

Quick Reference Guide to Case Summaries

07-05-21

Introduction

The Quick Reference Guide provides standards, expected and tips on how to write a useful case summary.

The case summary quickly succinctly introduces the child / young person. A good quality case summary enables colleagues to get to know the child and understand their current situation:

- It shows the child (it's their file) that you know them and what is happen for them at the time;
 - It helps colleagues to gain an immediate connection with the child and understand current priorities, if you are away from the office;
 - It helps the Emergency Duty Team staff to be more prepared to respond in an emergency;
 - It's a great way to get to the heart of the child's situation in supervision, reflective discussions and evaluations.
- ✓ The skill is to make sure that the case summary is up-to-date, useful, accurate and succinct. It needs to be as brief as it can be whilst providing good, specific information.
- X Don't repeat information just because it could fit under more than one heading, make the case summary headings suit the family and their circumstances not the other way around.
- X Don't keep adding to the case summary so it grows and grows, amend it.
- ✓ The previous version becomes a case note.

When to write and update the Case Summary

- There should be an up-to-date summary on every child's file
- Case summaries should be updated whenever there is a significant change in circumstances and / or information, or at 3 monthly intervals, whichever occurs first

What should be included in a Case Summary

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- A short paragraph which helps to bring the child to life – who are they, what are they like, where do they live and with whom, how do they like to communicate?
- Who are their brothers and sisters, and are services involved with them?
- Include any diversity / cultural needs or customs of the child or family that a colleague would need to be aware of if they needed to call or visit unexpectedly

- Who has parental Responsibility and how have they acquired this i.e. named on birth certificate, Child Arrangement Order.
- ✓ Imagine someone needs to meet with the child in a difficult situation, what would help them to gain a rapport quickly?

Reason why we are involved with the child/young person and their family

- Summarise the presenting problem in referral(s) that lead to the current episode of our involvement;
- Short indication of previous referrals/involvement to show if this is the first time we have been involved, the most recent involvement with a background of lengthy involvement or somewhere in between. You don't need to list them all, just a summary;
- Legal Status, this could include who holds PR, public or private law orders in place or application made/planned;
- Note when PLO (Public Law Outline) started, and where things are currently.
- Does the child have a Protection Plan, include dates of previous Protection Plan?

Danger/Wellbeing/Success Statement(s)

Summary of current danger/worry statements – no need to re-write these, use what you already have or summaries if there are a number.

Safety/Wellbeing/Success goals/Plan

Summary of current plan - no need to re-write these, use what you already have or summaries if there are a number.

Birth Response Plan (unborn babies only)

Include a summary of the birth response plan and direct the reader to the full plan for more details

Bottom Lines

- Not all cases will have a bottom line, you don't need to make one up unless there needs to be one. Leave this out if there aren't any;
- This might relate to someone not being in the house, the child spending time with someone who must be closely supervised at all times (give specific requirements);
- Remember to give enough detail so the reader knows what this looks like and direct them to where this is explained in further detail.
- If bottom lines flow better under the Safety/Wellbeing/Success goals/Plan heading, put them there.

Next Steps

When is the next multi-agency review i.e. review child protection conference, team around the family, core group or care team meeting;

Spending time with important people

Include information like:

- Family time plan – when, where, who, how, supported, supervised;
- Other circumstances where the child spends time with other people such as sleepovers shared care, respite;
- Who should be our first consideration if the child needs to stay somewhere in an emergency, has someone already been assessed or used in an emergency?

Important to know

Add anything here that is important to know but didn't fit easily under the above headings. Do not repeat information – if there is nothing to add just say see above or leave the heading out.

You might include things like:

- Best ways of contacting parents/carers if they can be hard to get hold of;
- Legal Status, this could include who holds PR, public or private law orders in place or application made/planned;
- Where are matters up to and any known hearing dates if in care proceedings;
- Note when PLO (Public Law Outline) started, and where things are currently;
- Does the child have a Protection Plan, include dates of previous Protection Plans;
- Could include complicating factors;
- Significant dates to the child, such as anniversary of bereavements;
- Next looked after review;
- Safety object information.

