

Chronologies

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1 What is a chronology?

1.1 A chronology is:

- a list in date order of **significant** events in a child or young person's life;
- a **concise** record of **fact**.

1.2 We have two chronologies in Stoke-on-Trent: a file chronology on Liquidlogic and a court chronology.

1.3 A chronology highlights the lived experiences of all the family members. Therefore, there should only be **one chronology for all the family in the home**. This should be on each individual child's file on Liquidlogic.

1.4 It is often seen that children in the same household have separate and different chronologies. Remember, even if an incident did not involve one of the children, it may still be likely to have an impact for others in the home.

For example, *'Tom is temporarily excluded from school for the third time. This means dad has to take time off work again to care for him and he does not get holiday pay, leaving less financial income. Dad is stressed, worried he may lose his job, concerned Tom may be permanently excluded and is struggling to feed Tom, his younger sister and pay bills.'* The exclusion may have only included Tom, but has a wider impact on his sister too.

2 Why do we need chronologies?

2.1 We need chronologies because they:

- Make key information easily accessible;
- Provide an overview and understanding of what is happening in the lives of a child or young person;
- Help to identify risks and the accumulative impact of any abuse or trauma;
- Allow us to better consider patterns within families;
- Help us to challenge and review our thinking, to make effective decisions;
- Are nationally recognised and required as good practice.

3 When do we do chronologies?

3.1 In line with Stoke Practice Standards, all allocated families must have a chronology. They should be started when a family is opened or re-opened and should be completed alongside the Child & Family assessment. An assessment is not complete without a chronology.

3.2 A chronology should be updated:

- as you progress an assessment and new significant information is established.
- when a significant event occurs.
- at least every three months.

TIP: Good practice is to pre-plan in your calendar to update and review your chronologies on a quarterly basis. If this time is specifically allocated in your diary, you are more likely to carry out the action.

4 How do we write our chronologies?

4.1 We have to write our chronologies in line with our definition of them, so each entry must be **significant** (in your judgement), **factual** and **concise** and comment on the impact for the child. We want our chronologies to be easy to write and, crucially, easy to read. They need to provide a brief overview, so we have to keep them short.

4.2 Chronologies need to be:

- in date order;
- concise;
- facts only; and
- updated regularly (minimum every 3 months).

4.3 It is crucial we keep our chronologies as concise as possible. If everything is recorded, the chronology loses its value. It is important chronologies do not become repeats of the file notes and so detailed that we cannot see the patterns.

4.4 Entries must be a short sentence or two and significant. You cannot argue that *'Phone call from mum'* is concise, but it tells us nothing about the significance of the call (if there is any). This only adds clutter to the chronology. However, *'Phone call from mum saying she was the victim of domestic abuse at the weekend by partner, whilst child was at grandparents. Police statement given.'* tells us something. Remember, the detail of the incident can be found in the file notes.

4.5 Of course, there may be times when 'missed appointments' or 'children not seen' takes on significance. A 'child not seen' because he/she is at an after-school club is understandable. However, if a pattern seems to be emerging that is harder to explain or understand, it will be worth recording these. Even so, rather than have numerous entries repeating the same information, it would be better to sequence these into shorter entries.

For example:

Event Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Document Ref
01 Jan – 31 Mar 2022	Crisis	Missing	25 incidents of Leo missing	N/A

4.6 So rather than this real example:

The situation of the children came before the court on 6 & 7 February 2023, when having heard representation on behalf of the parties and taking into account all the available information, the court made Care Orders in respect of both children. (42 words)

We could have said:

7 February 2023 – Court Orders made for both children. (6 words)

- 4.7 It is also crucial we only stick to the facts. There is no room for commentary, opinion or interpretation within the chronology. So rather than:

25 April 2023 – home visit, house untidy and children unkempt. Mum is clearly struggling to manage the morning routine.

We could have said:

25 April 2015 – home visit at 8.30am. Children not up or dressed and were late for school by 30 minutes. Mum could not find any clean uniform.

Facts laid out in a chronology will help us with our analysis of what is happening for the child, leading to greater decision making, so let's not clutter our thinking.

5 So what is 'significant'?

- 5.1 Below are examples of significant chronology entries, but this is not an exhaustive list. Therefore, additional significant entries will require you to use your social work judgement and knowledge of the child and family to ensure chronologies remain relevant and help any reader understand what is happening for the child.

