

# Impact Evaluation of CAF and Integrated Service Provision in the London Borough of Brent



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## Summary Report

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The **third stage** evaluation of the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Integrated Services Provision in Brent focuses on the impact of the CAF and integrated services and what difference it has made in the lives of children and families, who have been referred, and received a service. It takes a largely qualitative approach focussing on feedback from parents/carers, children/young people and schools to both measure their perceived impact and determine their views of what works or does not work and why.

All families and children involved in the evaluation had received a Tier 2 service from the CAF and had ceased to receive any service for more than 3 months.

A core component of the evaluation was to seek the impact of the CAF on parents, carers and children, as users of services, to find out what aspects of the services they feel worked, what level of impact the service made to them, what they like and how delivery could be improved in the future.

Views were also sought from all schools representatives involved in the CAF process as referrers, (including teachers, learning support assistants, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's and school heads), to determine the impact on both the school and young people referred.

## METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

It was decided that both qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined within the questionnaires and this is a useful strategy for both measuring the topic of interest and providing a detailed understanding of its nature or origins.

A mixture of scaled and qualitative questions was used to attempt to determine both impact and the quality of the service received.

The questionnaires asked schools and families to rate the impact of the work of the service.

Questionnaires were distributed to:

- Schools
- Parents/carers
- Children and young people

The schools' evaluation form was sent to 87 schools in April 2009 and completed within 6 weeks of distribution. This form enabled schools to review how the CAF had been working in their school and the impact on the school and the young people they had referred. In total 66 responses were received from schools in the London borough of Brent (76% of schools responded).

The separate questionnaire was designed for both parents and children and distributed to 91 parents and 80 to children and young people, who it was felt were independently able to answer the questions. Parents and children were sent questionnaires with a free post return; additionally they were also contacted by phone to encourage completion of the questionnaire.

The evaluation forms were completed and returned by families and children/young people between March 2009 and May 2009.

40 parents responded to the questionnaire (43% response) and 16 children and young people returned their questionnaire (20% response)

For the full evaluation report visit [www.brent.gov.uk/integrtaedworking](http://www.brent.gov.uk/integrtaedworking)

## PARENT/CARERS RESPONSES AND VIEWS

### CAF- Meeting the needs of children and young people

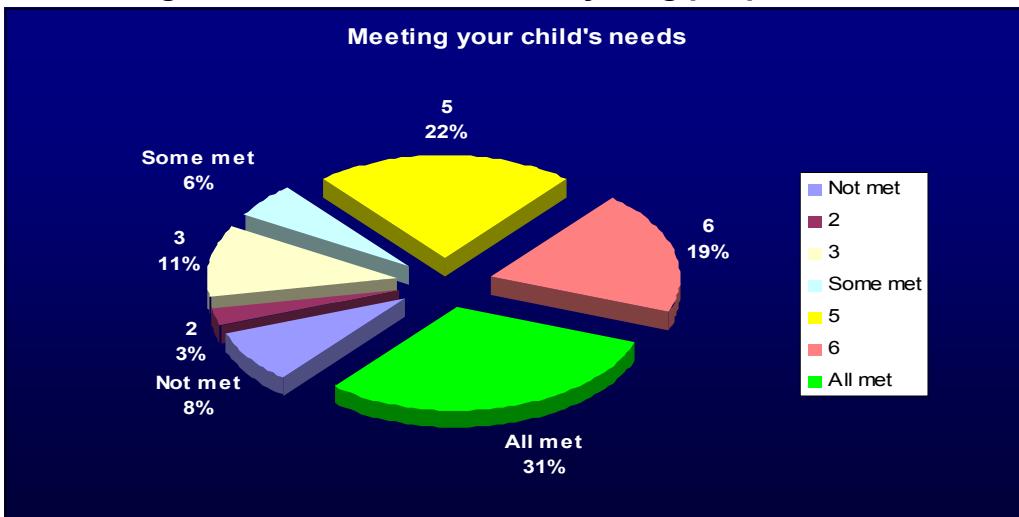


Fig. 1

As can be seen in fig.1, 78% of parents stated that CAF and its provision has met some or all of their children's needs, however, 31% of parents were confident that the service had helped them a great deal and has met all the needs of their children.