Headings

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Reason why we are involved with the child/young person and their family

Danger/Wellbeing/Success Statement(s)

Birth Response Plan (unborn babies only)

Bottom Lines (If needed)

Next Steps

Spending time with important people

Important to know

Up-to date

Useful

Accurate

Succinct

An Example of a Case Summary to show the types of information that might need to be included



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Maddison is a 5 year old little girl who likes people to call her Maddy. She lives in a busy household with her mum, Claire Greenfield, and her brother and sisters: her half-brother JoJo who is 7 years and sisters Casey, 4 years, Danni, 2 years and Keira who is 10 months old. Maddy is a talkative and smiley little girl who presents confidently and likes to chat and play with other people. Maddy has significant hearing loss in her right ear. She loves to draw and colour and this is a good way to engage with her. Claire Greenfield and Carl Brown share parental responsibility for Maddy, Casey, Danni and Keira as he is named on their birth certificates. Dad is living apart from the family at the moment.

Reason why we are involved with the child/young person and their family

Most recent referral was made by the Police on 2-03-2020 due to Maddy's, and her sisters' Dad, Carl Brown hitting her mother Jane, shouting, punching walls and throwing things. Maddy and her brother and sisters were in the house. There have been previous concerns and referrals over the past 7 years about neglect and domestic abuse.

Worry/Danger Statement(s)

Domestic Abuse:

1. James from Families First is worried as on 2/3/20 Carl hit Claire hard enough on the face to give her a black eye then started punching walls and throwing things around the house. When the police came JoJo and Maddy were crying, Casey was sitting quiet in the corner and Danni and Kiera were screaming. James is worried that if things don't change then the children will grow up in a home where they feel scared and unsafe, that they could get hurt in the crossfire whether Carl means for this to happen or not, and that as they grow up they start to learn that it is normal for boys to hurt and scare girls.

Neglect:

2. James from Families First is worried because JoJo, Maddy, Casey, Daniel and Kiera haven't always been getting the good care and chances in life that all children need, like the times when there has been clothes and dirty plates all over the floor so the children don't have a clean space to play or move around in and the worries about how much school the older children were missing before lockdown. James can see that these things get worse when Carl isn't living at home. James worries that if this carries on then the Kiera and Danny may not learn and grow well as they can't play and explore their world at home because of all the mess and that if JoJo, Maddy and Casey keep missing school they will fall behind other children and lose friends, which will make it harder for them to catch up, learn new things and feel good about themselves as they get older.

Safety/Wellbeing/Success Goal:

Domestic Abuse:

1. James from Families First can see how upset the children have been by what Carl has done and both parents are saying that things can't carry on like this but they want to keep their family together. In order for James to be able to get out of the family's life, James needs to see Claire and Carl live apart until they and some people that Claire, Carl and the children trust come up with a plan that means that even if Claire and Carl start to have an argument or disagreement, the children aren't left feeling scared by the things the adults do and Claire isn't being hit by Carl. James would like for the children to have a words and pictures story of their plan and what everyone in the network will do to make sure the children are always safe before Carl moves back home.

2. In order for James to worry less about the care of the children, James needs to see Claire, Carl and a network of support people come up with a plan that means that, no matter what is going on for Claire and Carl, the children live in a clean home where they have space to move around and play and the kids are in school often enough for them to be learning new things and see their friends.

Bottom Lines

- Family to identify a network of support people
- Carl to live elsewhere whilst he is on bail and until the family and network have come up with a plan to keep the children safe
- Words and pictures explanation for the children so that they understand the plan

Next Steps

Review Child Protection Conference planned for 5-06-20

Child Protection plan started 13-03-2020 - Neglect

Spending time with important people

Family Time - Maddy and her brother and sisters currently spend time with their Dad via whatsapp video call on their Mum's phone everyday. Maddy doesn't always want to join in but is encouraged to by mum.

Before Covid, Maddy and JoJo sometimes had sleepovers at their maternal aunt, Gemma Harrington's home. This is not happening at the moment.

Important to know

- Carl Brown, Dad, is currently on bail and must not visit the family home or street.
- Betty Greenfield, Maternal Grandmother, has an argumentative relationship with Claire but has always been in the children's lives and has cared for them for some weekend and whole weeks in the past when Claire has asked for help.