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| **Local authority social work evidence template****(SWET)** |  | 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.

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

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| **Names**  | **Gender** | **Date of Birth** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current legal status** |
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| **Local Authority and Social Worker details** |
| Case number |  |
| Filed by [local authority] |  |
| Social work statement number in the proceedings, e.g. 1st, 2ndN.B. A final statement should be completed on the Final Statement Template (FST) |  |
| Social work statement number for this witness e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd |  |
| This author/witness’s name, qualifications, experience, and office address |  |
| This author/witness’s HCPC registration number |  |

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| **Set out which court order or order/s are being sought, and why?** |
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| **1. Case details** |
| **1.1 Family composition*** This section should include family members and relationships, and should 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 address needs to be kept confidential, send the information to the court.
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| **Name** | **Relationship** | **Parental Responsibility** | **DOB** | **Nationality** | **Ethnicity** | **Address** |
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**1.2 Genogram (mandatory)**

* Include family members and their relationship to each child.

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

**1.3 Ecomap (risky and protective contacts) (optional)**

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| **2. Identified Patterns of Harm & Timetable for the child** |
| * List patterns within the family that you have identified as significant.
* Focus on the last two years unless prior events are significant.
* Unusual or exceptional events should be identified regardless of whether they form a pattern of behaviour as they may indicate a severe need.
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| **Pattern of Harm** | **Significance / Impact** | **Relevant chronology entries** |
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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** |
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| **3. 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)
* If the safety concerns for the child require immediate separation from their carer then this should be set out, including the harm that you believe the child would likely suffer during proceedings.

**3.1 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. Protective factors should also be identified.** |
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| **3.2 List of previous assessments and interventions** |
| **Organisation** | **Description of assessment/intervention** | **Date** | **Outcome and effectiveness** |
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| **4. Child impact analysis (for each individual child)** |
| **4.1 Description of the child’s daily life and experience during the period under consideration.** |
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| **4.2 Analysis of the child’s needs, considering the welfare checklist (see Section 12). Set out the steps taken to meet these needs e.g., any services provided and their outcomes (or their intended outcomes)**  |
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| **4.3 The child’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified** |
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| **4.4 The child’s own statement (where applicable)** |
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| **4.5 The child’s participation in the court case.*** Set out the appropriate level of involvement in the author’s judgment, with reasons.
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| **5. Analysis of the evidence of Parenting Capability** |
| **5.1** **Analysis of each parent’s 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. Include unrelated members of the household/s where relevant.**  |
| Mother |
| Father |
| Other person with parental responsibility |

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| **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:
5. That the carer understands in broad terms the needs of the child subject to proceedings
6. That the carer understands the level and type of care the child will need throughout their childhood as a consequence of their experiences
7. 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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| **7. The proposed S31A care plan – the ‘realistic options’ analysis** |

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

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| **Discounted option** | **Reason why discounted** |
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**7.2 Table of realistic placement options (Please specify whether these are interim or final care proposals)**

**Add additional tables for each child in a sibling group. Only list realistic options, whatever the number ie, 1, 2, 3, etc. Whilst the LAC 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.
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.

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| **Child** | **First realistic option: [please describe option]**  |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
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| **Available Support** |
|  | **Second realistic option: [please describe option]** |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
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| **Available Support** |
|  | **Third realistic option: [please describe option]** |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
|  |  |
| **Available Support** |

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| **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 whether this is a preferred interim or final care proposal.**
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**7.4 The Contact Plan**

**The contact plan 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** |
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| **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** |
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| **8.3 Views of wider family members** |
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| **8.4 Views of other parties or significant others e.g. Cafcass, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), court appointed experts** |
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| **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. Signature** |  |
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| Print full name |  |
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| Role/position held |  |
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|  | **I make this statement from my reading of the Children and Young People’s Services records and from my own personal knowledge. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.** |
| Signed |  |
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| Date |  |  |

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| **12. 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:

1. The ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child/children concerned (considered in the light of his/her/their age and understanding);
2. His/her/their physical, emotional and educational needs;
3. The likely effect on him/her/them of any change in his/her/their circumstances
4. His/her/their age, sex, background and any characteristics of his/hers/theirs which the court considers relevant;
5. Any harm which he/she/they has/have suffered or is/are at risk of suffering;
6. 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;
7. The range of powers available to the court under this Act (Children Act 1989) in the proceedings in question.

No Order

Supervision Order

Care Order

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):

1. the child’s ascertainable wishes and feelings regarding the decision (considered in the light of the child’s age and understanding),
2. the child’s particular needs,
3. 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,
4. the child’s age, sex, background and any of the child’s characteristics which the court or agency considers relevant,
5. any harm (within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 (c. 41)) which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering,
6. 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:
7. the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so,
8. 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,
9. the wishes and feelings of any of the child’s relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child.