

Local authority social work evidence template (SWET) – draft update for consultation, August 2020

In the family court sitting at
In the matter of the Children Act 1989

Use of this document is recommended by the President of the Family Division, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, Cafcass, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, the Department for Education, the Ministry of Justice and the Chair of the Family Justice Board, in compliance with the revised Public Law Outline (PLO) 2014. It is intended to summarise **not** duplicate other documentation contained within the court bundle and should be 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.

Local Authority and Social Worker details	
Case number	[]
Filed by [local authority]	[]
Social work statement number in the proceedings, e.g. 1 st , 2 nd (N.B. A final statement should be completed on the Final Statement Template)	[]
Social work statement number for this witness e.g. 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and date of statement	[]
This author/witness's name, qualifications and office address	[]
This author/witness's Social Work England registration number	[]

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

Signed

Date of completion or most recent update

The child(ren) – use one per template per family

Names	Gender	Date of Birth	Child's current placement status	Child's current legal status
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

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Overview of which court order or order/s are being sought, and why?

This section should contain a paragraph summarising the salient points of the case, it should not repeat in detail anything covered in subsequent sections of the SWET or other documents contained within the court bundle, please include references to sources of other information, such as the case summary, as required.

If an application for interim order(s) are being sought, please provide evidence of why this is being requested – why now?

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1. Case details

1.1 Family network composition

- This section should include family members and any other people they have significant relationships with, such as close family friends. Please specify the relationship in respect of each child subject to the application. Please set out the family members' full names, their dates of birth, their nationality, ethnicity and their current addresses.
 - Where an individual's address needs to be kept confidential, send the information directly to the court as well as Cafcass, do not record it here.

Has anyone listed, above, been identified as an alternative carer(s) for the child(ren)?

Has anyone listed, above, been mentioned as an alternative carer(s) for the child(s)? How and when they were identified e.g. put forward by a parent or identified by the social worker. Who does the child think is important to them?

2. Summary of the social work chronology

- Summarise significant events which can be evidenced here, drawing out patterns of behaviour alongside a brief synopsis of past incidents.
- Refer to the full chronology in **Appendix 1**, as required, to provide more detail plus context of significant incidents occurring further back in time.
- Focus on the precipitating factors and the timing of the application, why now?

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Date	Significant events happening in the near future which are relevant for the child (e.g. the transition from primary to secondary school)	Source of evidence/document reference	Significance

3. Child impact analysis (for each individual child)

3.1 Description of the child's day to day experiences during the period under consideration, what is it like for them now?

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- 3.2 Analysis of the child's needs, considering the welfare checklist (see Section 12). Specifically consider the interim position, harm and any changes proposed. Set out the steps taken to meet these needs e.g. any services provided and their outcomes (or their intended outcomes)**

3.3 The child's wishes and feelings and how these have been identified

This may include setting out what direct work has been completed with the child, who they enjoy spending time with, their view of the care plan and understanding of proceedings (where applicable).

3.4 The child's own statement (where applicable)

3.5 The child's participation in the court case.

Set out the appropriate level of involvement in the author's judgment, with reasons.

4. Social worker's welfare analysis

4.1 Analysis of risk and protective factors, key points before starting your analysis:

- The welfare checklist should be applied as appropriate throughout.
- Evidence can be primary (yours), or secondary (where you analyse what others say and think)

The social work analysis of the harm the child (or each child) has suffered and/or any risk of harm the child continues to face, including the analysis of the event/s that led to the application. Please identify protective factors here too.

4.2 Summary of work previously undertaken with children and the family e.g. convening a family group conference, or similar.

Date	Organisation	Description of assessment/intervention	Outcome and effectiveness
[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]

5. Analysis of the evidence of parenting capability

5.1 Analysis of each parent's capability to meet each child's needs, including relevant risk factors, protective factors, an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap and whether/how this can be bridged in the child's timescale. Include other members of the household/s where appropriate.

Please 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. Do not duplicate the information in section 3.2.

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Mother
Father
Other person with parental responsibility

If a parenting assessment has been completed, please either refer to this here or provide a link for the relevant documents in this space.

