

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board



Single and Multi-Agency Chronology Practice Guidance

Guidance for Practitioners Completing Chronologies

Introduction

The purpose of this practice guidance is to provide practitioners with an overview of single and multi-agency chronologies and their use in the safeguarding of children and young people.

It is commonly acknowledged that children and young people are most effectively safeguarded if professionals work together and share information.

Findings from numerous Serious Case Reviews have concluded that a chronology could have supported the earlier identification of risks to the child(ren).

The Jay Report (2014) on child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, found “It is likely that the absence of structured chronologies contributed to key information being missed when decisions were made”.

Lord Laming stated in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié (2004), “I regard the inclusion in any case file of a clear, comprehensive and up-to-date chronology as absolutely essential”.

What is a chronology?

A chronology is a tool that practitioners from a range of disciplines can use to help them understand what is happening in the life of a child, adult or family. It gives a clear account of all the major changes and significant events in the lives of the child(ren) and family.

Chronologies can be compiled by a single agency or be multi-agency integrated, pulling together the knowledge of and information held by agencies involved with the child, adult or family.

A chronology should be started when an agency becomes involved with a child and family, and updated and maintained on an ongoing basis.

The purpose of a chronology

The purpose of a chronology is to record significant events and changes for a child. It is not a running record of everyday events and should not replace case notes or records which include more detailed and sensitive information.

Chronologies are essential to:

- Gain an overview of events and changes in the lives of the child(ren) and family
- Help practitioners understand the impact, immediate and cumulative, of events and changes on the child and family’s progress
- Provide accumulative evidence of emerging needs and risks and flag when a multi-agency response may be required

- Support the early identification of patterns and issues. This supports, and is part of, assessing and managing risk, and is particularly useful in cases where there may be no single incident, i.e. in neglect.
- Support assessment in considering past events and their relevance to the child and family's current situation. To assist in the process of assessment, analysis, planning and review when working with a child, young person and family
- Strengthen working with children and their families and help a child and family make sense of their life

What is recorded in a chronology?

The chronology provides a brief, factual record of significant events in sequential date order, and may include;

- ✓ Significant changes in the family structure, e.g. separation, divorce, bereavement, birth of a new sibling, new partner, presence of a significant adult, housing/home environment, unemployment
- ✓ Factual information and events including missed/not brought appts, when a child starts or moves school, missing school, exclusions, offending behaviour, changes in peer relationships, running away/missing from home
- ✓ Significant changes in the child or young person's wellbeing
- ✓ Significant changes in the parent or carers wellbeing which impact on the child

Key factors for an effective chronology

Accurate - The chronology must be based on up-to-date and accurate case recording. Any inaccuracies or deficiencies will impact on the quality of the chronology and limit its usefulness.

Up to date - Chronologies should reflect the best knowledge about a child or adult's history at a point in time. It will need to be amended and updated in light of any new information.

Detail - The chronology should contain sufficient detail but not substitute for case recording, see example single and multi-agency chronologies attached at Appendix A and B. Reports differ in that they provide an update and analysis of an agencies involvement and observations over the 6-week period in between meetings but may not demonstrate patterns and/or the frequency of events.

Involving the child and family - Involving the family in the chronology promotes and strengthens family participation, develops an understanding of family members perspectives on events and their impact on individuals, and helps to identify progress or lack of progress.

Multi-Agency Chronologies

One of the actions from the Serious Case Review on [Child Q](#) was the development of multi-agency chronologies to ensure all agencies are aware of key issues and

events for children, and that we are working from one summary chronology in complex cases.

A multi-agency chronology brings together chronologies created by different agencies and presents them coherently, giving a clear account of significant events in the lives of the child(ren) and family. This gives a deeper understanding of the lived experience of the child(ren), the impact of key events and frequency of professional contact, e.g. a single incident may take on a far greater importance in the life of a child when placed in the context of a clear, time lined integrated chronology.

The multi-agency chronology should be regularly reviewed, analysed and updated. If a multi-agency chronology is to be compiled it is good practice to obtain consent from family members before contacting agencies for information. For guidance on information sharing refer to your agency's information sharing policy and [the 7 Golden Rules for Information Sharing](#).

