

CAF and Consent

1. The CAF aims to enable and support better information sharing about the needs of children. It is important that all practitioners using the CAF to share information do this lawfully.

Seeking consent should always be the first option. That is why the process of doing a common assessment has such a strong emphasis on consent and the CAF form asks practitioners to record that consent has been given.

In most circumstances you should only record and share information on a CAF form with the informed consent of the child or parent. (See below for exceptions).

Assessments should be undertaken with children and parents and the information recorded should be agreed in partnership with them. It is also necessary to work with children and parents to agree how information is recorded, used and with whom it can be shared.

2. Here's a checklist for consent:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| If you need to gather information from other agencies to help complete the assessment, have you got the agreement from the child/family about who you can contact | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| With child/parents discuss strengths and worries and agree what will be recorded on the CAF form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the information recorded on the CAF form accurate, up-to-date, and necessary to be shared? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree with family who will do what on the action plan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree with family who the CAF form needs to be shared with (by service) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Record this in the consent section of the form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The parent/young person has signed the form? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The original signed copy of the form is kept in your records? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The electronic version states that consent has been given and where this is stored | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The form is shared safely according to your agency's policy | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CAF forms that do not clearly state that consent has been given to share the information cannot be entered onto the Index or ContactPoint.

NB: CAFs without signed consent will not be able to be recorded in an eCAF system when we have one. This could have an effect on both families and practitioners if service delivery is uncoordinated or duplicated.

3. **Exceptions:** there may be times when you need to share information even when consent has been refused or when it would be inappropriate to seek consent. This is mainly:
 - Where there is evidence that the child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm; or
 - Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm; or
 - To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults including through the prevention, detection and prosecution of a serious crime

If you are not sure about this, seek advice from a line manager.

4. More information on consent and information sharing is available in the Information Sharing: a Practitioner's Guide which is available from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk