers seven stages (shown on the diagram below):

- Self assessment & quality supervision throughout CAF process
- Audit of completed CAF forms
- Audit of the CAF process
- Participation of child/ young person and family
- Audit of the effectiveness of the TAF process
- Feedback and recommendations as a result of the evaluation
- Improvements to the CAF process
Tools which help support practitioners and agencies in monitoring various aspects of the process are included in the accompanying **CAF and TAF Quality Assurance Toolkit**. Agencies are encouraged to use the tools which may be of use to them.

**Key roles within the QAF:**

The Quality Assurance Framework will utilize the following staff to lead and manage the process:

**WSCB Quality Assurance Manager** – Manages the Quality Assurance process and records the results of the audits. Also chairs the CAF QA Group and authors the quarterly reports.

**Senior Locality Manager (SLM)** – The SLM chairs the multi-agency Allocations meeting in their locality and manages the review of cases. All open TAF episodes can be subject to review by the multi agency group that allocated the family to a Lead Professional.

The purpose of the review will be to ensure family’s needs are being met in a timely and proportionate manner.

The process will work alongside the multi agency quality assurance process for Family CAFs which will be led by WSCB QA Manager. This group will report to the Targeted Services Management team in the first instance.

Cases will be selected for review by the Practice Improvement Unit according to the following criteria:

- At the request of the Lead Professional, this will usually be because they report that progress is not being made and they require support.
- Episodes that are drifting, either because regular reviews are not being held (6 – 8 weeks) or because the episode has continued for more than 6 months. The cases will be identified by the tracking undertaken by Early Help and CAF Coordination Team support Workers for each locality.
- An overview of 4 cases per Locality meeting per month will be presented via a written report to the Locality Meeting. The cases will be randomly selected and the report will outline progress made against referral reasons, timescales and degree of interagency cooperation. The information will be collected from Infoview, Liquid Logic and discussions with the Lead Professional. The reports will be prepared by the WSCB QA manager with support from the Quality Auditor.
- **CAF Quality Assurance Group** – Moderate the audit process and provide recommendations based upon the findings of the quarterly reports. Members of the group are managers and coordinators from a range of agencies (eg health, children’s centres, schools, youth service, area teams etc).
**Resources**

The CAF Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is one part of a set of guidance and resources available to practitioners involved with the Family CAF and the Team Around the Family processes. All the resources are available to download from the Wirral website:


Available resources include:

- The Guide to Integrated Working (includes procedures for multi-agency working, how to complete a Family CAF, assessment skills etc)
- Lead professional Welcome Pack
- Distance Travelled Tool (used to evidence impact of services)
- Details of Family CAF training courses (dates, venues and course summaries).

The **QAF Matrix** on page 12 summarises the use and nature of the different tools for practitioners and agencies.

Full versions of all the tools and feedback forms are contained in the **CAF and TAF Quality Assurance Toolkit**.

**Governance**

The CAF Quality Assurance Process on Wirral is managed by the WSCB Quality Assurance Manager who chairs the CAF QA Group. The group reports quarterly on the quality of the CAF assessments being completed. Guidance developed by the group is overseen by the Staying Safe Strategy Group, one of the outcome groups of the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board.
Stage 1: Self-assessment & Quality Supervision

A practitioner should be aware, from their CAF training, of what constitutes a high quality CAF process and should be mindful of this throughout the process. Guidance on this is included in the Guide to Integrated Working (IWG) and related documents (available from https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/family-common) and from Locality Social Workers and Targeted Services Managers who will provide advice on all aspects of the CAF and TAF process (contact details are in the IWG and on the website).

The regular feedback from child/young person and/or parent/carer throughout the CAF process using results from questionnaires and the distance travelled tool will also help practitioners assess how well the CAF process is going from the family’s point of view.

Where a practitioner encounters a problem outside of their control they should raise this with their line manager and/or through their agency escalation or the LA route.

This stage is also part of a line managers general supervision; coaching and feedback discussions and should be on an ongoing basis. This can therefore take place at any time during the CAF process.

It is recommended that the first 2-3 common assessments undertaken by a practitioner have quality supervision regularly throughout the process.

After this a decision should be made about the level of quality supervision and support the practitioner needs thereafter.