Multi-Agency Chronology (MAC)- frequently asked questions

- **Who should complete and submit a chronology?**

All agencies involved in the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC), Core Group (CG) and Review meetings must complete and submit a chronology.

The Chair of the conference will explain roles and expectations in relation to developing and keeping an up to date multi-agency chronology at the start of the meeting.

- **What difference does the MAC make?**

The MAC assists with assessment and analysis of risk, need and patterns within families, e.g. child repeatedly not brought for appointments, patterns of non-attendance at school, neighbourhood disputes. It enables the Core Group to identify key issues and develop effective plans and interventions.

The MAC can also highlight family strengths, successful interventions and the impact of positive change.

- **Where can I find a copy of the multi-agency chronology template?**

The administrator will send a copy of the template to all participating agencies following the ICPC.

A copy of the template is available in the [Multi-Agency Toolkit](#) on Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board website.

- **When should a chronology be completed and submitted?**

Agencies should submit their completed chronology by secure email to the allocated social worker, one week prior to the core group meeting.

- **Can I submit a chronology on our own template?**

Agencies wishing to submit their own template should discuss this with the Social Worker at the Core Group to ensure their template is fit for purpose.

- **How can this be sent securely?**

Organisations with email services connected to the Public Services Network(PSN) must use PSN to email their chronology securely. Agencies not on PSN, must send their chronology securely via Egress Switch. If you do not have an Egress account you can sign up for a free user account [here](#)

Make sure that you are clear who to send it to and mark it as 'Official Sensitive' for the attention of that person in the email header.

- **Who is it shared with?**

The multi-agency chronology will be shared with all core group members, parents/carers, the social care manager and ICPC chair.



7 Step Process Multi-Agency Chronologies(MAC) in Child Protection and Safeguarding

7. At the Child Protection Review Conference

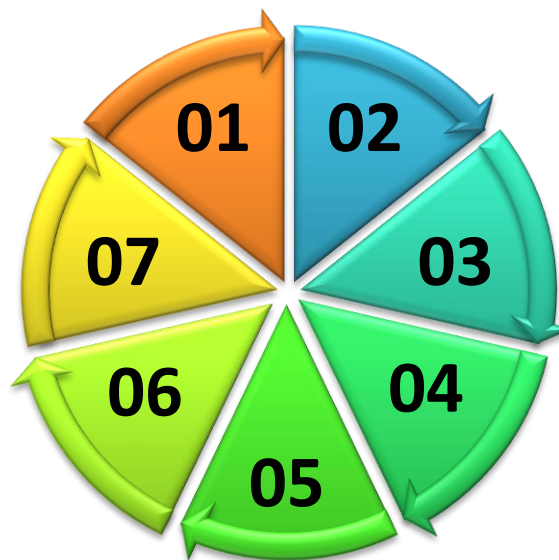
The MAC will be presented as a separate document and will serve to inform decision-making at any given point in the child protection process.

6. At Core Group

The Core Group will use the MAC as a tool in assessing progress and the level of concern regarding significant harm. The MAC will be updated, prior to or at each Core Group meeting.

1. At the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

The Chair of the ICPC, will explain that all participating agencies are required to complete a chronology. See Appendix A for example chronology (fictional family).



5. Involving the family in the MAC

The Allocated Social Worker will share the MAC with the family to check the accuracy of information, obtain their perspective on events and develop understanding of their impact on the family.

2. Following the ICPC

The Case Conference Administrator (CCA) will send the MAC template to the team holding the case, relevant Senior Admin Officer (SAO) and all agencies (including those invited but unable to attend), within 24 hours of the conference. The MAC will then be discussed at the initial core group.

3. Prior to the 2nd Core Group Meeting

All participating agencies will complete their chronology and send it by secure email to the Allocated Social Worker, 10 working days prior to the 2nd Core Group Meeting.

4. Collating the MAC

The Admin Officer will collate the content from the chronologies into one summary MAC and email it to the allocated Social Worker, 5 working days prior to the Core Group (see Appendix B). Following review and initial analysis, the Social Worker will approve the MAC.

Appendix A: EXAMPLE FOR INFO ONLY

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

To be returned to the Allocated Social Worker 10 working days before the scheduled Core Group meeting.

EXAMPLE SINGLE AGENCY CHRONOLOGY

PURPOSE: TO RECORD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

This is to cover the **previous 6 weeks** (or as directed by chair of core group / lead practitioner).