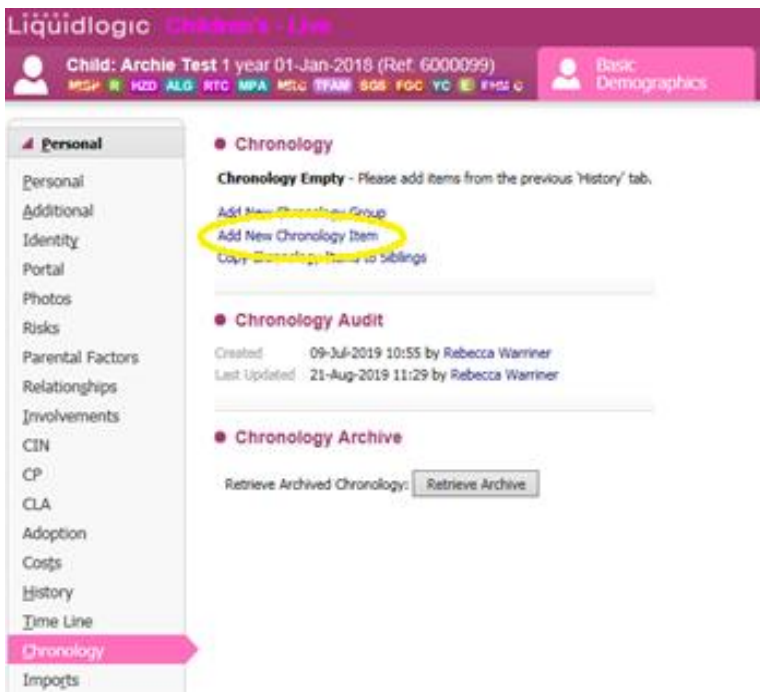
5.2

Life Events: DOB, marriages, divorce, new partners, separations, Non-accidental injury/significant injury/neglect events, attendance/admittance to hospital, births/deaths/serious illnesses of adults, children & young people in the family.	Crisis Incidents: attempted suicide of young person/family member, young person missing from home, any event in the child's life deemed to have a significant effect on them, unemployment.
Social Work Processes: contacts/referrals, assessments undertaken, strategy discussions, S47 investigations, CP conferences and significant meetings.	Support & Intervention: self-referrals/referrals to other agencies/teams, specific support offered to young person/family, events showing capacity of young person to work in partnership and engage with professionals, family time.
Changes: house moves, changes in family composition (new partners, separations, people moving into/out of the home), school changes and exclusions, changes of GP, separation from/change of main carer.	Legal: criminal proceedings and outcomes, civil proceedings involving family, court proceedings and legal status (including period where child becomes looked after), police incidents at home or in relation to family, drunken/anti-social behaviour of carers, custodial sentences, hospitalisation under the Mental Health Act.

- 5.3 It is vital you include not only the child's information but that of their parents and care-givers too. Often missed are DOB's of family members and when relationships began or ended. Including these in a chronology encourages you to ask questions and think about what may have happened since.
- 5.4 Always ensure you include the date of when the event happened, not when you obtained the information or when the referral was made.

6 How to complete a Liquidlogic Chronology

- 6.1 Below is a flow chart of how to create, add and delete items in a chronology and how to print a chronology on Liquidlogic (the entries are for visual purposes only and not examples to be replicated).

1	<p>From the child's main screen in Liquidlogic, click on 'Chronology' in the menu on the left.</p> <p>Then click 'Add New Chronology Item'.</p>
 <p>The screenshot shows the Liquidlogic Children's Live interface. On the left, a sidebar menu lists various options: Personal, Additional, Identity, Portal, Photos, Risks, Parental Factors, Relationships, Involvements, CIN, CP, CLA, Adoption, Costs, History, Time Line, Chronology (highlighted in pink), and Imports. The main content area displays the 'Chronology' section, which is currently empty. It includes a 'Chronology Empty' message, a 'Add New Chronology Group' button, and a 'Add New Chronology Item' button (highlighted with a yellow circle). Below these are sections for 'Chronology Audit' and 'Chronology Archive'.</p>	

2 This will open a box as in the image below, where you can input the details of your Chronology item. If you want to add this item to siblings tick the box at the right where their name is.

3 When you have completed this – click ‘Create’. To add further items, go back to ‘Add New Chronology Item’ and the chronology will begin to grow, as in the image below.