6. Analysis of the evidence of wider family and friends capability

6.1 Analysis of the evidence of wider family and friends capability to meet each child's needs, including analysis of the evidence of any capability gap and whether/how this can be bridged in the child's timescale.

Key considerations for a viability assessment

1. The genogram and ecomap should routinely identify those relatives who are already protective contacts for the child. Both the genogram and the ecomap should be comprehensive and inclusive.
2. Risky contacts should be excluded from consideration through a robust filtering process.
3. This *prima facie* viability – for being a permanent carer – should be extended by three further tests – before a full assessment is carried out in compliance with the specific set of current Regulations that apply to the proposed permanent placement.
4. The three additional viability tests are:
 - a) That the carer understands in broad terms the needs of the child subject to proceedings
 - b) That the carer understands the level and type of care the child will need throughout their childhood as a consequence of their experiences
 - c) That the carer expresses an authentic willingness to be part of the team around the child until matters are fully resolved.

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6.2. It may also be helpful to include the outcome of viability assessments here or details of when such assessments will take place if they have not already been undertaken as well as details of any attempts to seek out absent parents.

7. The proposed S31A care plan – the ‘realistic options’ analysis

7.1 List of options discounted as they were assessed to be unrealistic.

Discounted option	Reason why discounted

7.2 Table of realistic placement options

Add additional tables for each child in a sibling group. Only list realistic options, whatever the number ie, 1, 2, 3, etc. Whilst the care plan can be filed separately, the intention is for this template to be a single integrated document.

Realistic options

1. To be defined as realistic, the proposed placement at the heart of the court care plan must be assessed as sufficiently resilient and sustainable to justify the label of ‘permanent’. A robust filtering process is required to ensure each option assessed as realistic meets that standard.
2. In care proceedings, no arbitrary numerical limit can be placed on the number of realistic options available for the child, 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.

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3. Preferred status means that on the assessments and evidence available, the preferred placement should offer the child the prospect of recovering from any trauma she or he has experienced: personal growth and development within a family where the child is 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 the child's unique identity.
4. Determining the rank order between realistic options is a matter of professional judgment about the relative importance to the child of various attributes of the carers and/or the relationship between the carers and the child, or the carers, child and birth parent/s.

Child	First realistic option: [please describe option]	
	Factors in favour	Factors against
	Second realistic option: [please describe option]	
	Factors in favour	Factors against
	Third realistic option: [please describe option]	
	Factors in favour	Factors against

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
- Please specify here whether the proposal is for an interim or long-term placement.

7.4 The contact plan

The contact plan should seek to involve siblings and anyone else with whom the child has a significant relationship with, in line with the ecomap. It must be kept under review as circumstances change.

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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
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

7.5 Summary of arrangements for health care (including consent to examination and treatment and therapeutic care).

7.6 Summary of arrangements for education (including any pre-school and day care activity).

8. The range of views of parties and significant others

- Set out and analyse individual views about what should happen for the child/children in the future.
- This section also has a vital opinion-sharing purpose.

8.1 Mother's views

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8.2 Father's views

8.3 Views of wider family members

8.4 Views of other parties or significant others e.g. Cafcass, the relevant chair of child protection conferences, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), court appointed experts. Where possible a short statement or email from the IRO should be included here along with their contact details.

9. Case management issues and proposals

List any case management issues e.g. delay factors, special factors relevant for the child, vulnerability of any key participant, any further proposed assessments including why they are necessary, etc.

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10. Statement of procedural fairness

Have the contents of this statement been communicated to mother, father, significant others, and the child in a way which can be clearly understood? If not, what has been tried?

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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 his/her/their age and understanding);
- (b) His/her/their physical, emotional and educational needs;
- (c) The likely effect on him/her/them of any change in his/her/their circumstances
- (d) His/her/their age, sex, background and any characteristics of his/hers/theirs which the court considers relevant;
- (e) Any harm which he/she/they has/have suffered or is/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 his 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:
 - i) the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so,
 - ii) 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,
 - iii) the wishes and feelings of any of the child's relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child.

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Appendix

12. The full social work chronology

- List significant events which can be evidenced, it may also be helpful to include details of interventions and their successes, a description of the nature of the assessment and family engagement.
- 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.

