

REPORT TO: Children, Young People & Families Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 12th September 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

SUBJECT: Common Assessment Framework (CAF) activity by schools

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on CAF activity by schools, support available to school staff undertaking level 2 support to families, and developments in early intervention in Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Board:

- i) note the contents of the report;**
- ii) note the support available to staff in schools to complete and lead on CAFs;**
- iii) note the developments underway to support early intervention across the Borough.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Halton's approach to early intervention, endorsed through various policies, strategies and procedures, since 2010, depends on all partners ensuring that the delivery of universal services plays a key role in identifying and supporting children, young people and families when issues first emerge.

3.1.2 Halton uses the Halton level of needs framework across all partner agencies to enable practitioners and services to determine if a child or families' needs should be met through universal, level 1 services, need a co-ordinated multi-agency approach at level 2 or meet safeguarding criteria and need a level 3, children's social care response.

3.1.3 Halton is committed to CAF being the appropriate mechanism whereby all practitioners and all services can take responsibility for

carrying out holistic assessments of need and coordinating a package of support services when needs have emerged at level 2 on the Halton level of needs framework. Halton also encourages and supports the use of the pre-CAF as a means of establishing if needs within a family lie at level 2 or can be supported at level 1.

- 3.1.4 For the approach to early intervention to work and ensure appropriate services and interventions are delivered to families, all services and front line practitioners need to play their part in identifying families who need additional help and support and enabling that support either through referral or introductions to services or through acting as lead professional for a CAF.
- 3.1.5 Halton Borough Council has a relatively small number of its own staff who are dedicated to level 2 early intervention support. They are based in 2 Early Intervention locality teams, one in Widnes and one in Runcorn, and within the new iCART team, which acts as the one front door to both early intervention and children's social care services for children and families.
- 3.1.6 Halton Borough Council staff in other service areas such as children's centres, early years settings, health engagement, etc., all deliver services at a universal and/or universal plus level and will act as lead professional for a CAF when they are deemed the most appropriate service to do so. As such they are fulfilling a role similar to that expected of all other partner agencies practitioners.
- 3.1.7 The dedicated HBC early intervention workers who are working with families at level 2, are primarily working with children and families at the more complex end of level 2, where there are several unmet needs, significant vulnerabilities, family members with differing needs and/or when cases are near to stepping up to children's social care or have just stepped down from children's social care. The locality teams are also responsible for coordinating the Weekly Working Together Meeting for their locality, offering support to other lead professionals within their locality, linking with schools and early years settings in the area, supporting the roll out of the eCAF system, and offering parenting group interventions such as the Nurturing Parenting Programme and the Gateway Programme.
- 3.1.8 iCART – In the first quarter of this year, there were 650 EI contacts in iCART, of which 450 resulted in information, advice and guidance to the referrer or family. The other 200 resulted in other outcomes. Whilst it is entirely appropriate that the early intervention arm of iCART have a role in providing information, advice and guidance to the wider workforce, it is also the case that when more than 66% of contacts are for information, advice and guidance, this is taking time that would otherwise be spent undertaking screenings and 360 reviews for those children and families where needs have been identified, or are likely to be identified as level 2 on the Halton level

of needs framework.

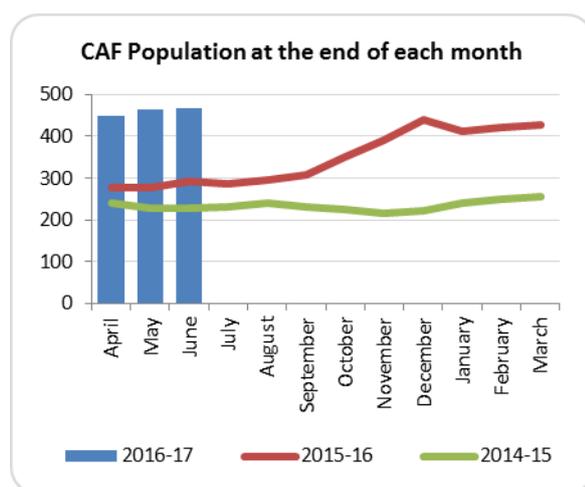
- 3.1.9 As part of the complex dependency programme iCART are planning to develop an online directory of services that will help support professionals to signpost and refer children, young people and families directly to other services. As the referral pathways from iCART have developed since the launch of iCART, fewer referrals have been coming out via Working Together Meetings. This is enabling these weekly meetings to develop a role as a forum for multiagency professionals to share information and advice about services and possible interventions for families they are working with. Alongside the launch of on line directory we would encourage all staff working with families within universal or level 2 services to attend the Working Together Meeting in their area to network and share information about services available in the area, and to make use of these forums as a first point of call for additional information, advice and guidance on possible interventions for families.

3.2 Current CAF data and schools

3.2.1 CAF activity in Halton

As at the last reporting period, end of Q1 2016/17, the total number of CAFs open in Halton is showing as 467.

This appears to be stabilising after a number of years of fluctuating figures. Due to a new eCAF system being introduced and the new iCART team introducing some new systems and processes there may still be some further fluctuations in numbers over the remainder of this reporting year.



