



CHRONOLOGIES AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

PUBLICATION DATE:	August 2022
ISSUE NUMBER:	002
AUTHORS OF PUBLICATION:	Cheryl Grazette, Service Manager, Participation Team / MI Practitioners
REVIEW DATE:	August 2024
TARGET AUDIENCE:	Hertfordshire's Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services Teams, Education and Early Intervention Teams, Foster Carers, Staying Put Carers, Supported Lodgings Carers and Independent Fostering Providers, Independent Children's Home Providers and Semi-independent Providers (Delete As Appropriate)
PUBLISHED BY:	Quality Assurance, Audit and Policy Team

AUTHORISATION

ORGANISATION	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Children's Services	Miranda Gittos		

This guidance provides the process for initiating chronologies, identifying significant events, how to write entries and sharing chronologies.

1.0 Purpose of Chronologies

1.1 Chronologies help tell the life story of a child/young person and their family. They provide a key link in the chain of understanding needs/risks including the need for protection from harm. Setting out key events in sequential date order, they give a summary timeline of child and family circumstances, patterns of behaviour and trends in lifestyle that may greatly assist any assessment and analysis. They are a logical, methodical, and systematic means of organising, merging, and helping make sense of information. They also help to highlight gaps and omitted details that require further exploration, investigation, and assessment (*SW inspection Agency 2016*).

In addition, chronologies are essential to:

- Telling a story of the child, young persons' lived experience, and enabling managers and practitioners to make decisions about risk and need by documenting historical and current significant events in a concise manner.
- Informing Assessment and reports.
- Supporting Life Story Work
- Developing Court reports.
- Providing children, young people, and their parents with a clear vision of decisions that have impacted upon their lives while being supported by Children's Services.

2.0 When to Start, Update and End a Significant Events Chronology

- 2.1
- Chronologies should be initiated when a record is opened for a child or young person and include Early Help records
 - Chronologies should be updated when any new significant events occur in a child's / young person's life or immediately when an event is known to the case worker. It must be readily available and kept up-to date.

3.0 What to Include in a Chronology?

3.1 Core Significant Events for ALL Cases

- Dates of birth/s deaths within the family or significant others.
- Where parents were known to children services all chronologies should start with a summary detailing that involvement as this may be crucial information in understanding their own experiences of

being parented and why they are now involved with services as parents.

- Referrals – Who made them and why - Where professionals or members of the public raise concerns. It is imperative that these are recorded in a chronology and the outcome of any follow up or investigation recorded. The importance of this is evidenced in national Serious Case Review (SCR) outcomes later in this document.
- Child / YP's moves in and out of the family home and any change of address for the child/YP and/ or family
- Any missing episodes and outcomes.
- Change of carers e.g., parent separation / new partner. Any adult or child moving into or out of the family home
- Dates of any personal losses, moves or placement breakdowns. This is particularly important for children looked after and understanding behaviour. This is also pertinent to parents whose parenting capacity may dip during key dates as they may require additional support. Understanding these allows for some forward planning to avoid work being crisis led.
- Key developments in the life of the child and siblings
- When local authority involvement started and why
- Reasons for involvement – issues of concern
- Action taken in response
- What services have been provided and outcomes.
- Change of school
- Health information (including any significant injury or illness, hospital admission, attendance at Accident & Emergency dept.)
- Facts e.g., child subject to a Child Protection plan, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meeting, Court Order made, change of name
- Key professional interventions e.g., reviews, hearings, tribunals, prison sentences, Family Group Conferences, Child Protection conference and the outcome of these meetings
- A brief note of a significant event e.g., domestic abuse incident, coming to school with a bruise
- Change of allocated workers
- Case transfer/ case closure
- Key decision points, where decided, by whom, i.e., Panel decisions, outcome of assessments
- Areas of strengths should also be included in a chronology, for example a significant event can be where a family are difficult to engage or where home conditions may be a concern or school attendance for example. However, at times things go particularly well. This helps to analyse patterns, dates, who was offering support, what was different to support this change? it allows workers to build on this. This can include a summary of the outcome of our adult worker's.

Other significant events can be added that are not listed above.

NB there are certain entries that should never be put in a chronology, such as the address or identifying details of adopters, any reference to Legal Planning Meetings.

3.2 The following gives an outline determined by the type of case. These lists are only examples and not exhaustive.

Child In Need (CIN) Cases

- Summary of CIN Plan
- CIN Review Meetings and outcomes
- Dates of all Core Group meetings and brief outcomes
- Support Services Provided

- Physical injury to the child
- Clinical diagnosis like ADHD, Autism
- Progress of EHCP
- Diagnosis of a significant health condition
- Bereavement of a significant person in the child's life
- Education – positive exam results
- Granting of any of the following orders:
 - Care
 - Contact
 - Supervision
 - Child Arrangement Orders
 - SGO's, etc.

