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| In the Family Court sitting at |
| In the matter of the Children Act 1989 |

**Local authority
social work evidence template**

**(SWET)**

This document is intended to summarise **not** duplicate other documentation contained within the court bundle and should be succinct, approx. 20 pages in length (excluding appendices), with clear links or references to other sources of more detailed information e.g. an expert report or parenting assessment.

Guidance notes are provided here to assist the author, this text should be removed before submitting the template to the courts.

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| --- |
| **Local Authority and Social Worker details** |
| Court 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) |  |
| Social work statement number of this witness e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and date of statement |  |
| This author/witness’s name, qualifications and office address |  |
| This author/witness’s Social Work England registration number |  |
| I have been the allocated social worker for [insert name(s)] since [date(s)] |  |

**The facts in this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and the opinions set out are my own.**

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Signed:

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Date of completion:

**Please ensure that you update the page numbers on the table by right clicking on the table followed by left click then “Update Field” tab, selecting “update page numbers only” once the report is completed.**

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**Accompanying guidance for completing the SWET can be found here:** <https://adcs.org.uk/care/article/SWET>

## **1. Overview of which court order or order/s are being sought**

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| ***Guidance notes to be overwritten:****The chronology is at the end of the statement, in section 12. It may be helpful to start by completing this before writing your statement, so that you do not duplicate information and can refer to events in the chronology when analysing harm already experienced, and/or the risk of further harm to the child(ren).****NB DELETE guidance once complete:*** * *This is an overview, an opportunity to summarise the salient points of the child and family’s circumstances in a few paragraphs,* ***ideally less than one page.***
* *There is no need to repeat in detail anything covered in subsequent sections of the SWET or other documents contained within the court bundle. Signpost to information in the legal bundle.* *In most cases parenting assessments / pre-birth assessments and viability assessments of family members should have already been completed and therefore you do not need to duplicate this information in the SWET.*
* *State the order being sought from the courts and why the local authority believes action is required now.*

     * *Please state where and with whom the child/ren are currently living*

     * *Please include interim plan for each child*

     * *Please include references to sources of other information, such as the case summary or the social work chronology to be as succinct as possible.*

     * *It might be helpful to think about: past harm, future danger and complicating factors here.*

     * *And, if interim order(s) are being sought, please provide evidence of why this is being requested i.e. why now, what has changed e.g. precipitating event such as police protection, non-accidental injury, ongoing or serious incident of domestic abuse, international element or capacity to consent to Section 20, compounding impact of neglect (this list is non-exhaustive).*

     * *If the Public Law Outline (PLO) process has not been used explain why not. Please refer to the social work chronology in Appendix 1, as necessary.*

     IF REMOVAL IS SOUGHT:-* *Explain why the local authority believes the child/ren’s safety demands immediate removal/continued removal (remember to evidence this)*

     * *Detail presenting features and why the risks to the child/ren have moved from significant to immediate harm, plus the evidence of impact or the likelihood of impact.*

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## **2. Family network composition**

### **2.1 The child/ren**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name(s)**  | **Gender** | **Date of Birth** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current legal status** |
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***Guidance:*** *Children’s legal names should mirror the names on their birth certificates – ensure you have accessed copies and provided to lawyer with conduct of case*

### **2.2 Child/ren’s family network**

***Guidance:*** *This section should include family members and any other people the child/ren have significant relationships with, such as close family friends. Who is important to them? Please specify the individual’s relationship in respect of each child subject to the application. Please set out these individual’s full names, their dates of birth, their nationality, ethnicity and their current addresses unless they have asked for these not to be disclosed. In such situations, send this information directly to the court as well as Cafcass,* ***do not*** *record it here.* *There are many good reasons why an individual may not wish their address or other personal details to be disclosed to all the parties in the case. In those circumstances simply state that it is confidential. You must make sure you include details of absent fathers (they will at very least need to be served notification of the Court application even if they do not have parental responsibility). DWP checks can be undertaken to search for absent father’s where their whereabouts are not known [This guidance text can be deleted before submitting the completed template to the court].*

**Use one template per family**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Relationship** | **Parental Responsibility** | **DOB** | **Nationality (Have you seen documentary evidence of nationality and immigration status PLEASE STATE)** | **Ethnicity** | **Address (where consent to disclose)** |
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### **2.3 Has anyone listed, above, been identified as an alternative carer(s) for the child/ren?**

***Guidance:*** *Alongside the name, it is helpful to include a brief note about how and when they were identified e.g. put forward by a parent, via a family group conference (or similar), or identified by the social worker. Detail any potential alternative carers who have been ruled out in section 5.*