Date completed: 20.10.17

Name of practitioner	Role	Organisation
XXXXX	SENCO	St Luke's School

Name of child/family Child A (5) Child B (14) Adult A (46) step father to Child B and father of Child A Adult B (30) Mother of both children CP plan – neglect (3 months)
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Brief summary of agency role Child A attends St Luke's School
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Chronology of service involvement over the past 6 weeks	
Date	Include: Contact with family/children, actions completed / not completed
2.10.17 - 4.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collected on time.
5.10.17 & 6.10.17	SENCO Child A did not attend school – no explanation given
9.10.17 – 11.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collected on time.
12.10.17	SENCO Child A late for school – Mother said A refused to get out of bed. A appeared tired whilst in nursery.
13.10.17	SENCO Child A did not attend school – no explanation given
16.10.17 – 19.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collected on time.
19.10.17 & 20.10.17	SENCO Child A did not attend school – no explanation given
23.10.17- 27.10.17	October break

Appendix B EXAMPLE FOR INFO ONLY

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

EXAMPLE MULTI-AGENCY CHRONOLOGY

PURPOSE: TO RECORD SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FROM EACH AGENCY

This is to cover the **previous 6 weeks** (or as directed by chair of core group / lead practitioner).

Date completed: 15.10.17

Name of practitioner	Role	Organisation
XXXX	Social Worker, FSS	Oxfordshire County Council

Name of child/family Child A (5) Child B (14) Adult A (46) step father to Child B and father of Child A Adult B (30) Mother of both children CP plan – neglect (3 months)
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Brief summary of agency role Allocated social worker and Chair of Core Group.
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Chronology of service involvement over the past 6 weeks	
Date	Include: Contact with family/children actions completed / not completed
1.10.17 2.30pm	REOC outreach visit (purpose to develop routines for Child A and modelling approached to managing adolescent parenting techniques) – all members of family were in for visit as agreed, agreed morning routine for Child A with Adult A for following week (wake up time, getting dressed, breakfast, walk to school). Shared Take 3 materials for next week session
2.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collect on time.
3.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collect on time.
3.10.17	TURNING POINT – Adult B missed session – called to rearrange appointment for 6th – no test conducted
4.10.17 4.30	SW Statutory CP Visit – Child A's room seen – clean sheets on bed, clean clothes apparent, clean floor area and discussion with Mary re missed appointment – Adult B stated that she had a headache and felt to unwell to travel to appointment. Adult B pleased with progress with school routine and room maintenance for Child A

	Child B and Adult A not at home for visit Unable to progress Graded Care Profile – noted for next visit
4.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collect on time.
5.10.17	SENCO Child A did not attend school – no explanation given
5.10.17	TURNING POINT – Adult B missed session – called to rearrange appointment for 6th – no test conducted
5.10.17	Misper report – Adult A reports that Child B has not returned home at agreed time and associating with older males with CDE links. Police return Child B at 2am located at local park
6.10.17	Misper interview conducted – Child B comments that he lost track of time and that he is not involved in any criminal activity but wants contact with his father.
6.10.17	SENCO Child A did not attend school – no explanation given
9.10.17	Secondary School -Child B's attendance is at 78% previous term 89% and EHCP has begun.
9.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collected on time.
10.10.17	Early Help – Adult A attended evening Take 3 session (session 7) without Adult B due to childcare. Session focus on adolescent brain – Adult B participated actively and gave an example where he chose not to react when Child B was swearing at him.
10.10.17	SENCO Child A in school on time and collected on time.

Core outcomes of the CP plan:

(To be added by SW or CCA in order to measure the below information in terms of outcomes)

Summary of review period – strengths/concerns:

- Adult B missed Turning Point appointment on two occasions – therefore no accurate indication of use, no observation of Adult B to be under the influence
- Child A's school attendance and routine improved – noted 2 days absence – room being kept to standard
- Child B attendance has declined – more detail required around days
- Attendance at Parenting group and REOC outreach sessions positive – Adult B noted to be absent (despite MGM agreeing to do childcare)
- Misper report for Child B revealed previously unknown CDE connection
- Graded Care Profile not yet progressed

For use within core group meetings / professional meetings.