3.3 Child Protection (CP) Cases

- Section 47 enquiries and outcome
- Dates of any CP conferences and outcome
- Core group meeting outcomes
- Details of significant reported concerns from any source
- Details of any injuries reported / observed
- Strategy meetings and outcomes
- Child Protection Medical and outcome
- Brief description of Home Visits
- Services provided or declined

3.4 Cases in Care Proceedings

NB: dates and outcomes of Legal Planning Meetings must not go in the chronology. This is legally privileged information.

- Dates of all Court hearings and outcomes
- Support services provided
- Assessment's outcomes Reports/expert opinions

- Dates of the letters before proceedings
- Date of the pre-proceedings meeting
- Date of Orders made and detail of the Order

3.5 Children Looked After (CLA) Cases

- Date care episode begins, type of care provided
- CLA reviews, care plan summary
- Personal Education Plans (PEPS)
- Health Assessment reviews
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) involvement
- Viability Assessment undertaken and outcome
- Temporary approval of F&F Foster Carers
- Approval of Family & Friends Foster Carers
- Permanency Planning Meetings and outcomes
- Placement Support Meetings and outcomes
- Disruption Meetings and outcomes
- Contact arrangements and changes made
- Adoption /Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Residence or any other Order made

4.0 Writing Chronologies

4.1 The key elements to compiling a chronology:

- Ensuring the purpose of the chronology is clear i.e., displaying the respective journey of the child / Young Person through CIN, CP, CLA, etc... (see section 3)
- Use of professional judgement to identify the significant events to be recorded and once identified ensuring the chronology is factual in the provision of facts, dates, and times.
- Ensuring what is recorded is accurate and in date order
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- **Providing sufficient detail, but it is not a substitute for recording in general notes/case notes/workbook**
- Being flexible with content – details included may be increased if risk increases
- Reviewing and Analysis – A chronology which is not reviewed regularly is of limited relevance and purpose

See Appendix 1 for Examples

5.0 Shared Chronologies for Siblings

5.1 All children should have their own Chronology. Some entries may be shared with siblings and others may be specific to the individual child.

6.0 Sharing Chronologies with Children, Young People and Families

- 6.1 Chronologies are a part of recording and should be available to the person they are about, unless there are justifiable legal reasons concerned with risk.

The chronology should be shown to and discussed with the person it is about or their parent if they are a child in line with subject access requests. This can often be used as a tool to support parents understanding of why we are involved.

7.0 Historical Information to be Included in Assessments

- 7.1 Any current referral or incident/concern in relation to a child must be considered in the context of the fullest possible background and historical information of him/her and the wider family unit. Episodic consideration of individual incidents should be avoided, and attention paid to identifying patterns of need. Information about significant events in a child or his or her family's history is one of the most useful tools in effective analysis of concerns and need. Previous history can be one of the strongest indicators of potential future significant harm to a child, and it is essential that all historical information is considered as part of the CP Risk.

The assessment will evidence that historical information and family context have been considered, and where this information has been sourced. If there are known to be gaps in information or family history, then this should be clearly identified and the significance of this highlighted.

A chronology is a tool to use alongside any case. It is likely that in the event that a case is escalating to court, some adjustment will be required to your working chronology to make this court ready.

Examples of inquiries which have promoted the importance of chronologies

The Jay Report (2014) on child sexual exploitation in Rotherham found that there was a chronology in fewer than half the cases looked at (43%) where it would have been appropriate to have one. Most chronologies were out of date, with significant gaps. Professor Jay concluded that: ***"...It is likely that the absence of structured chronologies contributed to key information being missed when decisions were made"***.

Lord Laming, in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié (2004) was unequivocal in stating: ***"I regard the inclusion in any case file of a clear, comprehensive and up-to-date chronology as absolutely essential"***.

In a youth justice context, the follow-up inspection into the management of Colyn Evans (2009) concluded that: ***"SWIA did not find comprehensive and up-to-date chronologies in any of the files in the sample. Good risk assessment requires detailed and accurate information. For example, the young person referred to in the previous paragraph had assaulted staff in a residential unit on several"***

occasions and had a long history of abusive behaviour which could have been identified by an accurate chronology”.

One of the first major child protection inquiries into the death of Maria Colwell noted that: **“Inaccuracies and deficiencies in the recording of visits and telephone messages played a part in the tragedy... the importance of recording actual dates and distinguishing between fact and impression”.** Other inquiries found that allegations by neighbours were sometimes not recorded fully, were ignored, or deemed malicious. All eight child protection inquiries concluded between 1974 and 1981 reported that records were incomplete. Many years later, poor recording was noted in Lord Laming’s inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié (2004).

