



Every Child Matters
Change For Children

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

Improving Information Sharing and Management (IISaM) Programme

E-enablement of the Common Assessment Framework (eCAF):

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers: Release 2

July 2008

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. How will implementation of the national eCAF system take place?

In principle, we are planning on following the ContactPoint approach to implementation, where appropriate, to ensure that organisations can follow a familiar path and reuse materials. The national eCAF system will be deployed in a phased approach, beginning with an Early Adopters group.

Those opting into national eCAF will be provided with the support of the Improving Information Sharing and Management (IISaM) Programme including support from their implementation coordinator. The team will provide guidance, materials and templates to support the implementation activity and will monitor it centrally and work to assist the Local Authorities and National Partners to ensure readiness by their deployment slot. The first of the templates available is the Local Business Case template, allowing Local Authorities and National Partners to assess the benefits of national eCAF compared to alternative options.

2. When will more information on funding be made available?

Currently, the eCAF Project Team is not in a position to provide any information on central funding to Local Authorities. The funding situation will become clearer once a supplier for the national eCAF system has been chosen.

The expectation to date is that funds will cover training key user managers and train the trainers, but this shall be provided centrally by the national eCAF supplier and not as grants to organisations.

There are additional cost savings that should be considered when making your decision about the national eCAF system:

- Funds originally intended for the development of your local system could be redirected to other initiatives.
- The cost of securing an eCAF license would be covered by the national eCAF system.
- Required enhancements to the national eCAF system will be covered by the DCSF.
- Changes in policy will be reflected by the national eCAF system.

3. What training will be provided for the national eCAF system?

Similar to ContactPoint, the emphasis will be on providing the necessary materials and support (including 'train the trainers' material) to allow Local Authorities and other stakeholders to educate their own people. Training will not be limited to one approach

4. What links have been made by the DCSF and the CWDC to ensure a combined approach to the implementation of CAF supported by the national eCAF system?

In October 2006, when CAF had moved into the implementation phase, the CWDC took over responsibility from the DCSF for the implementation of CAF along with other integrated working processes.

The national eCAF system is still at the development and design phase and has not yet moved to full implementation. However, the DCSF is already in close consultation with the CWDC regarding the development and implementation of the national eCAF system and a number of discernable links have been made:

- Regular progress reviews and planning meetings are held between the CWDC

and the eCAF Project Team.

- A representative from the CWDC is a member of the national eCAF system User Group.
- We are sharing documentation on our implementation approach and ensuring that this is coordinated with CWDC activity.
- IISaM Implementation Coordinators are beginning to reach out to their regional CWDC counterparts to ensure communications are shared where relevant.

The DCSF will continue to strengthen our engagement with the CWDC to ensure an increasingly integrated approach as we move towards implementation.

5. Many Local Authorities have developed variations to the standard CAF Form. How will the design team take this on board and consider their appropriateness for the national eCAF system?

The existing requirements are specified to match the current published CAF Form.

The formal approach to design will be developed and confirmed once a supplier is on board. The ultimate aim is to maximise the uptake and usage of the national eCAF system without unduly compromising the 'common' approach to CAF.

6. Will all eCAF users be ContactPoint users?

We anticipate that all eCAF users will be registered ContactPoint users. A very wide group of practitioners will be expected to at least 'participate' in a CAF Episode to some degree at some time, but not all will necessarily need to use the national eCAF system. This will be subject to the anticipated needs of their role i.e. frequency and extent of CAF involvement.

For those participants in CAF Episodes who will not be users of ContactPoint, the Department will share best practice processes so that they can view a CAF or provide input to one.

7. What is a CAF Episode?

The CAF Episode is a central concept within the electronic Common Assessment Framework. It corresponds to one complete trip through the CAF business process – from 'Preparation' through to the end of 'Delivery' and presents a holistic view of all the additional needs that a child or young person has and the services and activities that are addressing those needs. It is a self-contained unit that facilitates the collection of information, suitable for sharing between practitioners and systems as required. Practitioners will be granted access to specific episodes only and given its holistic nature there should only be one open CAF Episode per child at any particular time.

The CAF Episode could contain any of the following items: Common Assessment, Action Plans, Progress Reviews, Final Summary, Consent Statements and the Contact Details of all involved.

In summary, a CAF Episode is a single episode of concern from identification; through assessment and delivery to closing the concern as needs are met.