3.2.2 Schools and CAFs

The following table shows the split of lead professional organisation

for open CAFs on the system as at 30th June 2016. We are currently running 2 systems side by side as we introduce the new eCAF, so some of the figures may not be fully accurate, however the proportions of CAFs led by different agencies have remained relatively stable over a number of years.

CAFs open at end of quarter by Lead Professional

Lead professional organisation	Count	%
Locality Teams	152	33%
Primary Schools	84	18%
Family Work Service	45	10%
Not Recorded	51	11%
Children's Centres	23	5%
Secondary schools	22	5%
HBC	22	5%
Social Care	16	3%
Special Schools	16	3%
Bridgewater Health Visitor	10	2%
Nursery Schools	10	2%
Bridgewater School Health	6	1%
IFWS	5	1%
Woodview	4	1%
NHS Bridgewater	1	0%

3.2.3 It should be noted that by far the biggest proportion of CAFs are led by HBC staff. When the locality teams, Family Work Service, HBC, social care, and children's centres are added together HBC staff from these teams lead on a total of 233 of the 467 open CAFs, which equates to over 55%.

3.2.4 **Primary schools** currently lead on 84 of the open CAFs representing 18% of the total open CAFs in the Borough. Last year they led on approximately the same number, 82 which represented 16% of the total number.

However if this is looked at in terms of the numbers of children aged 5 – 11 years old with an open CAF, for 2015/16, 182 of the children with an open CAF were aged 5 – 11 years, and of these Primary Schools led on 82 of them or approximately 45%. At the end of Q1 for this reporting year the figures are 213 children aged 5 – 11 years with an open CAF, Primary schools leading on 84, which is approximately 40%.

3.2.5 **Secondary schools** currently lead on 22 of the open CAFs

representing just 5% of the total open CAFs in the Borough. Last year they also led on 22 which represented 4% of the total open CAFs during the year.

In terms of the age of children subject of CAFs, currently 142 of CAFs are for children aged 11 – 15 years, so secondary schools lead on 15% of the CAFs for secondary aged children. For the reporting year 2015/16 there was a total of 76 CAFs for secondary aged children, of which secondary schools led on 22, which equates to 35%.

3.2.6 **Table**

	2015/16	Q1 2016/17
Total open CAFs	550	467
Open CAFs for 5 to 11 year olds	182	213
Open CAFs for 11 to 15 year olds	76	142
CAFs led by primary schools	82	84
CAFs led by primary schools as % of total open CAFs	16%	18%
CAFs led by Primary Schools as % of open CAFs for 5-11 yr olds	45%	40%
CAFs led by secondary schools	22	22
CAFs led by secondary schools as % of total open CAFs	4%	5%

CAFs led by secondary schools as % of open CAFs for 11-15 yr olds	22%	15%
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3.2.7 The percentage of CAFs being led by Primary Schools is a significant proportion of the open CAFs for primary age children. The percentage of CAFs led by secondary schools is significantly lower. However it is possible that given the support staff and services which some secondary schools have access to via their own internal structures or as part of wider networks that more level 2 support is being offered to children at secondary school level which is not being managed via CAFs and therefore is not as easily quantifiable.

3.3 **Issues and pressures and support available**

3.3.1 It is acknowledged that for schools, as is the case for other universal services such as health visiting and school nursing, there are pressures to support and input into core groups and other meetings for not just children with CAFs but also children who are within the children's social care remit with a Child in Need, Child Protection or Child in Care plan. This can put considerable pressure on schools in areas with high levels of deprivation and need who have high numbers of children with multi agency plans of support across all levels of need.

3.3.2 Nevertheless it is important to re-endorse the commitment across the whole of the Halton Partnership to early intervention. As our more co-ordinated and coherent response to early intervention, supported by programmes such as the complex dependency programme and by responsive needs led commissioning, starts to show better outcomes for children, the numbers of children requiring support at level 3 should start to reduce.

3.3.3 There are a number of ongoing or new ways in which school based and other front line practitioners can seek support for themselves and/or for children, young people and families they are working with:

- Ongoing support from locality teams to schools and school based family support workers.
- The changing remit of the Working Together Meetings to enable more time for practitioners to bring issues and seek support from a multi-agency forum when they are unsure of the best way to proceed with a child or family, or services which might be available to support families.
- The new eCAF system which will be rolled out from this summer onwards, which should support practitioners in undertaking

CAFs.

- The proposed development of a new on line directory of services.
- More robust multi-agency screenings within the early intervention arm of iCART, and the use of 360 reviews for children and families with more entrenched and complex needs should lead to more initial information being gathered for some children and families in the front door, so that for those families where a CAF is subsequently advised the lead professional will have more information to inform the ongoing assessment and planning process.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report reiterates previous agreed policy and strategy regarding early intervention.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Early intervention supports vulnerable children and young people, and contributes to ensuring that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy, and receive their entitlement of high quality services that are sensitive to need, inclusive and accessible to all.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Early intervention supports vulnerable children and young people and contributes to creating a healthier community and offers opportunities for people to take responsibility for their health with the necessary support available.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.