

Quality Standards and Practice Guidance for writing a Chronology.

A chronology is a list of events, incidents and experiences that have taken place in a child's life presented in date order. Chronologies are an invaluable tool for practitioners which enable them to bring to life the family history. They also enable practitioners to see more easily repeated patterns of behaviour; identify potential unresolved trauma and present a vivid representation of the lived experience of the child.

A good chronology can also help to prevent drift by ensuring that energy is not put into repeating interventions that have not worked previously and that work is therefore targeted accurately to the areas of need for a family.

When a case is allocated to a worker for assessment or support that worker must first read the previous files and associated computer records to gain an understanding of the family and the history. **Take this opportunity to complete the chronology as you go.**

Every child's record must have an up to date chronology that is updated regularly. Why not add the events as they happen making sure you include the impact on the child, this will make it easier to keep on top of your chronology and will require less of a time commitment.

The chronology is also a useful tool when working directly with parents and some young people. It supports their understanding of why concerns have been expressed and also raises awareness of the repeated patterns that they have been experiencing with a view to supporting change.

The chronology should always begin at the time of the pregnancy of the parent's first child.

When completing an assessment of the family it is likely that the parents will also have experienced events in their childhood/life that has impacted on their parenting. Therefore the worker may also choose in exploring this history with a parent to compile a chronology of this too to support understanding, assessment and planning.

When used in supervision a chronology is a useful tool, supporting analysis and planning particularly in complex cases or in cases where the worker feels stuck.

Practice Guidance (this addresses each column of the chronology template)

Entries in chronologies should be brief, factual and accurate.

Chronologies should be in date order, earliest first.

Conference meetings, Strategy Meetings and any court hearings should be included.

Chronology column

Add the date to this heading or merge down when you have completed a months' worth of additions. See Liquidlogic guidance attached for more information.

Event Date

Date of the actual incident/event

Event Details

Deciding what is a significant event is a matter of professional judgement. The chronology needs to tell the story of a child's life, and significant events need to be identified in that context. What impact did that event have on this child?

Add the child's age as the first part of each details section added. ie **Age 5yrs**. This really brings home the significant and frequency of the incidents in such a young child's life. It also helps to inform your analysis of the likely risk to a child, impact on the person and on parenting both currently and in the future. In addition this knowledge enables the practitioner to target the appropriate support to allow the affected individuals to resolve the traumatic experience.

Action taken

This needs to record what action was taken in response to the significant event, by professionals working with the family. Was a key decision taken? Eg. Strategy meeting convened which lead to S47 enquiries, accommodation of child under a S.20 agreement or a referral to another service.

Source

This is where the information for this entry in the chronology came from.eg. Police Notification Log no..., CSC Family work session notes dated

Court Chronologies

Chronologies for the Family Court

Headings for chronologies to be presented in Court are as follows;
In Liquidlogic you will need to print a copy of the court chronology by exporting to print, adding the court front page detail and uploading your chronology into this pre-loaded template. Please see the diagram.

The local courts have decided that they do not want the court chronology to be more than three-four pages in length and going back no more than two years prior to the start of Proceedings. Use the Social Work Statement to cross-reference Children's services involvement. This will allow more flexibility for incorporating relevant historical information and more detail about a significant event or action taken, than the court chronology allows.

Other practice and recording issues

- The chronology should not be seen as a bureaucratic exercise but as a vital practice
- Tool to assist in reflection, analysis, planning, intervention and review of work with a family.
- The chronology should not be a repetition of case records, but brief points.
- Every child's record must have a chronology.
- When presenting a S47/Single Assessment report for an Initial Child Protection
- Conference, a standalone chronology should accompany the report.