8. How long will a CAF Episode remain on the national eCAF system?

A CAF Episode will remain accessible in a read-only format to all users originally granted access for 1 year after the CAF Episode is closed. After being closed for 1 year (or, where earlier, the assessed child reaches the age of 18 (or 25 if considered appropriate and consent is given)) the CAF Episode data will be automatically archived to a separate storage location. Archived data will still be accessible for the purposes of reporting and audit purposes. The archived CAF data will be deleted (i.e. purged) after a further 6 years. Organisations which have responsibilities for the CAF Episode data in question will be informed via alerts and/or reporting prior to deletion in order that they can retrieve any data required and then store this locally in line with their own data retention policy and practice.

In summary, a CAF Episode will remain on the national eCAF system as follows:

Open – Variable

Closed – 1 Year

Archived – Up to 6 years

9. Is a closed CAF Episode still accessible?

When a CAF Episode is closed, it will only remain accessible to those practitioners who have already been granted access, for one year, at which point, it will be archived. A closed CAF Episode can be accessed (read-only) in the same way as an open CAF Episode and details extracted to an available format such as word or PDF. An archived CAF Episode is still retrievable, although only certain users will have access for purposes such as reporting and auditing.

10. Can any information be pre-filled on eCAF, for example, information from a previous CAF Episode?

It is expected that the vast majority of eCAF data will be manually entered by practitioners as required.

The requirements do however include a facility for a user to copy the details of the CAF Episode team (i.e. citizens, organisations and practitioners involved with a child) from an existing CAF Episode to a new episode that they are creating (if that information is still relevant). Note, users can only copy from a CAF Episode that they have access to and the aim is to avoid re-keying where similar parties are involved (e.g. opening a new CAF Episode for the same child or a sibling).

11. How and by whom should the CAF Episode be updated?

The national eCAF system is not intended to replace the existing Common Assessment Framework – it is simply the e-enablement of this framework. As such, the three steps in the CAF process (Preparation, Discussion and Delivery) as outlined in published guidance, should still be followed.

In addition to face-to-face meetings (if needed), requests for services and responses to those requests can be managed by the national eCAF system. Alerts can also be sent to ensure that activities are being carried out.

Typically, the Episode Coordinator (this could be the CAF originator or the Lead Professional) would be the individual who has 'ownership' over the CAF Episode. The Episode Coordinator is primarily responsible for controlling the episode content and any

associated updates (e.g. through the use of version control) and ensuring that the correct consent and access procedures are followed. Deciding when to update the CAF Episode will be entirely at the discretion of practitioners. The national eCAF system will be flexible in this area and will be able to handle a variety of scenarios from multiple 'updaters' to a 'single updater'. It will also be possible to see who has made each update.

12. Will an updated CAF Episode send an alert to all other members of that CAF team?

Yes, the national eCAF system will provide users with the functionality to subscribe to alerts on CAF Episodes that they have been given access to. Similarly, the Episode Coordinator can set-up automatic alerts reminding involved practitioners to review a CAF Episode.

13. Will local eCAF systems be able to integrate with the national eCAF system?

The national eCAF system will provide a utility supporting the transfer of a CAF Episode to or from another (local, accredited) eCAF system. This utility is only intended to support the scenario where responsibility for a child changes from one Local Authority to another (e.g. when a child moves home to a new region), but only where the new Local Authority is supported by a different eCAF system.

When a CAF Episode is transferred to a local eCAF system from the national eCAF system, the episode will automatically be closed on the national eCAF system. This feature prevents the episode from being open and therefore maintained in two separate eCAF systems. Similar functionality should be made available in all local eCAF systems.

No organisation should support CAF through the use of multiple eCAF systems (i.e. either the national eCAF system or a local system must be used, but not both).

Additionally, when sharing a CAF Episode, practitioners would have to view an episode on either the national eCAF system or the local eCAF system.

These complexities reaffirm the benefits of using the national eCAF system, in that it facilitates multi-agency and cross-boundary working in a consistent manner. It also increases the transparency of work performed by other agencies.

14. Will the national eCAF system have links to any other systems apart from ContactPoint?

The national eCAF system will provide technical options to support the integration of local CMS systems – however, it is likely to be the responsibility of Local Authorities / National Partners to modify their own systems, should they choose to integrate them.

15. Is there a statutory obligation to inform ContactPoint of the existence of a CAF?

For the persons or bodies listed in Schedule 4 of the ContactPoint regulations, there is a statutory duty for them to inform ContactPoint of the existence of a CAF, whether this CAF is in paper form, held on a local eCAF system or is on the national eCAF system. It would be best practice for the practitioner to inform the child/young person and/or parent/carer that the existence of a CAF will be indicated on ContactPoint.