Appendix: Chronology Example

Event Date	Event Details	Outcome/impact	Document Ref
17-Jul-2002	Birth of J(father)		
06-Jan-2003	Birth of K (mother)		
	<p><u>Summary of parents’ background: -</u></p> <p><i>2004 – 2014 J (father), was known to CS, due to concerns around parental drug and alcohol misuse, neglect, and concerns that he was being exposed to Domestic Violence within the home. There were 3 periods of CP for him and his siblings. Section 20 for 7 months at the age of 10 years, before being return to the care of his parents. A previous psychological completed of "J when he was 18 years old reported that he has suffered significant harm and trauma throughout his childhood. This has significantly impacted J, whom without support to understand his childhood is likely to be a risk in any intimate relationship due to his inability to manage his anger flued by drug and alcohol"</i></p> <p><i>K was not known to CS as child</i></p>	3 periods of CP, Section 20 for 7 months at the age of 10 years, before being return to the care of his parents.	Filed on LCS livelink
05-Feb-2015	Birth of Steven West (Parents J and K)		Health report LCS
17-Feb-2015	Domestic Abuse referral received. The reported stated that the mother had been punched whilst holding the baby in the garden. Neighbours witnessed this and called the police. On arrival father J, was under the influence. K presented as shaken up by denied any DA and said the neighbours were lying as they hated J since he moved in 4 months ago.	The police reported home condition to be of concern (soiled nappies and empty bottles of alcohol), however Kia (7 weeks old) was appropriately dressed and looked clean. Agreed to forward to the assessment team for a C&F assessment	LCS
21-Feb-2015	Initial Home visit – significant visit as mother K had a black eye. She reported hit herself when pulling the cap of the baby bottle which was full at the time.	Outcome: - Agreed to visit again the following day when I could me J.	LCS
22-Feb-2015	significance of this visit was that J, was verbally aggressive calling me names and threatening to “take my head off”,	Kia present whilst father was shouting and making threats to workers.	LCS

		Outcome – appears K agreed to reside with her mother for a couple of weeks, whilst the C&F is being completed - This was a family decision. Impact – Kia and his mother will be away from the home this evening in a safe place.	
22-Feb-2015	Discussed my concerns regarding J presentation, however agreed as mother and baby now out of the home continue under section 17 as we have signed consent forms from both parents.		LCS
26-Feb-2015	All checks back (full outcome in C&F), however significant police checks. J arrested numerous times for violence against women with whom he was in an intimate relationship, carrying a bladed article, possession of class A drugs and criminal damage. J served a 7-month custodial sentence and was released in April 2014 and met K shortly after and she quickly became pregnant. The police report that J is high risk to his any partner, and he has not engaged with previous support.		
04-March 2015	C&F Assessment completed, recommendations: - CP conference as K moved back to the address with J Family/network support meeting to take place. Adult workers to support both parents. High level of visits and intensive support a plan is already in place that includes K's mother and sister.		
14-March-2015	ICPC – Kia made subject of the CP plan. K was supported by her mother and sister at the conference. This was significant as they were able to hear all the concerns and gain insight into the worries around J's behaviour	Outcome – Kia has CP plan. Impact – family support has intensified around Kia and his mother	
16-March-2015	Adult worker (Domestic Abuse officer), reported that J did not attend his first meeting with her.		
04-April-2015	Significant session with Kia handling and attachment and responses to Kia were significantly better today. She engaged well with the session, home was clean, and K presented as relaxed. Explored what was different and K, reported that her mother had spent the weekend and JJ had not been around much.	Outcome – Very good session. Impact – Kia presented as settled, more so than normal.	
7-April-2015	Adult worker (Domestic Abuse Practitioner), reports that work with K, is going well. She is showing great insight.		
16-April-2015	Core Group J did not attend – telephone call made to J to invite him in for an office visit. JJ reported that his mental health was not the best and blames CS for this, as he felt that K, having her family around is pushing him out.		
28-April-2015	Domestic Abuse incident, maternal grandmother called the police as she is staying at the home and J returned to the under the influence. He was denied access by maternal grandmother (he is not on the tenancy), he broke a widow and making treats to kill. J was arrested.	Outcome – J arrested, and bailed conditions will ensure he does not return to the address. Impact – Maternal grandmother, acted appropriately to protect.	
4-May-2015	Home visit joined with Health visitor to K significant as very good visit, much like the visit 4 th April. Asked K, to reflect on why both of these sessions had gone so well and reflected on her emotional wellbeing. Kia seen relaxed, gaining weight, home condition raised no worries.	Outcome- K, has not physically seen J J since his arrest, however he has called her and been abusive on the phone. Her mother and sister are	

		still taking turns in staying with K and Kia	
--	--	---	--