Chronology	Event Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Doc Ref
24-Jan-2018 Merge Down	24-Jan-2018	Significant Event	Domestic Violence	Police reported incident of domestic violence whereby Peter stated that Jane had a kitchen knife and was threatening to kill herself. No further action from the police.	
15-Feb-2018 Merge Down	15-Feb-2018	Significant Event	Referral to CSC	Referral from Hope's School stating that she has told staff that Peter has kicked Mum in the back and neck, and Mum can't walk. Mum seen and spoken to by School, no concerns were raised. No further action from Children's Social Care.	
27-Feb-2018 Merge Down	27-Feb-2018	Significant Event	Referral to CSC	Referral from Hope's school stating that Hope had told school that Dad (Peter) had got into bed with her sister, Belinda, and Belinda had been crying. Hope said that Dad was living back at home. Child and Family assessment required by Children's Social Care.	
05-Mar-2018	05-Mar-2018	Significant Event	CIN Plan	Family made subject to a Child in Need Plan due to concerns around domestic violence between Mum (Jane) and Dad/Step Dad (Peter).	

[Add New Chronology Group](#)

4 There are additional options highlighted below which allow you to ‘Print’ or ‘Export’ the chronology.

Chronology	Event Date	Category	Type	Event Details
24-Jan-2018 Merge Down	24-Jan-2018	Significant Event	Domestic Violence	Police reported incident of domestic violence whereby Peter stated that Jane had a kitchen knife was threatening to kill herself. No further action from the police.
15-Feb-2018 Merge Down	15-Feb-2018	Significant Event	Referral to CSC	Referral from Hope's School stating that she has told staff that Peter has kicked Mum in the back neck, and Mum can't walk. Mum seen and spoken to by School, no concerns were raised. No further action from Children's Social Care.
27-Feb-2018 Merge Down	27-Feb-2018	Significant Event	Referral to CSC	Referral from Hope's school stating that Hope had told school that Dad (Peter) had got into bed with her sister, Belinda, and Belinda had been crying. Hope said that Dad was living back at home. Child and Family assessment required by Children's Social Care.
05-Mar-2018	05-Mar-2018	Significant Event	CIN Plan	Family made subject to a Child in Need Plan due to concerns around domestic violence between Mum (Jane) and Dad/Step Dad (Peter).

[Add New Chronology Group](#)
[Add New Chronology Item](#)
[Copy Chronology Items to Siblings](#)
[Print Current Chronology](#)
[Export Chronology](#)
[Export Chronology Bundle](#)
[Delete Chronology](#)

5 You can also 'Copy Chronology items to siblings' (if this was not done this when creating the initial item). When you click this, it will give you the option of which siblings to copy to. Select the child you want to add to and click 'Next'. You then get the option to select which chronology items – either ALL or specific ones – then press 'Finish'.

Copy Chronology items

Previous Next Finish

● **Siblings**

☒ All

☒ Zcheck Zclient

● **Chronology Items**

☒ All

☒ 05-Mar-2018 - Family made subject to a Child in Need Plan due ...

☒ 04-Mar-2018 - Contact Type: Visit - Home, Reason for Contact: ...

☒ 27-Feb-2018 - Referral from Hope's school stating that Hope ha...

☒ 15-Feb-2018 - Referral from Hope's School stating that she has...

☒ 24-Jan-2018 - Police reported incident of domestic violence wh...

6 Another way to add items to your chronology is via the 'History' tab on the left. On the History tab, every event has a '+' button on the right. If you **DO NOT** want it in the chronology click the '+' to turn it to a '-'.

Case History - Newest events first

Newest Events First Configure View Create Chronology Add to Chronology

Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Actions
20-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Draft	LCS Contact Record, by Gareth Beckett	+
20-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Contact Recorded	Contacted by Unknown Person with contact method: Unknown	+
01-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Draft	Case Audit, by Gareth Beckett	+
15-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Step Up to Children's Social Care, by Rebecca Warriner	+
15-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	BHM Contact Record, by Rebecca Warriner	+
15-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	+
13-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Step Up to Children's Social Care, by Rebecca Warriner	+
13-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	BHM Contact Record, by Rebecca Warriner	+
13-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	+
13-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	+
08-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Cancellation	LCS Contact Record, by Rebecca Warriner	+
08-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Contact Recorded	Contacted by Unknown Person with contact method: OVIO	+
25-Jun-2019	General Events	Hazard Record	Hazard (Be Aware)	+
25-Jun-2019	Allegation	Allegation Record	Allegation (Sexual)	+
25-Jun-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Managing Allegations - Advice / Referral, by Gareth Beckett	+
11-Jun-2019	Relationships	New Relationship	New Relationship (Sister) Zcheck Zclient	+
10-Jun-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	+
10-Jun-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	BHM Contact Record, by Kelly Matthews	+
07-Jun-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Step Up to Children's Social Care, by Kelly Matthews	+

7 When you have selected the items you wish to add, click 'Add to Chronology' then 'OK'. They will then appear within the chronology where you can add additional text if required.

