

# Guide to definitions used in CAF form

## 1. Development of the infant, child or young person

### Health

**General health** The infant, child or young person's current health condition (for example, conditions of relevance to an infant, child or young person, including growth, development, physical and mental well-being). *Also includes consideration of:*

- health conditions or impairments which significantly affect everyday life functioning whether chronic or acute, including obesity;
- access to and use of appropriate health services, such as those provided by a GP/dentist/optician, immunisations and appropriate developmental checks;
- number and frequency of hospital admissions and accidents;
- access to and use of appropriate health advice and information, for example, diet, sexual health and management of any health condition such as diabetes or asthma.

**Physical development** The infant, child or young person's means of mobility, level of physical or sexual maturity/delayed development. *Also includes consideration of:*

- being well-nourished, being active, rested and protected, gaining control of the body, acquiring physical skills;
- vision and hearing;
- fine and gross motor skills including:
  - crawling, walking, running and climbing;
  - participation in football or other games;
  - ability to draw pictures, do jigsaws etc.

**Speech, language and communications development** The ability to communicate effectively, confidently and appropriately with others. *Also includes consideration of:*

- preferred means of communication;
- use of first language;
- ability to gain attention and make contact, access positive relationships, be with others, encourage conversation;
- the impulse to communicate, exploring, experiment, labelling and expressing, describing, questioning, representing and predicting, sharing thoughts, feelings and ideas;
- listening and paying attention to what others say, making playful and serious responses, enjoying and sharing stories, songs, rhymes and games, learning about words and meanings;
- vision and hearing;
- ability to communicate meaning, influence others, negotiate and make choices, understanding of others;
- language for communicating and thinking;
- linking sounds and letters;
- reading and writing;
- willingness to communicate;
- articulation skills and language structure;
- vocabulary and comprehension;
- fluency of speech and confidence;
- appropriateness of social and communications skills, for example, body language, excessive use of expletives or inappropriate language, for example brusque manner.

## Emotional and social development

The emotional and social response the infant, child or young person gives to parents, carers and others outside the family. *Also includes consideration of:*

- the importance of being special to someone, being able to express feelings, developing healthy dependence, developing healthy independence;
- nature and quality of early attachments;
- self-harm or risk of self-harm;
- phobias or psychological difficulties; fears or psychological difficulties such as persistent sadness or tearfulness;
- temperament, coping and adjusting abilities for example, after experiencing domestic violence, bereavement or family relationship breakdown;
- disposition, attitudes and motivation to change.

## Behavioural development

The behaviour of the child or young person and whether behaviour occurs in a particular setting or all settings.

*Also includes consideration of:*

- lifestyle and self-control (including participation in reckless activity and need for excitement);
- behaviour in class or other environments where the child or young person comes into contact with their peers;
- whether undiagnosed conditions may be impacting behaviour (e.g. hearing or visual impairment);
- substance misuse (includes alcohol and volatile substance misuse and controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971);
- anti-social behaviour for example, destruction of property, aggression towards others, harm or risk of harm to others;
- sexually inappropriate behaviour and attempts to manipulate or control others;
- early sexual activity, unprotected sex, lack of reflection or positive decision making about sex and relationships;
- offending behaviour and risk of (re)offending;
- violent or aggressive behaviour at home or school;
- attitudes to offending;
- over activity, attentiveness, concentration and impulsive behaviour.

## Identity, including self-esteem, self-image and social presentation

The growing sense of self as a separate and valued person. *Also includes consideration of:*

- growing awareness of self, realisation of separateness and differences from others, recognition of personal characteristics and preferences, finding out what they can do;
- importance of gaining self-assurance through a close relationship, becoming confident in what they can do, valuing and appreciating their own abilities, feeling self-assured and supported, a positive view of themselves;
- knowledge of personal and family history;
- access to recognition, acceptance and comfort, ability to contribute to secure relationships, understanding they can be valued by and important to someone, exploring emotional boundaries;
- sense of belonging, being able to join in, enjoying being with familiar and trusted others, valuing individuality and contributions of self and others, having a role and identity within a group, acceptance by those around them;
- race, religion, age, gender, sexuality and disability – may be affected by bullying or discriminatory behaviour;
- understanding of the way in which appearance and behaviour are perceived and the impression being created.

