

Local authority social work evidence template (Final statement)

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 and the Ministry of Justice, in compliance with the revised Public Law Outline (PLO) 2014.

The child(ren)

- Use one template per family, not one for each child.

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

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 , 3 rd	[]
Social work statement number for this witness e.g. 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd	[]
This author/witness’s name, qualifications, experience, and office address	[]
This author/witness’s HCPC registration number	[]

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1. Case details

Include any updates.

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2. The social work chronology

Update since the last statement/chronology was filed.

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3. Analysis of risk and protective factors

Final position where different from earlier statements in the case.

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4. Child impact analysis

Set out any additional evidence and analysis.

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5. Analysis of Parenting Capacity

Set out any additional evidence and analysis.

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6. Analysis of wider family and friends capacity

Set out any additional evidence and analysis.

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

.1 List of options discounted as they were assessed to be unrealistic. This may include options that were considered realistic in the initial SWET but have since been discounted following further assessment.

Discounted option	Reason why discounted

7.2 Table of realistic final placement options

Add additional tables for each child in a sibling group. Only list realistic options, whatever the number ie, 1, 2, 3, etc. This section is distinct from the Care Plan which still needs to be filed as a separate document.

Realistic options

1. To be defined as realistic in the long term, the proposed placement must be assessed as high quality, defined by a strong child focus, resilience and sustainability over lifetimes, because the responsibility to place a looked after child on a permanent basis is one of the most serious decisions the State takes, which cannot be compromised upon. The child deserves no less. A robust filtering is required to ensure each option judged as realistic will ensure the child’s future health, development and well-being.
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. Clear reasons must always be given for this preferred status in the body of the Social Work Evidence Statement.
3. Preferred status means that on the assessments and evidence available, the preferred placement will give the child in question the best life chances in terms of recovery 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 safely predicted – one or more positive lifelong attachment/s as a source of continuous strength for the child.

4. Determining the ranking 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 chemistry 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 brief welfare analysis of why, including a brief comparison of that option against the other/s.
- Analyse the support available for each realistic option.
- Analyse the likely impact on the child of the preferred option.

8. The range of views of parties and significant others

Final position/s where different from earlier statements in the case.

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9. Statement of procedural fairness

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

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This document is confidential and contains sensitive information. It should not be disclosed without permission of the court. Data protection standards must always be complied with.

10. Signature

Print full name

Role/position held

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

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.