Tools:

- **Self Assessment Checklist** (page 3-6 in Toolkit)
  
  Completion by: CAF Author
  
  Completion When: Throughout CAF and TAF Process

- **Quality Supervision Checklist** (page 6 in Toolkit)
  
  Completion by: Manager/ Supervisor of CAF Author
  
  Completion When: Throughout CAF and TAF Process

**Note:** The checklists are only intended as a prompt for practitioners and line managers and are therefore optional. The key point is for the practitioner to be aware of the quality criteria when going through the CAF process and for the line manager to provide supervision against the same quality criteria.
Stage 2: The CAF QA Group Audit of Newly Completed CAF Forms

The audit of newly completed Family CAFs is undertaken by the CAF QA Group with Family CAFs provided by the Early Help and CAF Coordination Team (formally known as the Gateway). It is a standing item on the monthly meetings and the expectation will be for the team to collect at least 15 new CAFs each month, five from each locality.

The objective of this initial audit is to explore how far each stage of the CAF process has been carried out effectively. The paperwork the Auditors will need for undertaking this part of the audit are a sample of newly completed CAFs, copies of the Quality of Initial CAF Assessment tool (page 12-14 in toolkit) and the Guidance for the Grading of CAFs (page 15-17 in toolkit).

Recording Audit Results

The WSCB QA Manager should record the results of each audit. The WSCB QA Manager writes to all the CAF authors with feedback offering training and support for all CAFs that are quality assured. (page 27 in toolkit)

A random sample of the audited CAFs (3 per month), from a variety of auditors if possible, should be sent to the WSCB QA Manager for moderation by the CAF QA group.

The complete audit process should record:
- The quality of the CAF forms;
- A percentage score for the number of outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate CAFs
- To which authors and agencies feedback has been sent to regarding inadequate CAFs.

The Audit must not be carried out by any person who has had any involvement in the particular assessment being audited. CAFs and other confidential records should be selected on a random basis.

The results of the audit are collated by the WSCB QA Manager on a quarterly basis along with a sample of audited CAFs. Feedback from the CAF QA group will be sent to the Locality Manager on a quarterly basis.

Tools:

- **CAF QA Tool Quality of Initial CAF Assessment** (page 12-14 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Family CAF QA Auditor
  - Completion When: After CAF form completed

- **Guidance for the Grading of CAFs** (page 15-17 in Toolkit)

- **CAF Quality Feedback Form** (page 27 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Family CAF Auditor
  - Completion When: After CAF form sample audited
Stage 3: Participation Feedback from the Child/ Young Person and Family

It is good practice for the Locality Managers and Lead Professionals as part of the TAF process to regularly collect feedback from the child/young person and family during the CAF and TAF process.

Questionnaires for children and young people are published in the Guide to Integrated Working which can be downloaded from the [https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/family-common](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/family-common) website. They are also included in the Lead Professional Pack which is sent to all Lead Professionals by the Early Help and CAF Coordination Team and included in training.

The toolkit contains the **Young Person and Family Participation Feedback Tool**. The tool is designed to be completed by the Lead Professional in consultation with the family. The completed tool can be scored to give an indication of how effective the family felt the process was. It is recommended that feedback is sought throughout the CAF and TAF process.

Practitioners should aim to use the participation tool with a sample of their cases before embedding it for use with all cases once they have become familiar with it. Any feedback received during the CAF process should be shared by the practitioner with their Line Manager to support them in their supervision and feedback. A copy of any feedback should be sent to the Locality Manager and WSCB QA Manager who will include identified trends and patterns from the feedback in the quarterly QA reports. All feedback will be anonymised and aggregated.

A **distance travelled tool** for use with the family was successfully trialled in 2012 and became the agreed tool in September 2013. The tool records the family’s perception of how serious the issues affecting them are. The use of the tool is designed to be repeated periodically after TAF meetings, including six months after the TAF episode has closed, and provides a measure of the family’s progress.

Scoring guidance and sets of prompt cards are available and can be downloaded from [https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/family-common](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-social-care/wirral-safeguarding-childrens-board/family-common). The tool is included in the toolkit for Lead Professionals to use as part of their role.

**Tools:**

- **Young Person and Family Participation Feedback Tool** (page 24 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Lead Professional and Family
  - Completion When: Throughout TAF Process

- **Distance Travelled Tool** (page 18 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Lead Professional/ TAF Team member
  - Completion When: Throughout TAF Process
Stage 4: The QA Group Audit of the Effectiveness of TAF

Similarly to the way Family CAF forms are audited the audit of the effectiveness of the TAF process is undertaken by the CAF QA Group.