Linked to building the capacity of parents, 81% of parents felt that the CAF and its services had helped them personally to deal with their children's issues.

### Parent perspective-reduction in seriousness

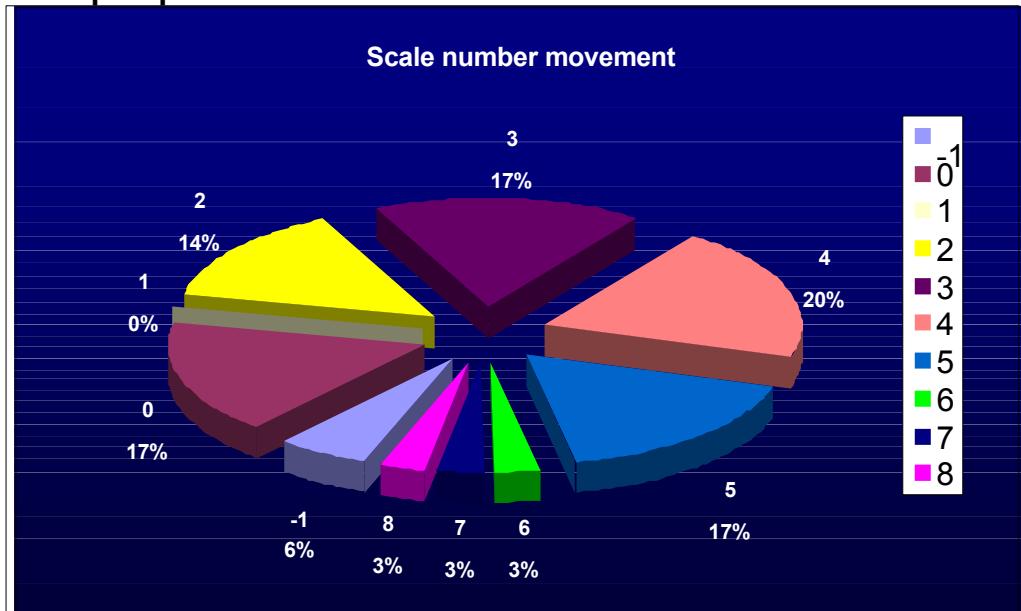


Fig. 2

When considering a comparison with individual parents' response scores (fig.2), we find that a vast majority, 77% of cases, expressed a significant reduction in the seriousness of their child's issue by 2 points or more on the scale (some up to 8 points). However, a small number (23%) felt that the issues were still very serious and that the issues had not been resolved. In 6% of the cases the parents felt that their child's situation had gotten worse after intervention.

## Parent's perspective-quality of service

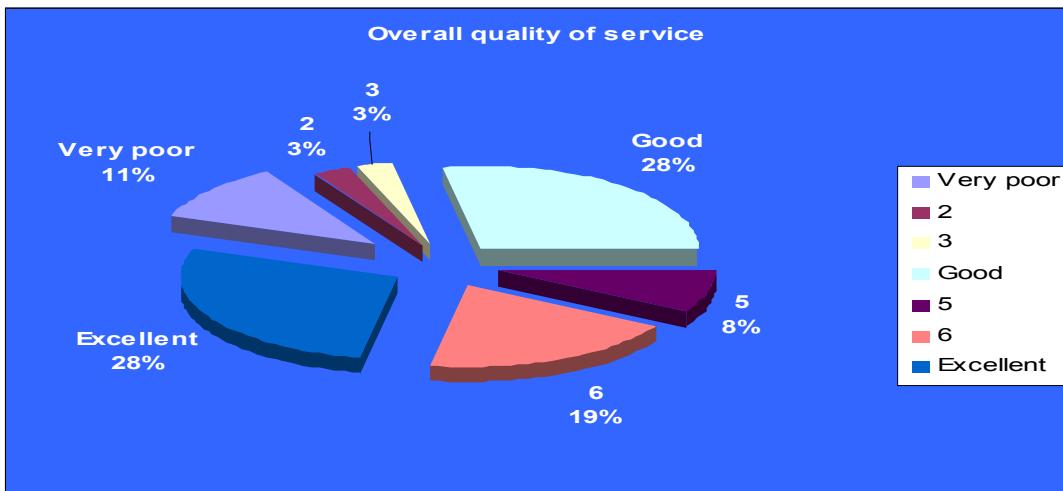


Fig. 3

In testing the overall quality of services (fig.3), 83% of parents felt that they received a good to excellent services with 28% scoring it as excellent (the top of the scale). However, 17% felt that the service they received was poor to very poor. This may be down to the quality of individual service providers, issues not being resolved to their satisfaction or the engagement with the Lead Professional/assessor.

