3rd June 2011

Dear Board Member,

RE: Early Assessment and Effective Support

Our organisations are passionate about supporting children and families. As resources get scarcer we are all working harder; but it is how we work together that is vitally important.

In Nottingham the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is the process through which agencies work together to provide early assessment and effective support.

The CAF is a foundation stone upon which the strength of our partnership is built. If we fail to use the CAF, then cracks could appear in our partnership, and none of us want to see our children and young people fall through cracks between our services.

For this reason our partnership agreed to strengthen our commitment towards the CAF. Our Board Meeting on the 26th January 2011 approved specific circumstances where it is now expected that the CAF process will be used to support children and young people. A list of these circumstances, and the related milestones for progress, has been attached to this emailed letter. I would appreciate it if you could cascade this letter, and the attached document, within your organisation so that it can be shared with colleagues across the entire Children’s Partnership.

I appreciate resources are scarce but it is essential that our partnership has a common process to record and share information. I strongly believe that:

- The more the CAF is used, the more established and routine it will become.
- The earlier the CAF is used, the more effective it will be at preventing problems from escalating and needing more serious interventions later on.

To ensure progress is made on this issue the following actions are taking place across all agencies within the entire Children’s Partnership:

1) As well as writing to all Board Members, I have also written to all schools to outline our expectation that the CAF will be main recording tool for all services and agencies.

2) Work is underway to introduce Ne-CAF (an electronic version of CAF) which will make it easier for colleagues to share information and collaborate between different agencies.

To all Board Members of Nottingham Children’s Partnership

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3) The Family Support Strategy and Family Support Pathway are being launched to provide guidance to the entire Children’s Partnership workforce. It is our intention to engage individual agencies to discuss how this guidance relates to the services they provide. Watch out for further information.

4) The CAF website has been reviewed to ensure there is easy access to information about CAF training, the CAF guidance toolkit and the contact details of the CAF team www.nottinghamchildrenspartnership.org.uk

It is not within our power to prevent all of the problems which affect our children and young people. But we can ensure that our partnership is as strong as possible. And if that means all Nottingham agencies using the CAF, then I would urge you to ensure it is used as routinely as possible, as widely as possible and as early as possible.

Let us not allow a Nottingham child to fall through any cracks of our own making.

I would like to extend my thanks to everybody who has a role in making this happen.

Yours sincerely

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