The objective of the audit is to look in a bit more detail at the Family CAF and gauge how well the TAF meetings were in addressing identified actions.

The paperwork the Auditors will need in undertaking this function are: the original Family CAF form; all the CAF Family Contracts (delivery plans and review forms and minutes) from meetings completed during the CAF and TAF process.

Two tools are available:

**CAF QA Tool In-Depth Review** – The tool scores how well different aspects of the CAF form were completed. The results can be expressed as a % and quality can be benchmarked.

**CAF/TAF QA Tool Effectiveness of TAF Episode** – The tool measures the effectiveness of each action stated in the TAF plans and follows them to see how well they were achieved.

The complete audit process should record:

- The quality of the CAF process records;
- The effectiveness of the Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings (plans and actions);
- The effectiveness of the actions taken in meeting the aims identified.

The Audit must **not** be carried out by any person who has had any involvement in the particular assessment being audited. CAFs and other confidential records should be selected on a random basis.

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**Tools:**

- **CAF QA Tool In-Depth Review** *(page 25 in Toolkit)*
  
  Completion by: Family CAF Auditor
  
  Completion When: At end of TAF Episode

- **CAF/TAF QA Tool Effectiveness of TAF Episode** *(page 26 in Toolkit)*
  
  Completion by: CAF Auditor
  
  Completion When: At end of TAF Episode
Stage 5: The CAF QA Group Evaluation of the Audit Results

The evaluation process is conducted by the multi-agency CAF Quality Assurance group whose membership is drawn from agencies across the statutory and voluntary, community and faith sectors. The CAF Quality Assurance group meets monthly to assess the quality of a random sample of completed CAFs from agencies across Wirral. The group exists to monitor the quality of CAFs as an indicator of the effectiveness of the CAF process. Findings from the group are reported quarterly and include actions to help drive up the standard of CAFs and improve outcomes for children and young people.

Members of the group are drawn from across the partnership and include representatives from: Locality Teams; the Voluntary/Community/Faith sector; the Youth Offending Service; Children’s Centres; Wirral NHS; IFIP, response and schools.

The CAF QA Group request 15 random CAFs monthly and annually a selection of closed TAF episodes from the Early Help and CAF Coordination Team which originate from a variety of agencies. CAFs and TAF episodes are rated as either: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

The results from each meeting form the basis of the quarterly CAF Quality Assurance report which is sent to the Locality Teams and all agencies involved with Family CAF and Team Around the Family (TAF). The quarterly report includes the features of an outstanding CAF, reasons why CAFs may be rated as inadequate and links to supporting material and training.

The Locality Mangers review the findings for their local agencies and swiftly offer support and advice where the quality of CAFs is rated as inadequate. This can include offering support with completing the CAF, directing the agency/practitioner to appropriate guidance and delivering training.

Also included in the toolkit is a CAF/TAF Episode Audit Record Form which can be used to record the various audit results for a completed CAF/TAF episode. The form also has a comments section and completed forms should be sent to the WSBC QA manager and will form part of the monitoring and evaluation of quality and of the QA process.

Tools:
- CAF/TAF Episode Audit Record Form (page 28 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Locality Team CAF Auditor
  - Completion When: Upon Completion of Audits
Stage 6: Feedback & Workforce Development Recommendations

The Quality Assurance information collected by the QA group is analysed and used in the preparation of reports which inform target setting and strategy.

The CAF Quality Assurance group reports on its findings each quarter in the CAF QA report which is sent to every agency involved in CAF and TAF and to the Locality Teams. The WSCB QA Manager also reports to the Staying Safe Strategy group quarterly and provides regular reports for the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board.

The reports are used by the local authority and partner agencies to help evaluate the effectiveness of CAF and TAF and by:

- Identifying the training needs for practitioners;
- Monitoring the Family CAF process;
- Identifying issues for supervision;
- Identifying support or development needs in services;
- Identifying areas for development and improvement;
- Performance management of services within Wirral;
- Establishing more effective inter agency and cross authority working;
- Identifying gaps in the service provision and/or disparities in the supply and demand of the service provision.

The CAF QA group and the Locality Teams use the report to highlight identified areas for improvement to existing TAF training and any additional items that need attention or inclusion. The reports are also used positively to highlight excellent practice which can be shared with all agencies.