Overall Parents and carers felt that they had received other significant benefits from the CAF and had also increased their capacity to enhance their child's development.

## SCHOOLS' RESPONSES AND VIEWS

### CAF- impact on school

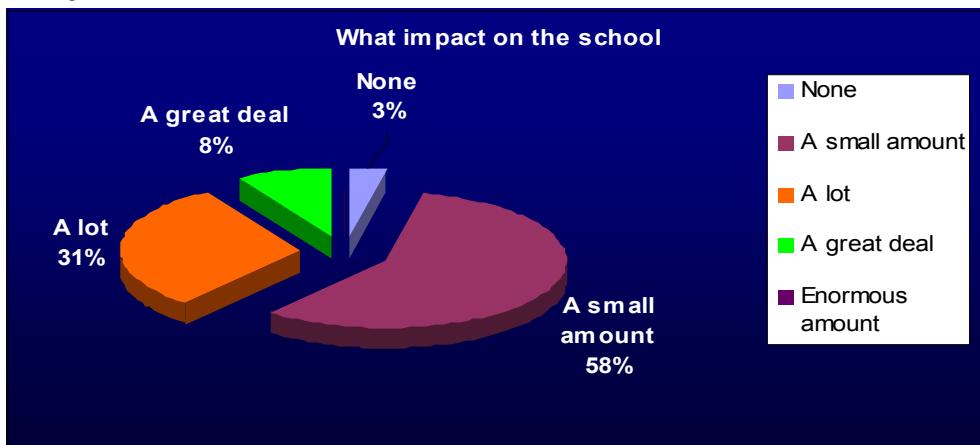


Fig.4

The majority of Brent schools recorded a significant, positive level of impact of the CAF and its services on their school (fig.4), **with 39% scoring at the higher end of the scale** (e.g. a lot or a great deal). Only 3% of schools felt that the CAF had not, in some way, had a positive impact on them

On further examination it was revealed that the longer the school had been involved with the CAF the higher they rated its impact on their school.

## Level of improvement on children and young people referred

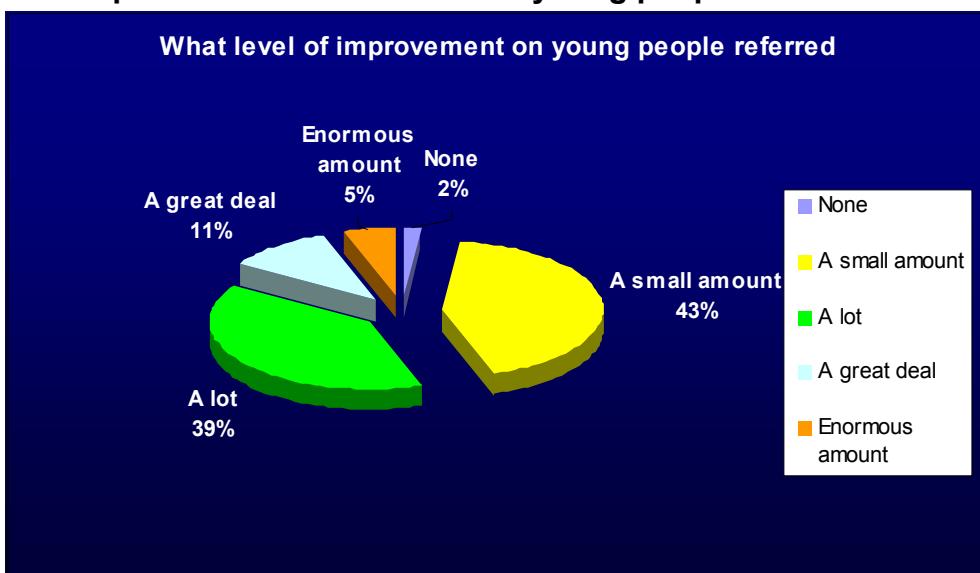


Fig.5

Again, based on a scaled question response (fig.5), 55% of children and young people referred had made **significant improvement** (above 5 on the scale) with only 2% of schools stating that there had been no improvement of young people referred.