Persons/bodies who are permitted to supply data to ContactPoint and who are listed in

Schedule 5 of the Regulations, and who are supplying data to ContactPoint are not obliged to provide CAF contact details. It is good practice to inform the child/young person and / or parent/carer that the CAF will be indicated on ContactPoint and the child/young person and / or parent/carer need to be aware of this before giving consent to the CAF in the first place.

When a CAF Episode has been created in the national eCAF system, it will automatically notify ContactPoint that a CAF has been initiated. There will be no access to the CAF itself via ContactPoint.

16. How will the national eCAF system deal with consent?

The national eCAF system electronically replicates the standard CAF Form and includes a free-text section to record consent (e.g. whether this was written or verbal and by whom consent was granted). If required, the consent statement can be printed out and filed appropriately.

When completing a common assessment, practitioners should explain to the child and/or their parent how the information in the assessment could, or will, be shared, and seek their consent.

It is important to note the difference between access and consent – i.e. that access is always given to named individuals (i.e. users of the system) but consent is given to services.

Access to a CAF Episode should only be granted following explicit consent (as is the case for manual CAF processes). The national eCAF system cannot monitor this any more than that of the manual processes - it will however maintain a record of who has been granted access to a CAF Episode for audit purposes.

When a practitioner requires access to a CAF Episode, he/she would then need to contact the appropriate practitioner - this will be the 'Episode Coordinator' (whose contact details will be made available via ContactPoint).

The Episode Coordinator holding the CAF Episode will only provide access to a specific CAF Episode following the informed, explicit consent of the child or young person (or their parent / carer where appropriate). As stated above, the system will maintain a record of who has been granted access to a CAF Episode.

Furthermore, all users of the national eCAF system must first be set-up as a system user (if this is not already the case). Access to the national eCAF system will be granted only to authorised users who have undergone appropriate checks.

17. Do practitioners require fair processing notice during consent to inform children, young people and families that their information will be entered into the national eCAF system?

The Information Commissioner's Office stated that this was something that the organisations making use of the national eCAF system should publish (with appropriate guidance from the DCSF). This should happen at the point of service – i.e. practitioners have to obtain consent to conduct and store a common assessment on the national eCAF system. Guidance will be made available at the appropriate time.

18. Who will the consent statement cover?

When completing a common assessment, practitioners should explain to the child and/or their parents/carers how the information in the assessment could, or will, be shared, and

seek their consent

The consent statement will be recorded as per the existing standard CAF Form which is effectively a free-text statement. Additionally, specific service organisations (i.e. agencies) that have been explicitly granted or refused consent can be recorded separately – the precise behaviour of this functionality is to be determined in the design phase.

It will be the responsibility of practitioners involved with a CAF Episode to ensure that CAF guidance is adhered to in managing consent-based access. Although an optional consent Review Date is included in the data model, it is anticipated that this would trigger an alert rather than apply any hard stop on the consent.

19. Can office support staff enter CAF Episode details onto the national eCAF system on behalf of a practitioner?

Local Authorities and National Partners may choose to organise their CAF processes to allow this to happen, especially in larger organisations. The consent statement signed by the child / family would allow different representatives of the service (to whom consent has been granted)' to view the common assessment data and enter it onto the national eCAF system.

However, all such people must have undergone the appropriate security checks, and must first be set-up as a system user (if this is not already the case). Confidentiality stipulations need to be complied with - for example, a practitioner may not allow the support staff to enter details for a CAF Episode where the child is related in some way to the support staff.

20. What Management Information reporting will be made available?

Attributes including those supporting Management Information (MI) reporting will be developed and agreed during the design phase of the national eCAF project. At a minimum, the national eCAF system will provide a tool allowing users to run reports either by creating new, ad hoc reports or by modifying saved reports. The report outputs will be exportable to various formats such as PDF and CSV files. Two separate system roles will grant users access to this tool:

1) The 'Analytical Reporting role' will support higher-level, statistical reporting needs (e.g. measuring the number of CAFs undertaken) at the national, Local Authority or National partner organisation levels. Analytical Data is essentially aggregated statistical information.

2) The 'Operational Reporting role' will support more detailed management needs such as monitoring team performance. Operational Data will identify individual CAF Episodes and practitioners but will not identify citizens. Operational reporting may lead to detailed investigation of individual CAF Episodes by managers.

It is important to stress that no reporting functionality will exist for data attributes which could potentially reveal the identity of an assessed child or other citizen (such as names, addresses or any common assessment observations).