

Dear Colleagues,

There are a number of changes and news that we want to let you know about. For speed of reading the headlines are in blue bold lettering and the rationale and additional information is contained within the relevant paragraphs.

New Panel Times 10.30am to 5.00pm from 25th February.



Many of you will have noticed the steady increase in the number of CAF's and reviews at each panel. We very much welcome this increase particularly as potentially this means for children, young people and their families that intervention is earlier and there is a real opportunity to prevent needs escalating. It has been very difficult to fit all the review and new CAF's into existing panel times. Even when this is possible it often feels that hearing cases can be rushed and there is limited time to allow for the very useful discussions which inform plans within the panels. Having canvassed some of you for your thoughts, generally the sense was that colleagues don't want panels to continue into the early evenings, hence the extension of the start time. As of 25th February all panels will commence at 10.30am. There will be a sandwich lunch at 12.30 for half an hour and a 15 minute break at 2.30pm, finishing no later than 5.00pm.

Change of panel venue for Central Cluster from 18th March.

Central Cluster panels have to date been held at the Beehive in Grays. We have been very happy with the venue. However, there is cost attached to hiring the room; money which in effect can be used for work with children, young people and families. The Children's Centre at Drake Road, Chafford Hundred have kindly allowed us to hold panels at the centre from 18th March. There is ample space for parking and the Centre is at the hub of the community providing a variety of groups, individual work and support to children and their families; an ideal venue for the MAG's panels. Thanks to the Children's Centre for providing Central Cluster MAG's panel with this venue; we look forward to seeing you there.

Quality Assurance – random sampling, striving for excellence.

In January we began to randomly sample CAF's and service delivery plans for quality assurance. This week the government via the DCFS, have released their own quality assurance documents relating to the CAF and service delivery!! These are not mandatory and we are currently in the process of considering these, and our own QA documents, to think about what might be the most useful way going about the task of quality assurance. Information gathered from quality assurance will help to inform future training, areas of development and ensuring continued quality of CAFs and service delivery plans whilst striving for excellence. The whole concept and management of quality assurance is likely to be an area of discussion at the pilot Lakeside Partnership CAF assessor and Lead Professional group and is also an area of work at the CAF/MAG's review days in April (see below).



Completing the CAF form.

Generally, the standard of CAF forms is good. However, the Conclusions, Solutions and Actions on pages 7 and 8 are sometimes not completed. We would appreciate it if these pages can be completed with the young person and their family as this helps to ensure appropriate plans and services are in place. Please also note that we will no longer be providing copies of new CAF's at panel from **4th March**. New CAF's will continue to be sent out electronically with the agenda.



Signed CAFs to be held by the Commissioning Team.

At the moment the signed CAF is held by the practitioner and agency that completes the CAF. We need to hold a copy of the signed CAF at the Commissioning Team for audit purposes. Therefore, can those practitioners completing the CAF ensure that a signed copy is with us no later than the actual panel. This means in effect that the signed CAF can be posted, scanned via e mail or faxed prior to panel or brought to the panel where the CAF is to be heard.

CAF Reviews, additional information on the Agenda, 1, 3, 6 months.

You may have noticed a new column on the agenda which indicates the number of months a CAF and service delivery plan has been in place by quarters e.g. indicated by the number 1, 3, 6 and so on. In November last year we introduced the current review system; 1 month review to confirm the child, young person and family have accepted the plan and to confirm services have commenced. The 3 month review is to consider progress and perhaps any additional services that may be needed. The 6 month and subsequent reviews are also to check progress but also to consider possible closure if appropriate. In summary, if the plan is for 1 month review this should be a fairly brief discussion at panel. Clearly, the following reviews would be more in depth. Finally, just to remind providers to ensure that Lead Professionals have relevant updates **prior** to panel to enable a comprehensive review.

Service delivery plans, ensuring services are in place.