## CAF- meeting the needs of schools

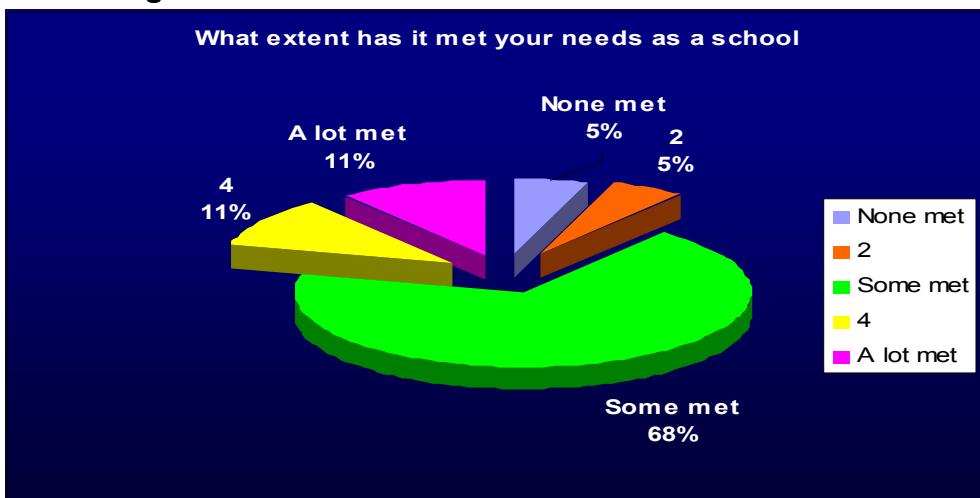


Fig. 6

The majority (**90%**) of schools stated, (fig.6), that some or all of their needs had been met, with only 10% of the schools feeling that the CAF had not met their needs. Based on the comments accompanying the questionnaires this appears to be due to no ISSO contact due to staff vacancies over a period of time.

When asked further, if they were satisfied with the general services received from the CAF, 88% were satisfied with CAF and its provision and 35% recorded very satisfied levels or above.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' REONSES AND VIEWS

It was important to seek the views of the children and young people who had received a service from the CAF and what impact they felt that it had had on them in resolving their issues. The questionnaires were only distributed to those young people it was felt it was appropriate for them to be able to answer the questions.

A total of 16 children and young people completed the questionnaires out of a possible 80. This was 20% of the appropriate target group (e.g. able to answer the questions independently).

### Reduction in seriousness – children and young people's perspective

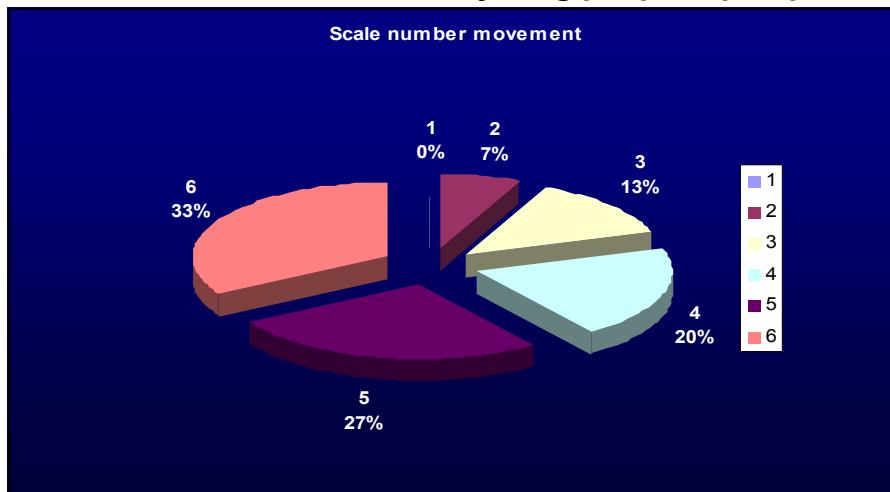


Fig. 7

Figure 9 shows on an individual basis the number of scale point reduction as perceived by the young people. Again, on a more detail examination (fig. 7), overall, young people tended to score less impact on themselves against the parents/carers overall scores on impact. Significantly, none showed an increase in issues.

