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

****

**Local authority social work evidence template**

**(Final statement)**

*Guidance notes in blue are provided here to assist the author, this text should however be removed before submitting the template to the court. This document is intended to update the Court since the initial statement and should not duplicate other documents and assessments contained within the court bundle. It should be succinct, approx. 20 pages in length, with clear links or references to other sources of more detailed information e.g. an expert report or parenting assessment.* **Additional guidance for completing the SWET can be found here:** <https://adcs.org.uk/care/article/SWET>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The child/ren**  | **Gender** | **Date of birth** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current legal status** |
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| **Local Authority and Social Worker details** |
| Court case number |  |
| Filed by Surrey County Council |  |
| Social work statement number in the proceedings, e.g. 1st, 2nd (**N.B**. Do not use this template for initial statements) |  |
| Social work statement number of this witness, including position statements and initial statements 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 application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and the opinions set out are my own.**

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| NB: do not sign or date until reviewed by Team Manager and legal adviser and agreed as final version  |

Signed:

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Date of completion:

**Please ensure that you update the page numbers on the table by clicking on the table followed by the “update” tab, selecting “update page numbers only” once the statement is completed.**

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## **Child/ren’s details**

Include any updates arising since the last statement or court hearing, the former details of proceedings do not need repeating.

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| *For example:*1. Please refer back to the initial social work statement in these proceedings for details of the family composition and events leading to the local authority’s application. The following information is provided by way of update.
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## **The social work chronology**

Guidance: An updated chronology should be attached at Appendix 1 Please provide further detail as to updating significant events here as necessary

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| *For example:*1. Please refer to the updated chronology at Appendix 1
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## **Analysis of risk and protective factors**

Final position.

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| ***Guidance:*** *The social work analysis of the harm the child (or each child) has suffered and/or the/any risk of harm the child continues to face.*1. Cross refer to previous ecomap (or provide an updated once if it has changed) – set out risky and protective contacts. Consider both options – what would happen if child was moved or if the plan was not approved.
2. Do not repeat large chunks of threshold or previous assessments. Later in statement there is a section on parenting capacity. At this stage simply refer to your analysis of parenting capacity and threshold and set out risks and protective factors. You can refer to accepted bodies of research about child development. Any research must be referenced. Also make explicit what would happen if care plan is approved.
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## **Child impact analysis and child/ren’s views**

Set out any additional evidence and analysis plus any updates to the child’/rens previously expressed views.

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| 1. ***Guidance:***
2. What have you observed during the proceedings?
3. What are the updated needs of each individual child against the aspects of welfare checklist? Which include:

*- the ascertainable wishes and feeling of the child/ren concerned (in light of their age and understanding)**- their physical, emotional and educational needs – compared with needs of a child of that age in general population – have they changed?**- Have they an EHCP, any specific additional educational needs – when was the EHCP last updated, will it affect the plan ?**- the likely effect of them of any change in their circumstances**- their age, sex, background and any characteristics of theirs which the court considers relevant**- impact on the child of the current harm and likelihood of harm (referenced in Section 3 above). The impact of the same event may be different on different children within same family, has resilience changed? What are the factors supporting the child’s resilience in the face of what has happened? Explain risk assessment of harm – or refer to it if in a separate document - what is type/nature of harm? What is likelihood of it doing so? To whom is it posed, by whom is it posed? What are consequences of it arising? How serious is risk? How imminent is risk? What are triggers for risk occurring? How predictable is risk? Can the risk be reduced? Can risk be managed? What steps can be provided (by LA or by family or other agencies) to mitigate/reduce the risk?* *You will be drawing together an updated picture of what each child needs both now and in the future – you can also indicate where services would be needed to meet those needs and how you intend to provide them. You should write maximum half a page per child.**Refer to accepted bodies of research about child development. Any research must be referenced.* *Is your care plan proportionate to risk/actual/likely harm?**Make explicit what would happen if proposed care plan is approved.**Refer back to earlier statements and conclusions of social worker and other assessments undertaken – are you in agreement with these or not? Why? If you quote from sections – keep succinct/just key remarks.**If care plan is one of adoption – please reference/provide analysis on the additional aspects set out in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 checklist:** *Likely effect on the child (throughout her life of having ceased to be a member of the original family and become and adopted person*
* *The relationship which the child has with relatives and with any other person in relation to whom the court/agency considers the relationship to be relevant including the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so, 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 (can refer to conclusions in Section 6 below). The wishes and feelings of the relatives or any such person regarding the child.*