Personal • Case History - Newest events first

Newest Events First | Configure View | Create Chronology | **Add to Chronology**

[1] [2]

Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Action
20-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Draft	LCS Contact Record, by Gareth Beckett	
20-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Contact Recorded	Contacted by Unknown Person with contact method: Unknown	
01-Aug-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Draft	Case Audit, by Gareth Beckett	
15-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Step Up to Children's Social Care, by Rebecca Warriner	
15-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	EHM Contact Record, by Rebecca Warriner	
15-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	
13-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Step Up to Children's Social Care, by Rebecca Warriner	
13-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	EHM Contact Record, by Rebecca Warriner	
13-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	
13-Jul-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Transfer Received from Stoke EHM (Status: Completed)	
08-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Cancellation	LCS	
08-Jul-2019	Children's Social Care	Contact Recorded	Cont	
25-Jun-2019	General Events	Hazard Record	Hazz	
25-Jun-2019	Allegation	Allegation Record	Alleg	
25-Jun-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	Man	
11-Jun-2019	Relationships	New Relationship	New	
10-Jun-2019	Transfers (Step Up and Down)	Transfer Received (Step Up)	Tran	
10-Jun-2019	Children's Social Care	Form Completion	EHM	

Message from webpage
Are you sure you wish to add items to the Chronology from the history shown below?
OK **Cancel**

8 You can also add an item to the Chronology from a case note. Within the case note, ensure the option 'Add to Chronology' is ticked. When you finalise, this will automatically put the case note in the chronology (if siblings are added to the case note, it will also go onto their chronology).

Liquidlogic Children's - Live

Finalise | Save | Save and Close | Close - Update: Case Note for Test, Archie (1 year) and Zclient, Zcheck , on 04-Mar-2018

Update Case Note for Test, Archie (1 year) and Zclient, Zcheck , on 04-Mar-2018 12:09 , of type

• **Part 1 - Contact**

From Context Of: Test, Archie (1 year)

Contact Date: 04-Mar-2018

Time: 12:09

Type of Contact: Visit - Home

Follow-Up Date:

☒ **Significant Event**

☒ **Add to Chronology**

Contact Regarding:

Relation	Name	Age	At Contact	Interviewed?	Seen?	Also
Children / Young People involved in this Case Note						
Self	Archie Test	1 yr 7 mths	8 weeks 6 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sister	Zcheck Zclient	≈ 15 years	≈ 13 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adults also present / interviewed

9 To delete a line in the chronology, select the item you wish to remove. The select 'Remove from Chronology Group'

Update Chronology Item

Save | Cancel

• **Chronology Group Item**

Date of Event: 15-Feb-2018

Category: Significant Event

Type: Referral to CSC

Details: Referral from Hope's School stating that she has told staff that Peter has kicked Mum in the back and neck, and Mum can't walk. Mum seen and spoken to by School, no concerns were raised. No further action from Children's Social Care.

Document Ref:

Remove from Chronology Group

- 6.2 Within the Liquidlogic chronology there are five boxes provided for you to submit information to make up the full chronology entry, see below.

Event Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Document Ref

- 6.3 Detail within the 'Category' and 'Type' box is often missing from chronologies or practitioners create their own. To support with consistency of practice and filtering, please ensure you use the below. Again, this is not an exhaustive list but supports with predominant areas of social work practice.

CATEGORY	TYPE
SW Process	Referral, assessment, strategy meeting, S47, ICPC, RCPC. Other meetings that have significance.
Life Events	DOB/deaths, marriages/divorce, new partners, separations, hospital attendance/admissions.
Changes	House moves, school moves/exclusions, change in family composition, change of GP, separation from/change of main carer.
Legal	Criminal proceedings and outcome incl. custodial sentences, civil proceedings involving family, court proceedings and legal status, any police incidents, hospitalisation and detainment.
Support/Intervention	Referral/self-referral, specific support offered to family/child, events showing capacity of parent/child, family time.
Crisis	Attempted suicide/overdose/self-harm, missing episodes, unemployment, substance misuse, homelessness, any event deemed to have significant effect on child.