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## **3. Child impact analysis (complete for each individual child)**

### **3.1 Description of the child’s day to day experiences during the period under consideration**

***Guidance:*** *Think about what has it been like for them, what it’s like for them now and why a court order is now being sought?*

### *Whilst describing the child(rens) experiences, it is also important to include positive aspects of their care and relationships with parents/siblings, as well as concerns relating to the application*

*Please ensure you reference peer researched material as this needs to be included.*

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### **3.2 The child’s needs. An analysis of the harm they face. Risk and protective factors**

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| ***Guidance notes to be overwritten: Do not repeat in this section the information that is in 3.1****The welfare checklist should be applied as appropriate throughout (see section 11).**Consider in this section whether you are saying that the child (1) has suffered significant harm, (2) is likely to suffer significant harm or (3) both. If you are saying that the child has suffered significant harm you must provide clear, concrete examples of the type of harm which you are saying has been caused. Examples may be apparent within the child’s behaviour, for example withdrawn, anxious, clingy or fearful behaviours, or exhibiting violence or aggression. You may wish to set out how the behaviour of this child differs from what would be expected of a child of this age. Positive patterns and impacts and protective factors should be identified and an explanation of how those positive behaviours weigh in the balance should be provided. This analysis (and the child impact analysis above) results from asking yourself ‘What is the impact on the child?’ of the patterns that have been identified within the family.**The aim here is to provide an understanding of the impact of what has happened on the child (or each individual child within a sibling group). It is important to note that the same event can affect children within the same family differently, so this differential impact should be drawn out in the analysis, as well as the factors supporting a child’s resilience in the face of what has happened.**The evidence used here can be primary – the direct experience of the social worker – or secondary – the social worker’s evaluation of evidence from assessments or the views of other people who know the child/ren or who have assessed their needs.*     * *Set out the steps taken to meet the child’s identified needs e.g. the services and support that have been and/or are being provided as well as the outcomes (or intended outcomes).*

     *Set out the impact of the proposed interim plan.*     * *In the event that you are seeking interim removal of the child you will need to be clear about the harm that you believe will occur before the final hearing is able to take place, should the child remain with their parents/carers.*

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### **3.3 The child/ren’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified (please include the child/ren’s own statement, where age appropriate)**

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| ***Guidance:*** *When writing your evidence, remember that recording children’s views should not solely rely on verbal communication. Observation, play, drawings and understanding of the child’s development, behaviour, demeanour and response to the important people in their lives is central to understanding how they experience life in their family. This is particularly important for those children who do not use speech because of their age or additional needs. Their views also need professional analysis - if a child appears to be uncomfortable when sharing their views or you assess they have had their views influenced, is it important to state this within the statement, with consideration of why this might have happened and your analysis of how this impacts on each child* * *How, when and in what circumstances the child/ren’s views were expressed. (For the very young, and those with additional needs or disabilities which may limit verbal communication, the use of creative approaches and direct observation and interpretation by social workers is crucial). Include a summary of the direct work completed with each child and the outcome of this, who they enjoy spending time with, plus their view of the care plan and their understanding of proceedings (where applicable).*

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### **3.4 The child/ren’s participation in the court case.**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Child/ren should be as fully involved in proceedings as their needs dictate.** *Set out in brief each child’s understanding or likely understanding of the process and their desired involvement for example, do they want to meet or write to the Judge or attend a Court hearing.*

     * *Set out the appropriate level of involvement for each child in line with their best interests, with clear reasoning.*

     * *Where a child has difficulty in expressing their wishes and feelings consideration must be given to the use of a children’s advocate.*

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## **4. Analysis of the evidence of parenting capability**

### **4.1 Summary of work previously undertaken with child/ren and the family that has led to these proceedings e.g. pre-proceedings or convening a family group conference (or similar).**

### *Please set out the intended purpose of the intervention for the child and what was achieved for the child as a result (outcome/effectiveness)*

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| **Date** | **Organisation** | **Description of assessment/intervention** | **Outcome and effectiveness** |
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*[This guidance text can be deleted before submitting the final template to the courts.]*