*If care plan is one of Supervision Order – why do you consider this necessary? How long is proposed? Do parents agree? Have you completed supervision order plan template? This should be used instead of final care plan for that child. In what way has this been done in partnership with family and how has it been co-produced with child/ren, family and any other significant adults? Are the family clear on the power, duties and effect of supervision order? How has explained this to them? Why do you consider this necessary? How long is proposed? How was child/ren involved and views reflected? Was a FGC used to identify support/help/shape plan. Have we involved other agencies and organisations? How have they contributed? Have we confirmed funding for each element of plan? Are there any gaps? Is the review process clear and robust? How will children and parents be supported? How have the family’s insight and their own plans to meet the child/ren’s neds informed and shaped this?**If care plan is no order – set out help, services and support that are being provided and under what framework (CIN/CPP), set out that this is dependent on agreement with parents and that they do not have to agree to support/services. Is there evidence of established and meaningful partnership working and co-operation between LA, the child(ren) and family to support this framework? Set out any timescales? If Child Protection Conference will be convened – this should be done prior to conclusion of proceedings and any minutes filed in the proceedings.*  |

## **Analysis of parenting capability**

Set out the final assessment of parenting capacity, including a brief summary of any assessments completed since the initial hearing, state how contact / family time has informed this view etc.

***Guidance*** *- This is an opportunity to set out your conclusions within your own SW assessment and why you have reached them. Consider the conclusions and analysis of any reports previously commissioned. You may quote relevant sections, but keep this succinct – the Court has the reports and doesn’t need you to repeat huge chunks – just the key remarks. Please don’t write in third person.*

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| **Mother**  |
| 1. ***Guidance:***
2. If absent – details of attempts to seek them out
3. Single carer or with Father or partner? Their role/influence to be included in analysis
4. Any cognitive or capacity issues? How have we adjusted our assessments to address these? *Have we followed the good practice guidance -* [*https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf*](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf)

*If English is not their first language – have we used an interpreter/had documents translated?**International dimension – has relevant consulate been notified?**List all contact you have observed with parent.**List what tools you have used with them.**Strengths/Protective factors**Vulnerabilities/Risk factors**Any improvements?* *What is the case being put forward by Mother? What is support on offer and proposal made? Is this realistic/in best interests of child? What support might be offered from LA if children were to stay at home and why this would not be adequate?**Prognosis for change – response to any support/treatment/goals/CPP Plan/CIN Plan to date**Is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent is committed to making the necessary changes?  If so, is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent would be able to maintain the commitment?  If so is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent will be able to make the necessary changes within the child’s timescale?**Probability of harm happening**Support – are they socially isolated?**Capability Gap – can this be bridged in child/ren’s timescales?**Can this person meet this child/ren needs for rest of their childhood?**Conclusion* |
| **Father** |
| ***Guidance:****If absent – details of attempts to seek them out**Single carer or with Father or partner? Their role/influence to be included in analysis**Any cognitive or capacity issues? How have we adjusted our assessments to address these? Have we followed the good practice guidance -* [*https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf*](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf)*If English is not their first language – have we used an interpreter/had documents translated?**International dimension – has relevant consulate been notified?**List all contact you have observed with parent.**List what tools you have used with them.**Strengths/Protective factors**Vulnerabilities/Risk factors**Any improvements?**What is the case being put forward by Father? What is support on offer and proposal made? Is this realistic/in best interests of child? What support might be offered from LA if children were to stay at home and why this would not be adequate?**Prognosis for change – response to any support/treatment/goals/CPP Plan/CIN Plan to date**Is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent is committed to making the necessary changes?  If so, is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent would be able to maintain the commitment?  If so is there some solid evidence‑based reason to believe that the parent will be able to make the necessary changes within the child’s timescale?**Probability of harm happening**Support – are they socially isolated?**Capability Gap – can this be bridged in child/ren’s timescales?**Can this person meet this child/ren needs for rest of their childhood?**Conclusion* |
| **Other members of the household and/or person(s) with parental responsibility** |
| ***Guidance:****If absent – details of attempts to seek them out**Single carer or with partner? Their role/influence to be included in analysis**Any cognitive or capacity issues? How have we adjusted our assessments to address these? Have we followed the good practice guidance -* [*https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf*](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/wtpn/FINAL%202021%20WTPN%20UPDATE%20OF%20THE%20GPG.pdf)*If English is not their first language – have we used an interpreter/had documents translated?**International dimension – has relevant consulate been notified?**List all contact you have observed with parent.**List what tools you have used with them.**Strengths/Protective factors**Vulnerabilities/Risk factors**Any improvements?**What is the case being put forward? What is support on offer and proposal made? Is this realistic/in best interests of child? What support might be offered from LA if children were to stay at home and why this would not be adequate?**Prognosis for change – response to any support/treatment/goes/CPP Plan/CIN Plan to date.**Probability of harm happening**Support – are they socially isolated?**Capability Gap – can this be bridged in child/ren’s timescales?**Can this person meet this child/ren needs for rest of their childhood?**Conclusion* |