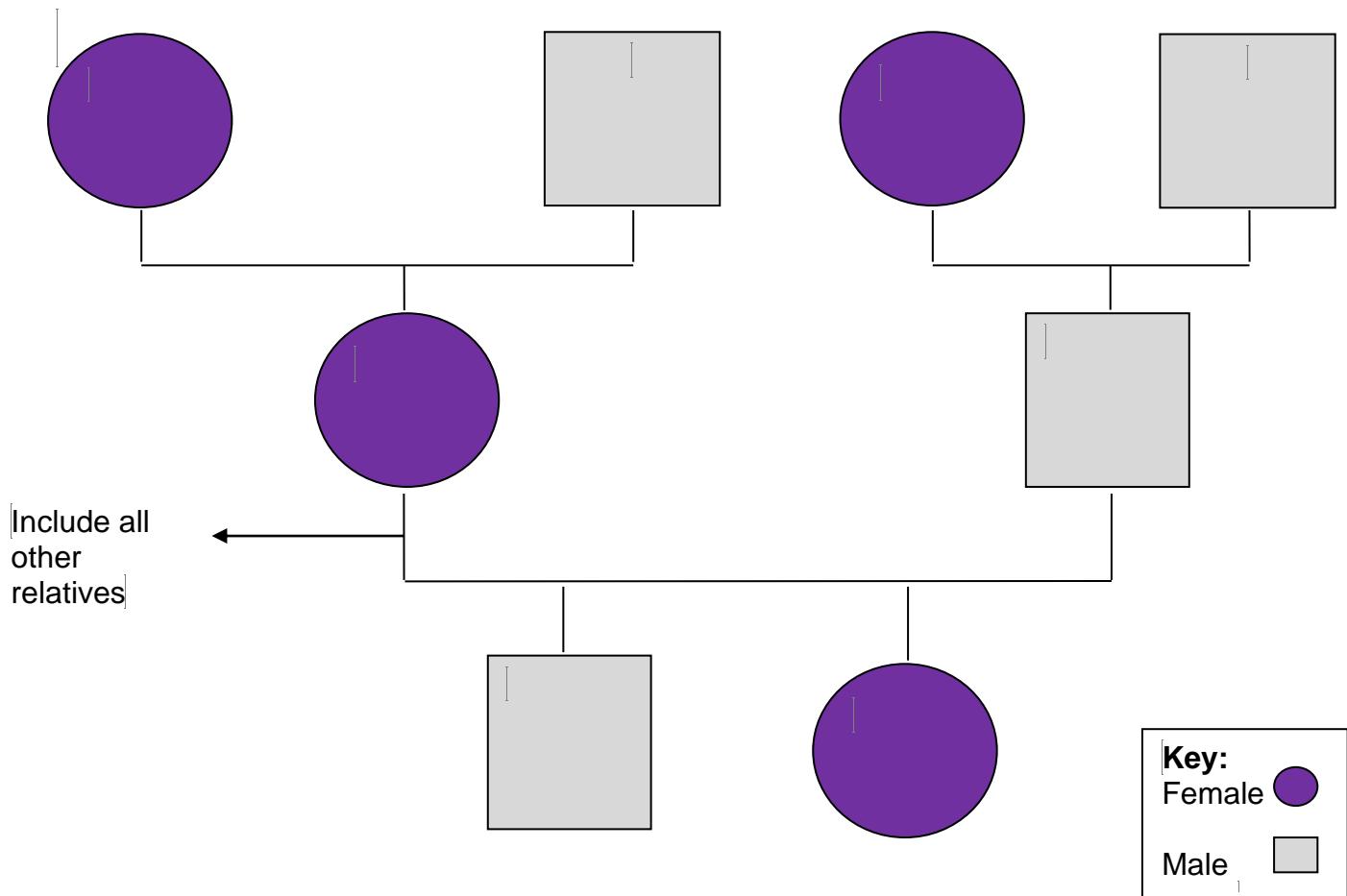
Date	Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child's welfare	Significance
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]

12.1. Historic incidents and events of relevance may be summarised here for context, including previous periods of Child in Need and Child Protection planning with category and/or any previous proceedings or proceedings with a connected person e.g. the parents may have had other half siblings placed in care.

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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)..



12.3. Ecomap (risky and protective contacts) (optional)

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