Additional questions asked how much the service had helped them with their problems and **82% (above 5 on the scale)** felt that it had helped them to some degree with **17% recording the highest scale score (helped a lot)**. Only 8% stated a negative response to the service offered.

Also, as with the parents/carers, the children and young people were asked if they would use the service again, if needed. There was a mixed response to this question with **76% recording a positive response** and 24% either not sure or inclined to a negative response with **8% stating definitely not**.

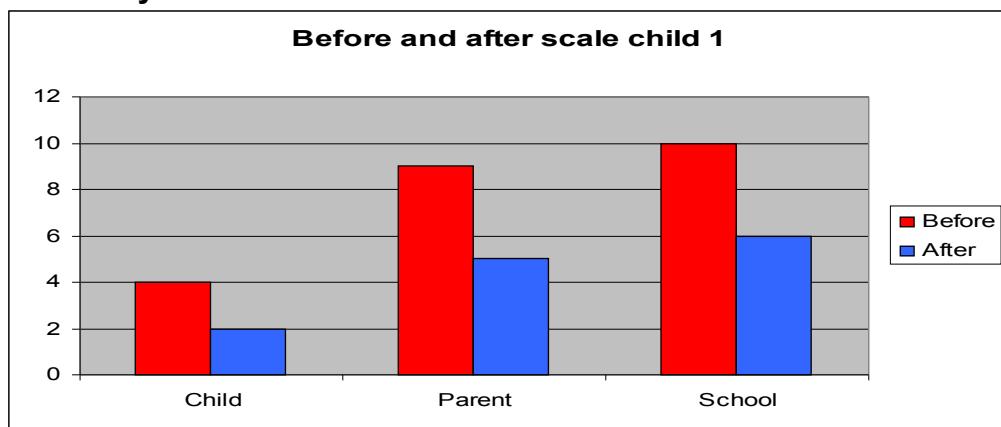
## CASE STUDY IMPACT COMPARISONS

A further analysis of the impact of the CAF and services on the children and young people was undertaken through the use of case studies. The case studies were self selecting e.g. based on children and their parents and carers who had fully completed the questionnaires. Then, individual schools' representatives who had made the initial referral scored a before and after impact based on the same scale rating as the young person and the parent/carer, in order to make a more accurate cross analysis from each person's perspective.

The reason for this approach was to determine if the level of impact was seen to be effective, consistent and similar (either positive or negative) from each individual's perspective, and if not why not. Schools representatives were asked, if possible, to

give some objective examples of any impact that the CAF and services may have made. In total 9 impact case studies were undertaken and below are 4 representative samples of the outcomes.

