**Practice Guidance**

**Summary of Child’s Circumstances**

* All children and young people’s LCS records should include a **Summary of Child’s Circumstances** (formerly known as Case Summaries), to be recorded within the Case Note section. *These summaries have been renamed to avoid confusion with the new Family Safeguarding Case Summaries which are produced as part of the Family Safeguarding Model.*
* The Child’s Circumstances Summary is a snapshot of a child/young person’s lived experience and provides the reader with a brief outline of the history of involvement and the purpose of the current involvement with Children’s Services. The summary should refer the reader to any relevant plan, assessment etc, rather than telling the whole story.
* When writing a summary you should **write it to the child** – not as if the child is writing it about themselves, i.e. avoid writing in the style of “I am…”. For example ‘*Sally, as I write this you are 6 years old and live at home with your Dad*’ instead of ‘*I am 6 years old and live with my Daddy*’. Also consider the audience as being a Social Worker or Manager who may need to quickly make a decision about the child/young person in the absence of the allocated worker.
* A Summary must be kept up to date regularly - updates must be completed **every 3-months**, or more frequently if:
* There has been a significant event or change in circumstance to the child and family.
* The child/young person is transferring to another Social Worker/Team.
* Children’s Services are due to end their involvement.
* Old summary information should be copied into a case note entry, and a new summary created.

**What to Include**

**Pen picture of the child/family**

A brief pen picture of the child/young person should be included. Consider the following key areas:-

* Where does the child live and who are their carers?
* Language
* Identity/Culture/Diversity
* Voice of the child – what is the child telling us about their lived experience? Celebrate their strengths and include what they like/dislike.

**Brief reason for current Children’s Services involvement**

Provide a succinct summary of the reason for our involvement, do not copy the referral. This should be an overview of the reason for the referral, level of involvement (i.e. CIN, CP, CLA, CWD).

**Significant relationships**

* Family and carers the child is in contact with.
* Identify who has parental responsibility.
* Identify who should be contacted in an emergency? How can we contact them? Provide full contact details e.g. home and mobile telephone numbers, email addresses.

**What is the plan?**

This should be a succinct summary of the child’s plan; you must not copy and paste actions from the care plan. Please comment on any assessments being undertaken (that may not be immediately obvious from LCS, such as PAMs, Viability Assessments, Parenting Assessments).

If there is a PLO/Care Proceedings what stage are they at? What has been achieved and what is outstanding? Are regular PLO reviews taking place?

**Are there any specific risks to the child?**

Where appropriate, please detail any risks i.e. risk of sexual abuse from a perpetrator having limited contact? Risk of CSE/CCE?

**What is the plan in the event of an emergency?**

Where possible, families should always be involved in writing their emergency plans. Consider who would the family say need to step in if there was an emergency? What is the contingency plan i.e. parents/carers become unwell/risk increases and cannot be managed at home? For example, ‘*Sally, if your mum becomes too unwell with her mental health, the family have agreed that your Aunty Jane would care for you for a few days.*’ How will Police/Emergency Duty Team know how to respond in an emergency?

**Any known hazards that those working with the family need to know about?**

This may include risk of violence/weapons/animals so that those responding in an emergency are prepared.

**Key Information:**

**Key Dates** – i.e. CIN/CP Reviews, Core Group Meetings, PEP, CLA Review, Medical, Next Visit

**Legal Status**

**Case Status** – i.e. CIN, CP, CLA.

**Professionals working with the child/young person and family** –include all contact details for them, i.e. telephone number and email addresses where known.

**Final Reflection…**

* **What does someone who knows nothing about the child need to know if I am not here, or something happens out of hours?**
* **Will someone be able to take the right action for the child or have enough information to make a good decision?**