

# integrated working

## What is integrated working?

**Integrated working is where everyone supporting children and young people works together effectively to put the child at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives.**

By combining their professional expertise, knowledge and skills, and involving the child or young person and family throughout, practitioners can identify needs earlier, deliver a co-ordinated package of support that is centred on the child or young person, and help secure better outcomes for them.

Integrated working is achieved through collaboration and co-ordination at all levels, across all services, in both single- and multi-agency settings. It requires clear and strong leadership and management. It is facilitated by the adoption of common service delivery models, tools and processes.

## Support for integrated working

The implementation of integrated working is supported by the following:

- development of Children and Young People's Plans
- the Children's Services Grant and Children's Workforce Development Council Integrated Working / Workforce Reform Grant

- the One Children's Workforce Framework which is being piloted by Children's Trusts
- Regional Development Managers from the Children's Workforce Development Council – offering regional support and advice on the development of integrated children's workforce strategies
- monitoring – using the annual performance assessment and Joint Area Reviews (JARs)
- CWDC Share! – has been developed to tell real life stories and demonstrate how integrated working can really help to improve the lives of families  
[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/cwdc-share](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/cwdc-share)

## Integrated processes

Integrated processes 'drive' multi-agency working and support the delivery of integrated frontline services.

Key integrated processes include:

1. **Information sharing** between professionals: appropriate information sharing underpins all integrated processes. Cross-government guidance has been developed for all practitioners and managers who work with children, young people and families to ensure they understand when, why and how they should share information.

2. The **Common Assessment Framework for children and young people** is a tool and process for initial assessment to identify more efficiently the additional needs of children and young people at risk of poor outcomes. The CAF reduces duplication of assessment, encourages a shared language across agencies and improves referrals between agencies. A national electronic version (eCAF) is planned.

3. The **lead professional** is the practitioner who takes a 'lead role' to ensure that frontline services are co-ordinated, coherent and achieving intended outcomes. The lead professional has three key functions:

- to act as a single point of contact that children, young people and their families can trust
- to co-ordinate the delivery of the actions agreed
- to reduce overlap and inconsistency from other practitioners

The concept of the budget-holding lead professional was piloted in 16 local authorities to test whether better service packages could be delivered by giving lead professionals a budget to procure goods and commission services directly from providers. A national evaluation of the programme will report in winter 2008.

4. **ContactPoint** will provide a quick way for a practitioner to find out who else is working with the same child or young person. This will make it easier to deliver more co-ordinated support. ContactPoint will be an online directory available to authorised staff who need it to do their jobs.

CWDC is charged with implementing integrated working by closely collaborating with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), local and regional organisations across England, and with the children's private, faith, community and third sector workforce.

CWDC is responsible for the following areas:

- information-sharing skills, knowledge and practice
- the Common Assessment Framework
- role of the lead professional
- the multi-agency working toolkit

The DCSF retain responsibility for policy in these areas, plus the information-sharing guidance, eCAF and ContactPoint.

This factsheet is one of a series of integrated working factsheets. For more resources and information, visit the Children's Workforce Development Council website [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working) or the Every Child Matters website [www.ecm.gov.uk](http://www.ecm.gov.uk)