A few months ago we put in place the requirement for young people and families to be informed of the service delivery plan and to endorse this. This has been effective and will continue. Basically, the lead professional is required to share the service delivery plan with the family and confirm their agreement with the plan. The lead professional confirms this via e mail to Chrissa Claydon, the CAF Coordinator. Following receipt of e mail confirmation, Chrissa shares the plan with service providers who commence introductions and work with the family often in conjunction with the lead professional. As stated above the 1 month review is to confirm services are in place. If for any reason, services have not commenced please advise the MAG's panel chair and Chrissa as soon as possible and we'll ensure this is rectified.

Thinking Families Providers.

We sent out the Thinking Families provider directory in our November e mail. We've attached the abridged version in this e mail to ensure you are all aware of what services are available. As you know there are also a range of council and children's trust services available via MAG's.

Training Dates and refreshers.



During the past 2 years, Information Sharing, CAF and Lead Professional training has been undertaken across a broad range of agencies and professionals. Current CAF training takes place on alternate months; the next **CAF training is on 20th April at the Culver Centre**. Those wishing to book on to the training should contact; Course Coordinator, Professional Development Centre, The Culver Centre, Daiglen Drive, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 4RR. Tel: 01375 413677, Fax: 01708 851789, Email: curriculum.services@thurrock.gov.uk .

The next **Lead Professional training is on 1st April at the Culver Centre**. Please contact Gillian Davison; gdavison@thurrock.gov.uk, 01375 652674.

For details on **information sharing training** please contact: Course Coordinator, Professional Development Centre, The Culver Centre, Daiglen Drive, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 4RR. Tel: 01375 413677, Fax: 01708 851789, Email: curriculum.services@thurrock.gov.uk .

Details of additional training provided either by the Children's Trust or Local Children's Safeguarding Board are available at panels or alternatively can be located on the Integrated Working website at:

http://www.shapingthurrock.org.uk/safeguard/content.php?page=integrated_services

Both Jo and Tracy are happy to provide short refreshers on CAF and Lead Professional advice, support and information. This may be particularly useful when professionals haven't completed a CAF or undertaken the Lead Professional role since their initial training. Alternatively, you may provide services outside of core hours or not be able to release staff for the training. Jo has just completed a twilight training session for staff at the Pirates and Neptune nurseries. Any queries should be directed to: jhenderson@thurrock.gov.uk or tmsmith@thurrock.gov.uk or on 01708857525.

CAF and MAG's Development days - 27th and 28th April.



Striving for Excellence. CAF and MAG's have been operational in Thurrock for a number of years in various guises. In order to continue the growth of early intervention and integrated working a day of review, reflection and determining next steps and the way forward will be provided for the East and West localities. The East locality development day will take place on the 27th April, the West on the 28th. Each day will facilitate 75 participants from a range of agencies involved in the CAF and MAG's processes and acceptance of applications will take place to ensure inclusion of a maximum number of agencies. More details will follow in March.

People news.

Congratulations! Those at Central Panel would like to wish Bhawna Bhakara all the very best in taking up her new post at the Primary Mental Health Care Team. Karen Reynolds from BEST is also moving to pastures new following her success in securing the post of Team Manager, Through Care Team in social care. Thanks to Bhawna and Karen for their invaluable contribution not only to CAF and MAG's but to the children and families they have worked with.

The Commissioning Team would like to welcome Mark Livermore, Supply Manager and Eddie Davidge, Contracts Manager. Mark and Eddie will provide key information in ensuring that MAG's has the very best services available for the children and families we work with. They can be contacted on 01708857525.

What's Next??

We realise this is quite a long e mail! In future the MAG's/Commissioning Team will produce a quarterly news letter to ensure everyone is aware of local and national updates and initiatives. The next news letter will be with you in June.

We have recently modified our data base which will be fully operational from 1st March. We are able to produce more comprehensive and detailed information across the whole CAF and MAG's processes. This means we can provide various data to individual agencies, clusters, localities and the whole of the borough.

And finally!!!!

If you need any help, support, advice, guidance on all things CAF and MAG's please don't hesitate to contact us: 01708 857525 or:

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Jo Henderson, MAGs East
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