- 6.4 It is recognised that the final column 'Document Ref' may not always be applicable, see example below.

Event Date	Category	Type	Event Details	Document Ref
12/03/2020	Legal	Police incident	Mrs Smith reported that Mr Smith hit her over the head with a frying pan. Outcome: Mrs Smith made a statement and Jon Smith was arrested.	N/A
21/07/2020	SW Process	S47	Paul arrived at school with bruises to the face, which mum was unable to explain. Outcome: S47 concerns were substantiated and ICPC booked.	CP Medical Jubilee Hospital 210720

Although there may be documents associated with the police incident, this is likely to be on police systems. If you are provided with documents that support the chronology entry, ensure this is highlighted, as shown above in the S47 entry. All documents should be uploaded to the 'Document' section of Liquidlogic.

7 How do we complete a court chronology?

- 7.1 Principles of Liquidlogic file chronologies equally apply to court chronologies – concise and factual. An additional element to adhere to is keeping the chronology to two pages long (4 A4 sides), focusing on the most recent two years of the child's life. However, this does not exclude **important** and **relevant** information before that date.
- 7.2 If the history goes back longer, consider summarising what has happened (aim to keep this minimal) rather than individual dated entries. However, use your professional judgement and if you believe some historical detail would be usefully added to the chronology then add it. e.g. 2015-2017 Mrs Smith in 4 different relationships where there were patterns of domestic abuse. Children open on five child in need plans during this period.
- 7.3 You should always be mindful of what we are seeking the courts to do. So, a court chronology should contain the significant events that will inform your analysis and demonstrate to the courts, why a particular decision should be granted. Remember its purpose is to help us with the understanding of the present and what the future may hold.

TIP: Ask yourself: 'How is this information helping the court to understand our decision making and rationale?'

7.4 A court chronology has three key headings, an example is below.

Event Date	Event Details	Significance
11.08.2021	C&F Assessment identified parents are unable to meet the children's basic needs. Home conditions assessed as 'unsafe and significantly unclean'. Children move in with maternal grandmother. Child in Need (CIN) plan is recommended.	Potential evidence of neglect.
02.09.2021	Strategy meeting decides a Section 47 (child protection) enquiry	First initial CP conference for the children.
22.09.2021	Initial Child Protection Conference decides to make the children subject to Child Protection plans under the category of neglect.	Serious and shared concerns about neglect. First CP plan for the children.

7.5 It is important you are clear on the significance of the event, for the child. This can identify patterns of risk and future harm to assist the courts with decision making.

8 Manager's Mini-Guide to Chronologies

'Every child's file should include a properly maintained chronology'

Recommendation 58 - Victoria Climbié Inquiry

Make sure both you and your team know how to record a chronology

Please see the step by step guide (attached). If you are not familiar with it, then neither will your team be.

Make sure your team all know what a child's chronology is

It's a series of 'headlines' which record, in order, the significant events and changes in a child or young person's life. It gives an immediate, visual overview to assist in assessment and decision making.

And what it isn't. Everyday observations, an assessment, a running log, a daily diary, or a list of professional interventions.

Understand why we need to do a chronology

It is a quick, effective way to see what is happening in the life of a child or young person. It helps identify patterns and issues and helps to assess risks. It is also a tool that is useful to share with families.

Make sure they know what to include

They should only consider events that have a significant impact on the child. They need encouragement to use their professional judgement, as a guide, and their critical thinking.

Make use of chronologies in Reflective Supervision

Discussing the social workers understanding of the child's chronology and its content, will support the social worker to gain a greater understanding of what to propose moving forward. This will also give you an opportunity to challenge perspective and be a 'critical friend' to ensure the social worker's assessment is purposeful, anti-discriminatory and meets the needs to effectively safeguard and support the child.

Make sure chronologies are included in assessments

A Child and Family assessment is incomplete if it does not include a chronology. Principal Managers should be ensuring social workers begin a chronology from the moment they are allocated to a child and should be included as an action in your Management Oversight on allocation. This will improve the overall quality of the assessment.