

The Common Assessment Framework for Adults: Your invitation to join the consultation process

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for Adults is a generic approach to assessing the health and social care needs of individual adults. It aims to support improved coordination between health and social care services.

CAF brings together and builds on the current Single Assessment Process (SAP) and the Care Programme Approach (CPA) in mental health. CAF aims to improve outcomes for **all** adults with complex, longer-term health and social care needs. Its unified approach will be especially helpful to those who previously had to deal with separate health, social care and other support systems.

As part of the process of developing CAF, we are inviting your comments, suggestions and ideas. This leaflet outlines some ways you can get involved in this consultation.

The CAF proposals will need to work within the context of *Putting people first: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care* and of *transforming social care*, LAC(DH)(2008)1. In particular, the proposals must take account of developments in personalisation, self-directed support and improved outcomes for individuals.

CAF and information sharing

Among other things, CAF sets out the **principles of information sharing** between health and social care that are needed to assess and plan care/support most effectively.

Most people working in health and social care agree that improved information exchange is an important ingredient in good multi-disciplinary working. Evidence from the evaluation of SAP suggests that there are

some clear efficiencies to be gained from sharing the right information at the right time.

The proposals for CAF include developing IT solutions to enable assessment and care/support planning information to be shared electronically. This will be a part of improved coordination between health and social care services and, more widely, other care agencies, such as local housing authorities, when they are involved in supporting an individual.

The CAF proposals include determining what information is collected and shared between the relevant organisations – provided the individual concerned agrees to have their personal details shared. Assessment and care/support planning information would be recorded electronically and made available to service users and relevant care teams so that they can participate effectively in the assessment and care/support planning process. Work is already underway to enable local authority social services to access data in the Personal Demographics Service of the NHS Spine.

The CAF consultation

You are invited to be part of the consultation process and submit your comments.

Register your interest now and we will notify you when the formal consultation period begins. See overleaf for how to register and get involved.

We will be publishing a wide-ranging consultation document available in January 2009. It will cover the general direction of CAF and include more detailed proposals such as initial cost benefit analysis and connections to developing policy and practice.

Online consultation

From January 2009, you will be able to submit your comments online. **You can register your interest now** at www.dh.gov.uk/caf

Consultation events

We are holding eight regional consultation events, so that people can discuss and contribute to the CAF consultation in person. These events are:

22 January – London

27 January – Newcastle

29 January – Nottingham

3 February – London

5 February – Manchester

11 February – Bristol

17 February – Leeds

19 February – Birmingham

For more information on the events and to book a place visit: www.dh.gov.uk/caf

CAF for Adults: Demonstrator Sites Programme

Call for Expressions of Interest

Alongside the consultation, we are providing funding for 'demonstrator sites' to test the CAF for Adults proposals (as outlined in the consultation document and prospectus) over the next three years. These sites will be social services led, but taken forward in partnership with the NHS and other sectors.

The sites will establish assessment processes across local organisations, based on a person-centred approach and the proportionate use of multi-disciplinary teams.

The sites will also be involved in developing IT solutions to enable sharing of assessment and care planning information between health and social care practitioners and making this information accessible to service users.

A national evaluation team will collect data on the costs, benefits and risks of implementing the proposals. This will inform future funding bids for national roll-out of the programme.

Putting People First: A shared vision is available at

www.dh.gov.uk/en/PUBLICATIONSANDSTATISTICS/PUBLICATIONS/PUBLICATIONSPOLICYANDguidance/dh_081118

Transforming social care is available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/publicationsandstatistics/lettersandcirculars/localauthoritycirculars/dh_081934