## Family and social relationships

The ability to empathise and build stable and affectionate relationships with others, including family, peers and the wider community. *Also includes consideration of:*

- stable and affectionate relationships with parents or caregivers;
- sibling relationships;
- involvement in helping others;
- age-appropriate friendships;
- association with predominantly pro-criminal peers or lack of non-criminal friends;
- understanding of others and awareness of consequences;
- association with substance-misusing friends/peer groups.

## Self-care skills and independence

The acquisition of practical and emotional and communication competencies to increase independence. *Also includes consideration of:*

- discovering boundaries and limits, learning about rules, knowing when and how to ask for help, learning when to say no and anticipating when others will do so;
- discovering and learning about their body, demonstrating individual preferences, making decisions, becoming aware of others and their own needs;
- early practical skills for example, coping with routine such as washing, dressing and feeding including swallowing, chewing and weaning, in the case of the very young;
- opportunities to gain confidence and practical skills to undertake activities away from the family;
- independent living skills for older children for example, appropriate use of social problem solving approaches;
- the readiness of older teenagers to make the transition from children and young people's services to adult services.

## Learning

**Understanding, reasoning and problem solving** The ability to understand and organise information, reason and solve problems. *Also includes consideration of:*

- the impact of any disability or impairment or special needs and of any potential for these outcomes;
- making connections through the senses and movement, finding out about the environment and other people, becoming playfully engaged and involved, making patterns, comparing, categorising, classifying;
- being creative, exploring and discovering, experimenting with sound, other media and movement, developing competence and creativity, being resourceful;
- being imaginative, imitating, mirroring, moving, imagining, exploring and re-enacting, playing imaginatively with materials using all the senses, pretend play with gestures and actions, feelings and relationships, ideas and words;
- exploring, experimenting and playing, discovering that one thing can stand for another, creating and experimenting with one's own symbols and marks, recognising that others may use marks differently;
- play and interaction;
- demonstration of a range of skills and interests;
- numbers as labels and for counting;

## **Learning** *continued*

- calculating;
- shape, space and measures;
- progress in learning, including any special educational needs identified;
- knowledge and understanding of the world.

**Participation in learning, education and employment** The degree to which the child or young person has access to and is engaged in education and/or work based training and, if he/she is not participating, the reasons for this.

*Also includes consideration of:*

- attendance;
- the degree to which prior non-participation has led to current needs and circumstances;
- access to appropriate and consistent adult support;
- access to appropriate educational resources for example, books.

**Progress and achievement in learning** The child or young person's educational achievements and progress, including in relation to their peers. *Also includes consideration of:*

- adult interest in the child or young person's educational activities and achievements;
- progress, for example measured against prior attainment in learning, national curriculum levels achieved and their peers;
- basic skills – the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a functional level;
- key skills – the ability to learn, work with others, carry out tasks;
- participation in activities in the community; development of particular strengths or skills for example, in sports, arts or vocational training;
- special educational needs – whether the child or young person has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children or young people of their age;
- whether the child or young person needs help to catch up when education has been disrupted;
- disability – whether the infant, child or young person has a disability and reasonable adjustments are being made to support their access to the curriculum and school life generally.

**Aspirations** The ambitions of the child or young person, whether their aspirations are realistic and they are able to plan how to meet them. Note there may be barriers to a child or young person's achievement of their aspirations for example, the child or young person's other responsibilities in the home. *Also includes consideration of:*

- the child or young person's view of progress;
- motivating elements;
- the child or young person's level of self-confidence;
- perseverance.

## 2. Parents and carers

### Basic care, ensuring safety and protection

The extent to which the infant, child or young person's physical needs are met and they are protected from harm or danger, including self-harm. *Also includes consideration of:*

- provision of food, drink, warmth, shelter, clean and appropriate clothing, personal and dental hygiene;
- level of engagement in securing universal services for example, doctor, dentist, optician;
- provision of a safe environment, where family members and other carers act to safeguard the safety and welfare of the infant, child or young person and the infant, child or young person is not exposed to domestic violence, alcohol/substance misuse, sexual exploitation or other abusive experiences;
- recognition of hazards and danger both in the home and elsewhere;
- quality of care;
- parental substance misuse (includes alcohol and volatile substances, as well as illegal drugs).