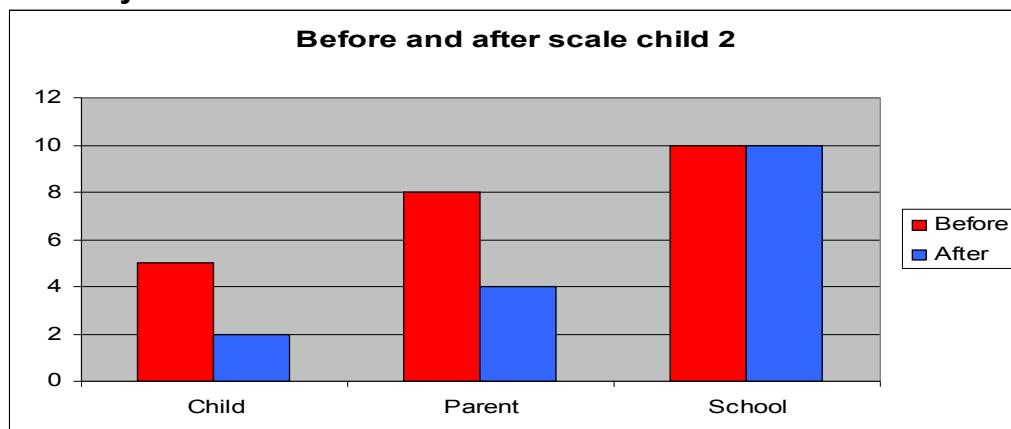
### Case Study 1



**Fig. 8**

All respondents showed a significant reduction in the child 1's issues (fig 8). The school stated..."that there had been improvement in both behaviour and concentration and that child 1 was much calmer. Access to further educational opportunities has increased self esteem and achievement."

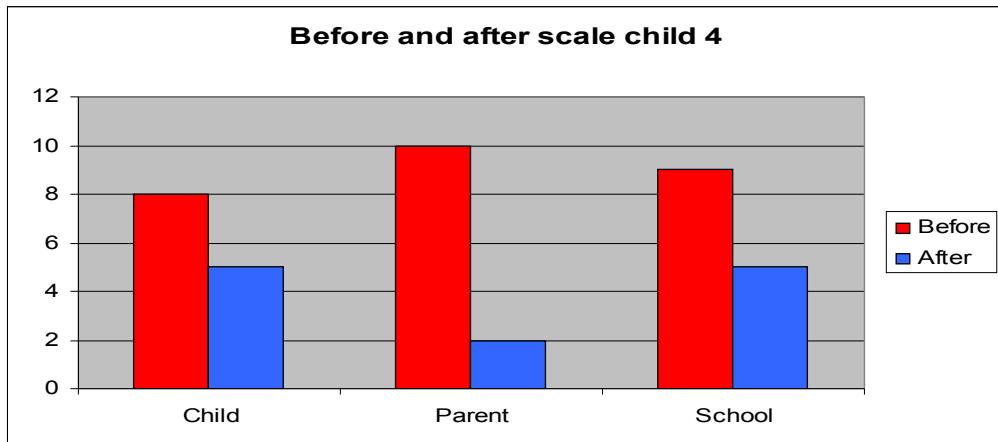
### Case Study 2



**Fig. 9**

Child 2 (fig.9) shows no improvement form the school perspective, but significant difference in improvement from both the child and parent. However. the school sated that..."behaviour remains erratic...and continues to bend the rules... with limited difference in behaviour". However, both child and parent felt that the service received particularly with respect to a number of services providing parental and child support and understanding had made a significant difference.

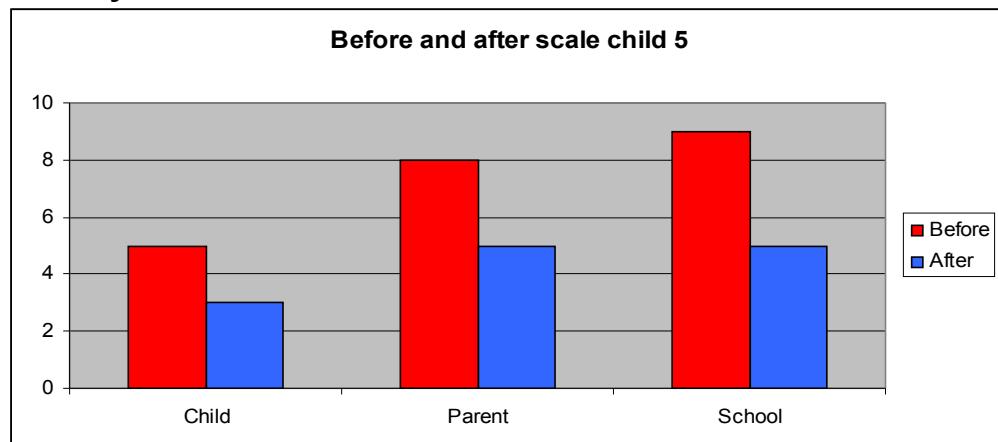
### Case Study 3



**Fig. 10**

Child 4 (fig.10), shows distinct improvement across all respondents and the school stated that...Child 4 is now accessing services like CAMHS, and is more settled in education/ training, and...is able to cope more effectively without resorting to self destructive behaviour. CAF has helped by bringing in services that the school would not have direct access to, and has given the family, especially the mother, good support. The child has now established a pathway at college, and is in regular attendance there.

