

Plenary Paper

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Engaging early in children's needs in England through the Common Assessment Framework: New challenges for practice in England and Wales?

Abstract

This plenary paper is based upon research conducted by a team of university researchers based at Cardiff (Pithouse) Lancaster (White) and Huddersfield (Peckover and Hall). Our research addressed the implementation in England and Wales of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This is an electronic system for assessing children and sharing information promptly between child welfare professionals, which is at various stages of pilot and full implementation in England and Wales. Research in England (Peckover *et al.*, 2008 a and b; White *et al.*, 2008) and in Wales (Pithouse *et al.*, 2004; Pithouse, 2006) informs this paper in order to compare CAF as implicating a number of policy 'goods', with CAF as a set of worker and organizational accomplishments. Rather than rehearsing key research findings (the above sources offer an abundance), we use this plenary to synthesize arguments about key assumptions and conceptual properties that underpin the CAF of policy and practice and which may have wider provenance in respect of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in child welfare.

Key words: child welfare; interprofessional working; children and families; children's rights; information technology.