### Emotional warmth and stability

Provision of emotional warmth in a stable family environment, giving the infant, child or young person a sense of being valued. *Also includes consideration of:*

- parent or carer's feelings about looking after this infant, child or young person;
- ensuring the infant, child or young person's requirements for secure, stable and affectionate relationships with significant adults are met, with appropriate sensitivity and responsiveness to the infant, child or young person's needs;
- appropriate physical contact, comfort and cuddling sufficient to demonstrate warm regard, praise and encouragement;
- maintenance of a secure attachment to the primary caregiver(s) in order to ensure optimal development;
- ensuring the infant, child or young person keeps in contact with important family members and significant others, when it is safe to do so;
- frequency of moves of house and/or early years provision, school or place of employment.

### Guidance, boundaries and stimulation

Enabling the child or young person to regulate their own emotions and behaviour while promoting their learning and intellectual development through encouragement and stimulation and promoting social opportunities. *Also includes consideration of:*

- modelling appropriate behaviour and control of emotions and interactions with others;
- provision of clear, consistent and appropriate guidance, boundaries and discipline such that a child or young person can develop a positive internal model of value and conscience;
- appropriate stimulation of learning;
- effective discipline;
- ensuring the infant, child or young person's safety while encouraging independence and avoiding overprotection;
- encouraging the child or young person to participate in and benefit from education and leisure activities;
- supporting the child or young person's personal and social development so they are independent, self-confident and able to form positive relationships with others.

### 3. Family and environmental

#### Family history, functioning and well-being

The impact of family situations and experiences. *This includes consideration of:*

- culture, size and composition of the household – including changes in the people living in the accommodation since the child's birth;
- family history – including any concerns about inheriting illnesses from a parent;
- family routines;
- disorganised/chaotic lifestyle;
- failure to show care or interest in the infant, child or young person;
- impact of problems experienced by other family members such as physical illness, mental health problems, bereavement or loss;
- whether the infant, child or young person is witness to violent behaviour, including domestic violence (both physical and verbal);
- involvement in criminal activity/anti-social behaviour;
- experience of abuse;
- family relationships – including all people important to the infant, child or young person for example, the impact of siblings, absent parents and any serious difficulties in the parents' relationship;
- history of family breakdown or other disruptive events;
- parental physical and mental health (including depression) or disability;
- involvement in alcohol misuse;
- involvement in substance misuse (includes alcohol and volatile substances as well as illegal drugs);
- whether anyone in the family presents a risk to the infant, child or young person.

#### Wider family

The family's relationships with relatives and non-relatives. *This includes consideration of:*

- formal and informal support networks for the infant, child or young person;
- formal and informal support networks for the parents or carers;
- wider family roles and responsibilities for example, including employment and care of others;
- appropriate level of support from family members.

## Housing, employment and financial considerations

**Housing** What are the living arrangements? Does the accommodation have appropriate amenities and facilities?

*This includes consideration of:*

- who the infant, child or young person has been living with;
- the exterior of the accommodation and immediate surroundings;
- the interior of the accommodation with specific reference to the infant, child or young person's individual living arrangements;
- water, heating, sanitation, cooking facilities, sleeping arrangements, cleanliness, hygiene, safety;
- reasons for homelessness.

**Employment** Who is working in the household, the pattern of their work and any changes. *Also includes consideration of:*

- the impact of work upon the infant, child or young person;
- how work or absence of work is viewed by family members;
- how work affects the family's relationship with the infant, child or young person.

**Financial considerations** Income available over a sustained period of time. *This includes consideration of:*

- the family's entitlement to, and receipt of, benefits;
- sufficiency of income to meet the family's needs;
- the ways in which the family's income is used;
- how the family's financial circumstances affect the infant, child or young person for example, inadequate legitimate personal income;
- whether the family is suffering financial hardship due to an emergency for example, loss of possessions/homelessness.

## Social and community elements and resources, including education

Explores the wider context of an infant, child or young person's neighbourhood and its impact on the infant, child or young person, including details of the facilities and services available. *Also includes consideration of:*

- neighbourhood characteristics for example, levels of crime, disadvantage, employment, high levels of substance misuse/trading etc;
- relationship with neighbours;
- availability and accessibility of universal services, including schools, day care, primary health care, places of worship, transport, shops and leisure activities and family support services;
- quality of the learning environment and educational support services;
- physical access to facilities and services;
- degree of child or young person's social integration or isolation;
- the influence of peer groups, friendships and social networks for example, substance or alcohol misuse.