### Case Study 4



**Fig. 11**

Child 5 (fig. 11), shows positive impact from child, parent and school perspectives. The school stated that child 5... “had completed KS 4, when there was a real possibility of permanent exclusion”

### Summary of Impact analysis

As with the general questionnaire responses children, and parents in particular, felt that the CAF and its services had a greater impact from their perspective and situation than that expressed by the school, although, even where the schools' responses showed no or little impact, their qualitative response showed areas of improvement in the child referred.

## CONCLUSIONS

The responses from families, children and schools indicate that the CAF has had a significant impact on the issues presented at referral. Parents in particular recorded a higher level of impact both on themselves and their children. Comparatively, children were less likely to report as greater an impact upon their initial issues compared to parents.

It would appear that schools are generally very supportive of the CAF and services with all schools indicating that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the CAF.

Schools were positive about the impact of services in schools, helping them to address a wider spectrum of unmet need. However, additional factors effecting impact were how closely services were matched to the needs of the school, consistency of staff, availability of service to children, the extent to which it involves parents and the family and how the extent to which they had integrated into the school.

There is no doubt that having a school-based approach has enhanced partnership working between themselves and the local community. Schools report the outreach strand in particular has been successful in engaging hard to reach parents, a strand that they do not always have the resources to provide. Schools, interventions and parents themselves argue that the involvement of parents increases impact.

Specific points arising out of the evaluation included:

- Continued feedback to schools in monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress in order to evaluate impact and measure long term progress of child/young person referred and to provide appropriate support in school.
- Continuing support to schools to promote inclusive practice across the whole school through multi-agency meetings
- The extension of work with families through schools, provided by the CAF, is seen as a great benefit, particularly with the more serious cases that may eventually be referred to Social Care.
- The CAF is seen to add to, and enhance, the continued development of multi-agency working.
- There is still the need to improved information for parents about support available, through posters, leaflets, drop-in sessions and training to other agencies such as health visitors
- Continued contact with families supported by CAF for 3 months after conclusion of regular support to monitor progress was express by a significant number of parents
- There was a strong feeling expressed, by a number of schools, for the need for feedback on decisions taken and progress of young person referred by them.

- The success of some work is dependent on school staff with other priorities – so some training/developments are not shared consistently across the whole school
- Concerns were raised about longer-term funding and support with respect to the CAF, and services, available to schools was expressed.
- Some parents would have liked to have known about the service earlier or to have had more information about the service and additionally, would like to have maintained links with CAF after the regular visits are concluded.
- All responders e.g. parents, young people and schools were highly complimentary to the Lead Professionals and the ISSOs.
- Children and young people who received the services scored lower on effectiveness and satisfaction than parents and carers, even though overall they felt that the service had helped them address the issues. More study in to why this is may be required.
- Schools recognised the additional support and services that the CAF provided to children and families who did not access statutory services, in particular Social Care services, but who still had quite serious unmet needs and issues.
- The CAF appears to be targeting its intended client group both in terms of identification, level, and provision of specific services.
- The CAF and its services would appear to be greatly appreciated by parents, and schools, but to a slightly lesser extent by the young people themselves.

## **SUMMARY**

It would appear from the analysis that the CAF is targeting the appropriate client group e.g. Tier 2 and identifying those who need Tier 3 services.

Overwhelmingly, from the point of view of parents/carers, children and young people and schools the CAF is seen to be having a positive impact on the initial issues present at referral. However, schools and children scored lower on average with regard to the positive impact, than parents.

Schools who had been involved with the CAF for the longest time showed the greater positive affect on both the needs of the school being met and the impact on the school and the children referred. This would suggest that the CAF takes time to be embedded in current school practices, but once embedded is seen as a vital service to both schools and families.

Schools also felt that the CAF was filling an unmet need by providing a service for children who would not normally have access to services through statutory or school resources.

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