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| **Local authority  social work evidence template**  **(Discharge of Care Order)** |  | In the family court sitting at |
|  | In the matter of the Children Act 1989 |

**The child(ren) – use one per template per family**

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| **Names** | **Gender** | **Date of Birth** | **Ethnicity** | **Nationality** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current  legal status** |
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| **Local Authority and Social Worker details**  **Name of Social Worker/Team Manager:** | |
| Case number |  |
| Filed by [local authority] |  |
| Social work statement number in the proceedings, e.g. 1st, 2nd  N.B. A final statement should be completed on the Final Statement Template (FST) | **(Not needed for legal panel)** |
| Social work statement number for this witness e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd |  |
| This author/witness’s name, qualifications, experience, and office address |  |
| This author/witness’s HCPC registration number |  |

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| **Set out which court order or order/s are being sought, and why?** |
| **Why are you requesting the court to discharge the Care Order? On what grounds has the care plan changed? What are the child’s views? What evidence is there that reunification is the right plan for this child?** |
| **1. Case details** | |
| * 1. **Family composition – fill in for legal panel** * This section should include family members and relationships, and should specify the relationship in respect of each child subject to the application. Please set out the family members' full names, their dates of birth, their nationality, ethnicity and their current addresses. * Where an address needs to be kept confidential, send the information to the court. | |

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| **Name** | **Relationship** | **Parental Responsibility** | **DOB** | **Nationality** | **Ethnicity** | **Address** |
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**1.2 Genogram (mandatory) Fill in for Legal Panel**

* Include family members and their relationship to each child.

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

**1.3 Ecomap (risky and protective contacts) (optional)**

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| **3. Analysis of risk and protective factors associated with discharge of care order and plan for reunification.** |
| **3.1 The social work analysis of the harm the child has previously suffered that led to a care order being sought, how the risks have changed and how a plan for reunification is in the child’s best interests. Why is discharge of the care order sought at this point? What protective factors are there in this child’s life?** |
| **Key points before starting your analysis:**   * **The welfare checklist should be applied as appropriate throughout.** * **Evidence can be primary (yours), or secondary (where you analyse what others say and think)** * **Evidence should set out the reasons to support a reunification plan as well as potential risks and challenges involved.** * **Child’s voice should be explict.** |

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| **3.2 List of previous assessments and interventions – Please list for legal panel assessments that led to removal and reunification work if this has taken place.** | | | |
| **Organisation** | **Description of assessment/intervention** | **Date** | **Outcome and effectiveness** |
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| **4. Child impact analysis (for each individual child)** |
| **4.1 Description of the child’s daily life and experience during the period under consideration.** |
| **What is the expected impact on the child of a plan for reunification/ discharge of Care Order?**  **What would be the impact on the child if the Care Order were to remain in place?** |
| **4.2 Analysis of the child’s needs, considering the welfare checklist (see Section 12). Set out the steps taken to meet these needs e.g., any services provided and their outcomes (or their intended outcomes)** |
| **How will the child’s needs be met moving forward – are any specialist services required?** |
| **4.3 The child’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified** |
| **Use 3 houses if you can. What is the child saying to you?** |
| **4.4 The child’s own statement (where applicable)** |
| **What does the child say about discharge of Care Order /reunification?** |
| **4.5 The child’s proposed participation in the court case.** |
| **Set out the appropriate level of involvement in the author’s judgment, with reasons.** |

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| **5. Analysis of the evidence of Parenting Capability** |
| **5.1** **Who is the reunification with and do they have capacity to meet the child’s needs.** |
| Mother |
| Father |
| Other person with parental responsibility |

**5.2 The Contact Plan – how will the child keep in contact with key people – foster carers/siblings, friends and clubs**

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| **Child** | **Who contact is with and their relationship to the child** | **Brief rationale for the level of contact proposed** | **Level of support/ supervision required** | **Frequency and duration** |
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| **8. The range of views of parties and significant others** |
| * **Set out and analyse individual views about what should happen for the child/children in the future.** * **This section also has a vital opinion-sharing purpose.**   **8.1 Mother’s views** |
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| **8.2 Father’s views** |
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| **8.3 Views of wider family members** |
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| **8.4 Views of other parties or significant others e.g. Cafcass, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), court appointed experts** |
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| **9. Family support needs** |
| **Please detail any family support needs and details of the proposed child in need plan.** |
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| **10. Statement of procedural fairness** |
| **Have the contents of this statement been communicated to mother, father, significant others and the child in a way which can be clearly understood? If not, what has been tried?** |
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| **11. Signature** |  | |
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| Print full name |  | |
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| Role/position held |  | |
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|  | **I make this statement from my reading of the Children and Young People’s Services records and from my own personal knowledge. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.** | |
| Signed |  | |
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| Date |  |  |

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| **12. The welfare checklist in full for reference** |

The full Children Act checklist, to be used in care and supervision proceedings is found at section 1(3) (a) – (g) and requires the court to have regard to the following matters:

1. The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child/children concerned (considered in the light of his/her/their age and understanding);
2. His/her/their physical, emotional and educational needs;
3. The likely effect on him/her/them of a
4. any change in his/her/their circumstances
5. His/her/their age, sex, background and any characteristics of his/hers/theirs which the court considers relevant;
6. Any harm which he/she/they has/have suffered or is/are at risk of suffering;
7. How capable each of his/her/their parents, and any other person in relation to whom the court considers the question to be relevant, is of meeting his/her/their needs;
8. The range of powers available to the court under this Act (Children Act 1989) in the proceedings in question.

25. The full Adoption and Children Act welfare checklist, to be used in care proceedings where the plan is for adoption and in placement proceedings, is found in section 1 (4) (a) – (f) and requires the court and the adoption agency to have regard to the following matters (among others):

1. the child’s ascertainable wishes and feelings regarding the decision (considered in the light of the child’s age and understanding),
2. the child’s particular needs,
3. the likely effect on the child (throughout his life) of having ceased to be a member of the original family and become an adopted person,
4. the child’s age, sex, background and any of the child’s characteristics which the court or agency considers relevant,
5. any harm (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41)) which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering,
6. the relationship which the child has with relatives, and with any other person in relation to whom the court or agency considers the relationship to be relevant, including:
7. the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so,
8. the ability and willingness of any of the child’s relatives, or of any such person, to provide the child with a secure environment in which the child can develop, and otherwise to meet the child’s needs,
9. the wishes and feelings of any of the child’s relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child.

## 13. The social work chronology (last two years)

* *List significant events which can be evidenced. It may be helpful to include details of the nature of assessments carried out, family engagement, interventions and their successes. Please note there is no need to include detailed supervision notes here.*
* *Focus on the* ***last two years*** *unless prior events are felt to be both significant and relevant, then provide a summary drawing out key incidents or events in the box, below [NB delete this guidance text before submitting].*

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| **Date** | **Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child’s welfare** | **Significance** |
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### **13.1 If there has been involvement with the family over a longer period, please summarise this involvement here.**

***Guidance:*** *Summarise historic incidents and events of relevance e.g. any previous proceedings with a connected person, if this seems helpful for context purposes and is not covered in the chronology of the last two years, above.*

**[All guidance text to be deleted before submitting]**