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| **Mother**  |
| *Analysis of the capabilities of each parent to meet the child/ren’s needs (including any additional/learning need), including relevant risk and protective factors and an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap (why is an order being sought now?) and if/how this can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. The analysis should address the fundamental question: ‘Can this person meet this child’s needs for the rest of their childhood?’**Please include mother’s* motivation, capacity to change and sustain change.Include analysis together and apart from current /most recent partner*Please ensure you reference peer researched material as this needs to be included.*     *Include details of support or interventions (either past or present) from any professional agency involved with individual members of the family or the family as a whole, as applicable, detailing learning, changes, progress and the gaps that remain:** *Have the parents made full use of the opportunities and resources afforded to them?*
* *Based on previous behaviour, what is the prognosis for change?*
* *Are the parents likely to make effective use of further assessments or interventions?*
* *If further assessment is recommended, how will this affect the overall timescale of the child’s developmental timetable and journey?*
* *Has the child experienced previous care proceedings, periods of care, or child protection plans?*
* *What will be the impact of further delay?*

     *If a parenting assessment is required or is in progress, please include this information here. If you have already completed parenting assessments – signpost to these and summarise the key points.*     *Indicate whether there is an international dimension and whether the relevant consulate has been notified.*     *Please record details of attempts to seek out absent parents.*       |
| **Father** |
| *Analysis of the capabilities of the father to meet the child/ren’s needs (including any additional/learning need), including relevant risk and protective factors and an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap (why is an order being sought now?) and if/how this can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. The analysis should address the fundamental question: ‘Can this person meet the child(ren) needs for the rest of their childhood?’**Please include father’s motivation, capacity to change and sustain change* *Include analysis together and apart from current /most recent partner**Please ensure you reference peer researched material as this needs to be included.*     *Include details of support or interventions (either past or present) from any professional agency involved with individual members of the family or the family as a whole, as applicable, detailing learning, changes, progress and the gaps that remain:** *Has the father made full use of the opportunities and resources afforded to him?*
* *Based on previous behaviour, what is the prognosis for change?*
* *Is the mother likely to make effective use of further assessments or interventions? If further assessment is recommended, how will this affect the overall timescale of the child’s developmental timetable and journey?*
* *Has the child experienced previous care proceedings, periods of care, or child protection plans?*
* *What will be the impact of further delay?*

     *If a parenting assessment is required or is in progress, please include this information here. If you have already completed parenting assessments – signpost to these and summarise the key points.*     *Indicate whether there is an international dimension and whether the relevant consulate has been notified.*     *Please record details of attempts to seek out absent parents.*      |
| **Other members of the household and/or person(s) with parental responsibility** |
| *Analysis of the capabilities of the carers/holder of PR to meet the child/ren’s needs (including any additional/learning need), including relevant risk and protective factors and an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap (why is an order being sought now?) and if/how this can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. The analysis should address the fundamental question: ‘Can this person meet the child(ren) needs for the rest of their childhood?’**Please include carer/holder of PR’s motivation, capacity to change and sustain change* *Include analysis together and apart from current /most recent partner**Please ensure you reference peer researched material as this needs to be included.*     *Include details of support or interventions (either past or present) from any professional agency involved with individual members of the family or the family as a whole, as applicable, detailing learning, changes, progress and the gaps that remain:** *Has the carers/holder of PR made full use of the opportunities and resources afforded to him?*
* *Based on previous behaviour, what is the prognosis for change?*
* *Is the mother likely to make effective use of further assessments or interventions? If further assessment is recommended, how will this affect the overall timescale of the child’s developmental timetable and journey?*
* *Has the child experienced previous care proceedings, periods of care, or child protection plans?*
* *What will be the impact of further delay?*

     *If a carers assessment is required or is in progress, please include this information here. If you have already completed parenting assessments – signpost to these and summarise the key points.*     *Indicate whether there is an international dimension and whether the relevant consulate has been notified.*     *Please record details of attempts to seek out absent holders of PR.*       |

## **5. Analysis of the evidence of wider family and friends’ capability as alternative carers for the child/ren**

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| ***Guidance to be overwritten or deleted****: Demonstrate what is known about the capabilities of wider family members and/or friends to meet child/ren’s needs (including any additional/learning need) as alternative carers, including an analysis of skills or resource gaps and if/how they can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. Key considerations for a viability assessment:** *Unsuitable family network members should be excluded via a comprehensive filtering process. Please provide details.*

     * *In respect of each proposed carer please confirm that they:*
1. *understand in broad terms the needs of the child/ren*
2. *understand the level and type of care each child will need throughout their childhood because of their earlier experiences*
3. *have expressed an authentic willingness to be part of the team around the child/ren until matters pending court determination.*
* *It would be helpful to share an overview of what information has been shared with potential carer(s) to enable their understanding of the issues.*
* *For assessments of wider family have been already completed – signpost to these and summarise the key points*
* *Set out the details of any incomplete assessments, including date for completion*