The QA group will feedback any issues, concerns and items for celebration to the Children's Trust, Local Authority and WSCB through the Staying Safe Strategy group.

Team Around the Family Training

An important aspect of the CAF QA Group is that of overseeing all the TAF training. Any and all changes made to any TAF training must be agreed in the first instance by the CAF QA Group. This is to ensure governance. All TAF training evaluations are sent to the WSCB QA Manager so that findings and feedback can be incorporated into a quarterly CAF Activity report. The WSCB QA manager monitors and reports on the effectiveness of the TAF training offered.
Stage 7: The Performance Improvement Unit Audit of cases in TAF

Cases are selected for review by the Practice Improvement Unit according to the following criteria:

- At the request of the Lead Professional, this will usually be because they report that progress is not being made and they require support.

- Episodes that are drifting, either because regular reviews are not being held (6 – 8 weeks) or because the episode has continued for more than 6 months. The cases will be identified by the tracking undertaken by Early Help and CAF Coordination Team Support Workers for each locality.

- An overview of 4 cases per Locality meeting per month will be presented via a written report to the Locality Meeting. The cases will be randomly selected and the report will outline progress made against referral reasons, timescales and degree of interagency cooperation. The information will be collected from Liquid Logic and discussions with the Lead Professional. The reports will be prepared by the Quality Auditor.

Tools:

- **TAF QA Tool Quality of ongoing TAF cases** (page 10 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: CAF QA Auditor
  - Completion When: As above but when cases have been open for a while

- **Guidance for the Grading of CAFs** (page 13 in Toolkit)

- **CAF Quality Feedback Form** (page 27 in Toolkit)
  - Completion by: Locality Manager
  - Completion When: After CAF and minutes have been sent to allocation meeting
Stage 8: Improvements to the CAF Process

Improvements are identified by the CAF Quality Assurance Group and the Practice Improvement Team overseen by the Staying Safe Strategy Group. The improved training, supervision and service supply as a result of the QAF, and the resultant improved outcomes for children and young people completes the cycle of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Quality Assurance Framework Matrix

The QAF Matrix shows how the framework fits together and can be used as a guide for practitioners to see which tools are relevant to them and how and when to use them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA Tool</th>
<th>Used By</th>
<th>Used When</th>
<th>Results Inform</th>
<th>Share Results?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Assessment Checklist</td>
<td>Practitioner who completes CAF</td>
<td>After completion of CAF form and throughout CAF/TAF process</td>
<td>Training needs, Good practice in agency</td>
<td>With Line Manager as directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Supervision Checklist</td>
<td>Practitioner and Supervisor/ Line Manager</td>
<td>Supervision, ongoing throughout CAF/TAF process</td>
<td>Training needs, Good practice in agency</td>
<td>During Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Improvement Team</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Team inc CAF QA Manager and Locality Managers</td>
<td>Ongoing difficult cases</td>
<td>Improve the outcome of the interventions for the family</td>
<td>Information is added to Capita and reported on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit of newly completed CAF forms and guidance</td>
<td>CAF QA Group</td>
<td>After completion of new Family CAFs</td>
<td>Quality of CAF assessment and competence of author and ‘home agency’</td>
<td>Results shared with ‘home agency’. Support offered where CAFs are rated as inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Travelled Tool</td>
<td>Lead Professional</td>
<td>After first TAF meeting and periodically until end of TAF episode</td>
<td>Progress made by family and effectiveness of TAFs</td>
<td>Results shared with ‘home agency’ and QA Manager Reported to WSCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of Child Young Person and Family</td>
<td>CAF Author or Lead Professional with family</td>
<td>During and at end of TAF episode</td>
<td>Family’s perceptions on effectiveness of process</td>
<td>Results shared with ‘home agency’ and QA Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of TAF Episode</td>
<td>Performance Improvement Team and CAF QA Group (for moderation)</td>
<td>After closure of TAF episode</td>
<td>Quality of CAF assessment and TAF process especially concerning achievement of actions</td>
<td>Results shared with ‘home agency’ and QA Manager Reported to WSCB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF/ TAF Episode Audit Record</td>
<td>Performance Improvement Team and CAF QA Group (for moderation)</td>
<td>After completion of Audits</td>
<td>Overall quality of CAF/ TAF process highlighting areas of strength and weakness</td>
<td>Results shared with ‘home agency’ and QA Manager Reported to WSCB</td>
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