## **Analysis of wider family and friends capability**

Set out any additonal evidence and analysis of assessments or work with the child/ren’s family and friends network during the course of proceedings.

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| *For example:*1. In accordance with s1(3)(f) Children Act 1989 I have considered how capable each of the wider family and other connected persons are of meeting the [child’s] needs.

[**Guidance:** Was FGC held? When? If not, why not/refer to PLO Plan. Have parents given you information to do a comprehensive genogram/ecomap. What is outstanding?]**1 [enter name and relationship to child/ren]*****Guidance:****Did parents agree for them to be approached? When were they put forward? For what child? Have they engaged with LA? What is motivation? Have they got a pre-existing relationship with child? Are they seeing child? What assessment(s) have been completed, dates and by whom and outcome.* *Capability to meet child/ren’s needs, understanding of risk, what support can they offer, understanding of permanent care, how will they manage child’s relationship with parent?**Capability gap – can this be abridged in child/ren’s timescales**Do we have medicals and checks completed?**International dimension – has relevant consulate been notified? Did you contact Outbound Services? Have timescales prevented this from being a realistic option?***2 [enter name and relationship to child/ren]*****Guidance:****Did parents agree for them to be approached? When were they put forward? For what child? Have they engaged with LA? What is motivation? Have they got a pre-existing relationship with child? Are they seeing child? What assessment(s) have been completed, dates and by whom and outcome.* *Capability to meet child/ren’s needs, understanding of risk, what support can they offer, understanding of permanent care, how will they manage child’s relationship with parent?**Capability gap – can this be abridged in child/ren’s timescales**Do we have medicals and checks completed?**International dimension – has relevant consulate been notified? Did you contact Outbound Services? Have timescales prevented this from being a realistic option?* |

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

7.1 Final position/s,

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

**Realistic options**

1. *To be defined as realistic, the proposed placement must be assessed as sufficiently resilient and sustainable to justify the label of ‘permanent’.  Evidence of a robust filtering process is required to ensure each option assessed as realistic meets that standard.*
2. *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 in the body of this document.*
3. *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.*
4. *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 courts].*

*[Enter Child’s name]*

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| **Option 1: e.g. Adoption****Strengths of Placement** * xx will be placed in a safe and nurturing home environment
* There will be consistency of care for xx and he will have all his needs met.

**Weakness of Placement*** This is not in line with the wishes of xx
* Xx will not be living with his family and will have limited contact with them

**Arrangements or Services that can mitigate risks identified*** Xx would continue to have an allocated social worker.
* xx will continue to be supported by her Mental Health team.

**Consideration of potential orders*** e.g. Care Order and Placement Order

**Analysis and preferred order*****Guidance:*** *Looking at 4 preceding boxes what is our analysis of the appropriateness/safety of pursuing this as a plan for the child? This will need to be considered along with all placement options – not a linear exercise.* |
| **Option 2: e.g. long term foster care****Strengths of Placement** * .