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## **6. The proposed S31A interim care plan – the ‘realistic options’ analysis**

### **6.1 Options considered for the placement. Please have regard to the following:**

**Realistic options:-**

*Evidence of a robust filtering process is required to ensure each option assessed as realistic meets that standard as detailed above.*

*Determining the rank order between realistic options is a matter of professional judgement about the relative importance to the child/ren of various attributes of the carers and/or the relationship between the carers and the child, or the carers, child and birth parent/s. Ideally, placements should be listed in order of preference / strength.*
*[NB this text can be deleted before filing the completed template with the Court].*

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| **Long-term placement options explored** | **Is this option realistic and viable or has it been discounted?** | **Reason(s) why it is viable or why it has been discounted?** |
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### **6.2 The preferred and proposed placement option for the child or each individual child if part of a sibling group**

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| * *In care proceedings, no arbitrary limit can be placed on the number of realistic options available for the child/ren, but one option must always be preferred. A clear reason (or reasons) must always be given for this preferred status set out below. This is a proportionality evaluation that compares the preferred carer against the other realistic options, there is no need to repeat the information set out in the table at 6.1*
* *Preferred status means that on the assessments and evidence available, the preferred placement should offer the child/ren the prospect of recovering from any trauma they have experienced: personal growth and development within a family where they are guaranteed unconditional love; strong educational prospects; good health outcomes; and – as far as can be predicted – one or more positive lifelong attachment/s which promote their unique identity.*
* IF SIBLINGS WILL NOT REMAIN TOGETHER PLEASE REFER TO SIBLING ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED PLACEMENT - *Reminder: If the child(ren) is already in a placement not with parents, and the proposal is for a placement change, the IRO is to see child before any placement move and social worker should factor in those timescales.*
* Include the likely impact of the preferred option on the child/ren.
* *Signpost to assessments already completed and summarise the key points*

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### **6.3 Summary of diversity and cultural considerations**

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| *Please have regard to relevant* [*protected characterisitcs*](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights) *namely age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, religon or belief, race, disability, sex and sexual orientation and how the child/ren’s cultural identity and beliefs will be met/supported including which languages the child speaks. This may include the vulnerabilities of children from minority groups, including their experience of prejudice and discrimination or barriers to communication. This may include support from organisations such as Afruca etc. Contact with family members can be a way to support a child’s identity, particularly for children placed with carers whose faith and/or culture background is different from their own*      |

### **6.4 Summary of any health, wellbeing and educational considerations**

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| Guidance: detail*a. how schooling arrangements have been considered as part of the care planning process and b. whether the child(ren) have regular medical appointments or ongoing health needs and c. how it is planned to ensure the child’s interests and activities are supported.*      |

## **7. Family time/ the plan for contact**

***Guidance:*** *The family time plan should involve siblings and anyone else with whom the child/ren has a significant relationship, why this meets each child’s needs and whether any support or supervision is required to facilitate family time activities, why and by who. in line with the genogram and ecomap. Please refer to the family time assessment document.*

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| **Child** | **Who contact is with and relationship to the child** | **Frequency and duration** | **Level of support/ supervision required** | **Brief rationale for the level of contact proposed** |
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## **8. The range of views of parties and significant others**

### **8.1 Mother’s views**

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| ***Guidance NB delete guidance once completed: –*** *Please include the mother’s view on the family plan and if in dispute, what family plan is proposed.***MOTHER’S VIEWS ON INTERIM PLAN**      **MOTHER’S VIEWS ON CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE**      **MOTHER’S INTERIM PROPOSALS**       |

### **8.2 Father’s views**

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| ***Guidance –*** *Please include the father’s view on the family plan and if in dispute, what family plan is proposed.***FATHER’S VIEWS ON INTERIM PLAN**       **FATHER’S VIEWS ON CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE**      **FATHER’S INTERIM PROPOSALS**      **[Repeat for each father if more than one father]** |

### **8.3 Views of anyone else holding parental responsibility or wider family members**

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| ***Guidance –*** *Please include the wider family’s view on the family plan and if in dispute, what family plan is proposed.***WIDER FAMILY’S VIEWS ON INTERIM PLAN**      **WIDER FAMILY’S VIEWS ON CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE**      **WIDER FAMILY’S INTERIM PROPOSALS**       |

