



Frequently Asked Questions about the CAF and the Light House

Why do I need to complete a CAF to get a service for a child from the Light House?

The Light House is a specialist service; any child we work with at the Light House has had an assessment by at least one other professional, if not many more.

- Parents have told us that one of the difficulties for them is that they have to tell both theirs, and their child's story, over and over again. The IDCS partnership promised parents that the service would find systematic ways of ensuring that we reduce this: the CAF provides that. We then top up the CAF with specialist assessment, which we share within the Light House teams as relevant.
- These professionals will have an insight into the child, which benefits us in allocating the work or the specialist assessment. Therefore, speeding up the process of receiving a service for the child.

You only need to complete a CAF if you, or someone else already working with the child, hasn't already completed a holistic assessment. If you have this, and are willing to provide this assessment, you don't have to complete a CAF.

If you are working with a child and you haven't completed an assessment, which outlines the need you have identified for the child, then completing a CAF could benefit you to consolidate your thinking.

I don't think that the child's needs warrant the completion of a CAF...

If you feel that the child's needs do not warrant a CAF, e.g. the child needs a ramp or some other practical need, then completing the CAF will take minutes. After you have put the CV and details of the child's disability AND confirm that this is the only need for the child, you have finished. There is no need to search for info for the form.

** This approach won't work if the request is for input by workers to the child.

Why do I need to complete a CAF for a disabled child to access community short breaks? It is really heavy handed and isn't accessible.

According to the Disability Discrimination Act, disabled people, including children, have a right to access any goods and services in the community. In reality, many of the clubs and activities in Derby aren't open to disabled children. This may be because of physical access, or the staff ratio isn't enough to safely care, or because these services are uncomfortable in providing for children's personal care needs.

This will change given time, particularly as the extended school agenda applies to special schools also, BUT in the interim, the Community Support Team have tried to fill the gap alongside the other family support and safeguarding work they do for disabled children.

This is where the difficulty comes in:-

The CST are regulated by the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate, it is highly regulated and a costly service. The standards and regulations include the following:

- Full care records including a holistic assessment and care plan.
- Mandatory training requirements across a full range.
- Six monthly review arrangements.
- Staff monthly formal supervision.
- High staffing ratio expectations.
- We provide transport to many (but not all) of the activities.

The disadvantages of our CST are:

- This expensive and highly regulated team is not the most cost effective way of providing after school clubs or group work or clubs.
- There are easier and cheaper ways to provide these services, BUT the CST provides because there is a gap for these children in Derby.
- If you already know the child, and the child's needs are not extensive, then completing the CAF is not onerous. However, if the CST do not know the child and they are to assess (instead of a CAF) this means a home visit; getting to know the professionals that work with the child, and a school visit **before** the care plan is drawn up. This is time consuming, costly and more intrusive for the family AND, if the CST do an assessment (as per non-CAF statutory requirements) it reduces the time they can offer to the children.
- Either we receive a CAF or we assess and reduce our services!!! We can either assess or provide, not both.

I don't mind completing a CAF but I don't want to be the Lead Professional and no one else working with the child wants to be Lead Professional either... what can I do?

The first thing to consider is: 'does the need warrant having a Lead Professional?' (e.g. the ramp reply above). If the request is practical, then the child may not need a Lead Professional. Enter that on the CAF, we will understand.

Secondly, we are about to develop Service Co-ordinators at the Light House. This means that for children receiving a few different services from the Light House we will nominate a Service Co-ordinator who will be the link for the service to the Lead Professionals and parents and they will co-ordinate what we do. This would mean the Lead Professional has someone to directly liaise with and share any meeting arrangements with, etc..

Thirdly, if your identification of need comes with a feeling that the child's 'care or support' input doesn't need to be co-ordinated, then you must ask whether the child needs a specialist service. Access to Umbrella or youth service provision is fairly straightforward and families can self refer.

For the Future:

The Integrated Children's Service intention is for the Lead Professional to be in the area locality teams: in this way, children and young people will be owned by their community. There will be benefits for the child and specialist staff, the Lead Professional issue should be a short term one.

Where can I get information about services for disabled children or information and advice for parents?

The Light House has a 'single point of access' staff member who is building an information resource of local and national resources or providers. She will be happy to provide you with information. If she can't answer you, she will take your details, search for an answer and then get back to you. She is happy to send out leaflets or information to parents for you.

We also have some web pages on the council site: www.derby.gov.uk/thelighthouse