**Weakness of Placement****Support Available and anything required****Analysis and preferred Order** ***Guidance:*** *Looking at 4 preceding boxes what is our analysis of the appropriateness/safety of pursuing this as a plan for the child? This will need to be considered along with all placement options – not a linear exercise.* |
| **Option 3: e.g. Placement with maternal grandparents****Strengths of Placement** **Weakness of Placement****Support Available and anything required****Analysis and preferred Order** ***Guidance:*** *Looking at 4 preceding boxes what is our analysis of the appropriateness/safety of pursuing this as a plan for the child? This will need to be considered along with all placement options – not a linear exercise.* |

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| **7.3 The preferred and proposed placement option for each child, with a proportionality evaluation that is a comparison of that option again other realistic options*** **Analyse the likely impact on the child of the preferred option.**
 |
| ***Guidance:*** * *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.*

*It is helpful to explain why siblings will not be together, if that is the recommendation, and to reflect on the ‘cons’ of the placement even if it the best option.* * *An analysis of the likely impact of the preferred option on the child/ren should be included.*

*For example:*1. In reaching a recommendation as to the final living arrangements for the [child], the local authority is obliged to consider a range of realistic options before reaching a conclusion as to which option is in the best interests of the child’s welfare in the interim.
2. In formulating the proposals for placement I have considered the full range of the powers available to the court per section 1 (3) (g) of the Welfare Checklist of the Children Act 1989. In doing so I have considered the prognosis of each option meeting the needs of the child(ren), with reference to the potential positive or negative implications for the child. These include the likely effect on the child(ren)of any change in circumstances in accordance with the Welfare Checklist at S1 (3) c) of the Children Act 1989.
3. If care plan of adoption – must also refer to Welfare Checklist at s1 Adoption and Children Act 2002.
4. Whilst my statement sets out a number of strengths and weaknesses, it is not the case that each factor has the same weight as all of the others. The ultimate balancing of the strengths against the weaknesses is a qualitative one, not a quantitative one.
5. In reaching my conclusion as the best placement option for the child[ren] I have had in mind that [the child’s] welfare must be the paramount consideration
 |

**7.4 The Contact Plan**

***Guidance:*** *The contact plan must be kept under review as circumstances change.*

***Guidance****: It may be helpful to include a brief summary of the child’s needs in respect of contact here before completing the table below*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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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## **The range of views of parties and significant others**

***Guidance***: *Final position/s, where information has already been provided to the court in previous statements this can be summarised rather than repeating it in full here. Where these differ from earlier statements this should be recorded here too. Ensure the view of the CP Chair and/or IRO (where applicable) is included.*

### **8.1 Mother’s views**

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### **8.2 Father’s views**

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

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### **8.4 Views of other parties or significant others**

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| ***Guidance:*** 1. *Significant others may include the Cafcass guardian, CP chair, a health visitor, the IRO or court appointed experts.*
2. *Where possible a short statement or email from the IRO should be included here.*
3. *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.*
 |

## **Statement of procedural fairness**

Steps taken to ensure procedural fairness since the last statement was filed.

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| ***Guidance to be overwritten/deleted****:* * *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.*

*For example:*1. The parents have been made aware of the concerns of the authority in a number of different ways……

***Guidance:*** *State if parents have been invited to child protection meetings, whether they attended whether the minutes have been shared, and whether they have had access to legal advice/legally represented.* |

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

**Please update the table of contents & add updated chronology as Appendix ]**

## **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:

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| a) | The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child/children concerned (considered in the light of his/her/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 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; |
| 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):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 their life) 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**

## **11. The social work chronology (last two years incl updates during proceedings )**

* ***Guidance:*** *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*
* *Do not include legal advice [NB delete this guidance text before submitting].*
* *We want to avoid a long narrative section. Try to make this no more than one or two pages, and no more than about 10 things. What is wanted here is core incidents and developments that would need to be known if you had to describe the case in less than two minutes – so changes of placement, changes in the parents’ relationship, any incidents of abuse, any major changes in circumstances that the Judge really needs to be made aware of. An example of this is: “There were 8 further episodes of domestic abuse between May and September, see the LA Chronology for more detail”]. In the column headed “significance” explain briefly the significance of the event cited.*

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

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| ***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.*   |