### **8.4 Views of the IRO, Multi-Agency Partners or significant others**

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| ***Guidance:*** * *Significant others may include CP chair, a health visitor, teacher*
* *Where possible a short statement or email from the IRO should be included here.*
* *Please be sure to include the full name and job title of anyone providing a statement for inclusion here as well as the date on which they provided it.*

***Guidance****: Please include the IRO’s view on the family plan and if in dispute, what family plan is proposed.***IRO’S VIEWS ON 1. INTERIM PLAN 2. CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE 3. IRO’S INTERIM PROPOSALS** *Where possible a short statement or email from the IRO should be included here*     **CP CHAIR’S VIEWS ON 1. INTERIM PLAN; 2. CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE; 3. INTERIM PROPOSALS**     **MULTI-AGENCY PARTNER VIEWS ON 1. INTERIM PLAN; 2. CHILD/REN’S INVOLVEMENT IN COURT CASE ; 3. MULTI-AGENCY PARTNER INTERIM PROPOSALS**     **[Repeat for each Multi-Agency practitioner involved for each child]** |

## **9. Case management issues and proposals**

### **9.1 Record case management issues here alongside details of any further proposed assessments**

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| *1. any factors that may lead to delay, for example, this may include the assessment of family members in other countries, a parent having bail conditions, or the requirement for an interpreter or an advocate etc.*      *2. any special factors or the vulnerabilities of key participants*      *3. any further proposed assessments including why they are necessary.*       |

### **9.2 Significant events happening in the near future which are relevant for the child**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event e.g. transitioning from primary to secondary school** | **Source of evidence/document reference** | **Significance** |
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## **10. Statement of procedural fairness**

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|  *Confirm here that the local authority’s concerns and the contents of this statement have been communicated to the child/ren, mother, father, and significant others, and state how this has been communicated. Have these concerns been clearly understood? If not, please be explicit about attempts to engage parties and any help that has been provided to them to participate in the process. This may include access to legal advice and representation, translators, advocates etc.**I or X has communicated to X the local authority’s concerns and the contents of this statement on XX/XX/XXX, this was by way of (state how this has been communicated)**I believe these were clearly understood because XXX or I do not believe these were clearly understood because XXX**I or XX have been unable to communicate the local authority’s concerns and the contents of this statement to X because XX I have attempted to engage XX by XX to enable them to participate in this process, (access to legal advice and representation, translators, advocates etc)*REPEAT FOR PARENTS, CHILDREN AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS |

**[All guidance text to be deleted before submitting to court.**

**Please update the table of contents.]**

## **11.** **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:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a) | The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child/children concerned (considered in the light of their age and understanding); |
| b) | Their physical, emotional and educational needs; |
| c) | The likely effect on them of any change in his/her/their circumstances; |
| d) | Their age, sex, background and any characteristics of his/hers/theirs which the court considers relevant; |
| e) | Any harm which they have suffered or are at risk of suffering; |
| f) | How capable each of 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; |
| g) | 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):

PLEASE DELETE IF NOT ISSUING PLACEMENT SIMULTANEOUSLY

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a) | the child’s ascertainable wishes and feelings regarding the decision (considered in the light of the child’s age and understanding); |
| b) | the child’s particular needs; |
| c) | the likely effect on the child (throughout theirlife) of having ceased to be a member of the original family and become an adopted person; |
| d) | the child’s age, sex, background and any of the child’s characteristics which the court or agency considers relevant; |
| e) | any harm (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41)) which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering; |
| f) | 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:1. the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so,
2. 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,
3. the wishes and feelings of any of the child’s relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child.
 |

**Appendix**

## **12. The social work chronology (last two years)**

* This should be succinct and relate to **significant events** that have resulted in this application being made, rather than detailing everything that has happened,
* *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*
* *It may be helpful to summarise key events by grouping similar events that happen in a short space of time, for example “the police were contacted ten times raising concerns about shouting and raised voices between parents, when the children were present, between 10th February – 1st March 2020”. This approach may also be used to cover longer periods of time e.g. “between 2010 and 2015 children’s services undertook five child and family assessments, with each ending in no further intervention or support*
* *[NB delete this guidance text before submitting].*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child’s welfare** | **Significance** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

### **12.1 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 to the court]**

### **12.2 Genogram (mandatory)(but format may be adapted)**

Include family members and their relationship to each child, identify anyone who has been identified as a potential carer by adding ‘PC’ next to their name(s)

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

Male

### **12.3 Ecomap (risky and protective contacts) (optional)**

This document is confidential and contains sensitive information. It should not be disclosed without permission of the court. Data protection standards must always be complied with.