The Family CAF meeting
Establishing a Team Around the Family

Pulling together a Family CAF meeting begins to establish a Team Around the Family. It brings together all those services working with the family into a team that works together with the family to plan coordinated support and to address problems in a holistic way.

It can be an evolving team of practitioners as service involvement responds to emerging or dynamic needs. Some services drop off as they finish their work with the family and others will join as new needs are identified.

The aim of the meeting is to reduce duplication of effort and support a common service delivery approach which is needs lead and outcomes focused. It should work to a well defined action plan which is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that changes are occurring and agreed outcomes are being achieved.

Family members will have an active role in the Family CAF meetings, helping to determine and shape service interventions and being responsible for the part they play in resolving their own needs.

Some adults and young people may need to be supported in these meetings because of their own needs or vulnerabilities.

The Family CAF meeting process
A Family CAF meeting should be organised when at least two other agencies have been identified as working with the family.

Underlying principles of the Family CAF process and meeting:

- Competent adults and competent young people are custodians of their own destinies and are therefore responsible for the consequences of the decisions and actions they make.
- The culture of the process and meetings is one of support not rescue, of enablement not dependency.
- The child’s and/or young person’s needs must come first and their welfare is everyone’s responsibility
- The young person and/or parent(s) should always be present at a Family CAF meeting and their views considered
- Meetings follow the same format to ensure consistency and equity of approach.
- Action Plans are completed at every meeting and the actions decided have clearly defined outcomes
- All participants, services and agencies work together to support commonly identified actions and outcomes.

Family CAF meeting format:
Initial meeting:
- Welcome and introductions
- Information sharing from participants about needs and current actions
- Action Plan creation to co-ordinate activities and focus on outcomes
- Decide who is to be the Lead Professional
- Decide the date of the next meeting
How to organise a Family CAF meeting

Step 1
Identify potential dates that you and the Parent/Young Person can attend the meeting

- Work out the best TIME to meet taking into account child care arrangements and parents working commitments
- Identify at least 3 date options – Many professionals need adequate notice, remember, like you, they will have other things in their diaries to juggle
- Having a range of date options will make it easier to get the meeting organised.
- Realistically it’s highly unlikely that people will be able to meet in the next two weeks

Step 2
Check venues for the proposed dates

- Is the room size right for the number of people you expect at the meeting?
- Are there any access issues for the family?

Step 3
Contact Potential attendees to determine their availability

- Consider which professionals are ESSENTIAL to the meeting and which may be less so. This will help you to prioritise who to contact first and also help you to make a decision on which date to eventually set.
- The most effective way to contact attendees in the first instance is a telephone call as you’ll quickly get a feel if the original date options are viable.
- Make sure you get their email address when you call. It will make things much easier later on.
- Unable to telephone? use email because it’s a lot quicker than post and the sooner you get the dates out there the sooner you’ll be able to confirm the date.
- This can feel like a long process, particularly if there are lots of people to invite but once you have the first meeting review dates should be agreed around the table at that meeting.

Step 4
Finalise the meeting date

- Often you won’t be able to get everyone free on the same date as your planned meeting.
- Decide which one to go with based on whether the ESSENTIAL professionals can attend.
- Don’t forget to confirm the venue booking once you know the date.
- Send out an email confirmation of the date to all attendees