

**Life Work**

**Procedure**

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**Why is Life Work needed?**

Children who are brought up with their birth family are naturally surrounded by their history. Who they are, where they come from, their likes/dislikes, life events and key milestones.

Children who do not live with their birth family, especially those who have had multiple care placements, may well have a fragmented sense of their history and not be clear on who they are. Life work can help to redress this and teach a child about their history, their milestones and key moments within their life. As the child journeys through, gaining a better understanding of who they are and beginning to feel more secure, more details can be added to the life work.

All adopted children need a Life Work book, no matter what their age, it is never too early or late.

**When should Life Work start?**

Sandwell Children’s Trust believes that Life Work should start (at point of contact, be it EDS, SAAT) When a child is removed that worker is uniquely placed to record this event. as soon as a Child/ Young Person becomes looked after, this is at the point that the Care Plan indicates that the child will be looked after beyond the 1st Review [20 working days]. Even before a child enters care information can be gathered such as Family tree, family photos, details of extended family, details of birth, name, who chose and why. Link into the form, Life Work :Significant Information

At the point of a child entering our care, Life Work should be considered and any important information should be captured. The social worker should ensure that those first moments are captured and documented in a way that will be useful and explanatory for the child or young person as well as whoever will be providing their care. Direct work /play/conversations should help give the children a basic understanding of why they came into our care and the decisions being made with regards to their wellbeing. If this work is undertaken early and consistently carried out, then it will help to ensure that the child or young person’s history integrates into their present and will help move them into their future with a sense of identity and continuity.

Life work should be factored into work with our children and young people from early on, and revisited regularly, Life Work is a significant part of a Social Workers role during each visit they carry out, each conversation they have with birth family and professionals should be recorded. Significant events/moments should be captured even prior to a permanency plan being decided.

**How often should work be recorded?**

All Life Work should be ongoing, however for the first 8-10 weeks of a child/ young person becoming Looked After it should be undertaken on a weekly basis.

Life work should be discussed at Supervision and recorded and Team Managers should ensure that there is evidence of good quality life work being undertaken. Life work should be given a high priority within the work on the child’s file and should be integral. All life work discussed during supervision should be added to the supervision record on LCS.

**Life Work Templates**

*[Insert templates by age category and how/ where to find resources]*

*[LCS process map and guidance]*

**Age Groups**

Sandwell Children’s Trust has broken the age groups down as the following:

0 – 6 years

6 – 10 years

10 – 13 years

13 years +

*[See Understanding and Telling Guidance]*