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| **Local authority social work evidence template (SWET),**  **Incorporating final 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 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, 2nd  N.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?** |
| *This is our chance to make it clear to the Court that we are seeking final orders, perhaps as a result of work being done in pre proceedings or otherwise and having all the evidence available to Court in order for it to make final decisions.*  *Summarise the reasons the Local Authority seek the Order sought concisely and clearly.*  *All adults (family and professionals) are referred to as Mr, Mrs or Ms throughout the document and ensure that their professional job title is clearly identified.*  *The child(ren) are referred to as their full name initially, then the first name thereafter (throughout the document). Set out clearly the orders you are seeking for each child* |
| **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.   *This section should detail the child(ren) subject of this SWET and all known immediate and extended family members, primary caregivers and significant others (children and adults).*  *The individuals relationship to the child(ren) subject to this statement should also be specified, as well as the individuals date of birth, address, nationality and ethnicity for each child e.g. Father of Jack.*  *No box should be left blank. Please delete unused lines. A consistent format should be used throughout.*  *Addresses which need to remain confidential need to be marked as such. If unknown this should be made clear.* | |

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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.

*The Genogram needs to fully reflect the family composition detailed within section 1.1. The Genogram needs to clearly identify who each family member is, eg- Maternal Grandmother, Mrs Smith/Paternal Cousin, Joe Bloggs, Age 5.*

*The ages (not dates of birth) of all individuals less than 18 years of age need to be included.*

*The subject child(ren) should also be detailed within the genogram, including any adopted, deceased or living elsewhere.*

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

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

*The Ecomap needs to reflect all personal and professional relationships with the child(ren), clearly outlining the child(ren)’s network (daily lived experience) as a whole.*

*Protective, risky, active and inactive relationships should all be detailed as correct at the point of application.*

*If relevant, within Final Evidence Social Worker Evidence Template, the Ecomap should detail Foster Carers.*

*If this is not present please delete this section*

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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. |

*As the Applicant we need to demonstrate to the Court the patterns of behaviour which are causing us concern and prove to the Court that these behaviours are taking place.*

*It will not be possible to prove every instance of the behaviours that we are concerned about, however, sufficient examples should be provided to support our level of concern.*

*Patterns of harm may be things like domestic violence, substance misuse, neglect, high critical, low warmth parenting or misleading professionals. These patterns should be restricted to those issues which are important to your analysis.*

*The significance of impact of the pattern of behaviour should be a succinct statement of the impact as further details can be provided in the later analysis section.*

*The court will expect to see a variety of sources within the chronology entries cited and it must be child specific.*

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| **Pattern of Harm** | **Significance / Impact** | **Relevant chronology entries** |
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***Timetable:*** *This section clearly reflects the social workers consideration of the impact on each individual child in relation to social work/court decision making, for example- timescales of court time tabling, potential delay caused by further assessment, expert evidence, and/or adjournment.*

*It is relevant here to mention where the case has been in pre proceedings and the work undertaken during those pre proceedings to ensure speedy decisions are possible and to prevent delay within the court arena.*

*It may help to demonstrate the pros and cons if you are aware the issue is likely to be contested. The test is that the intervention and therefore the delay should be necessary for the child, not just that one party would ‘like it’ undertaken.*

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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.** |
| *This section fully reflects clear, concise social work analysis of the significant harm the Local Authority believes the child(ren)* ***has*** *suffered or is* ***likely*** *to suffer, and why the child(ren) is/are at a continuing high level of risk.* ***Provide clear concrete examples of the type of harm****.*  *Examples of harm may be contained within the child’s behaviour, e.g. withdrawn, anxious, frozen or fearful behaviours, or violent or aggressive. Comment on attachment. You may wish to set out how the behaviour differs from what you would expect of a child this age.*  *This outlines Social Work reflection, professional judgement and evidenced based analysis as to why the harm has happened. This analysis results from asking yourself “so what?” from the patterns that have been identified within the family.*  ***In the event you are seeking interim removal of the child you will need to be clear about the harm you are saying will occur before the final hearing.***  *You will need to have explicitly considered the welfare checklist and make reference to any relevant factors. Care should be taken to avoid repetition of information contained in box 4.2 below and S2 above.*  *All current and historical risks are identified and set against any current protective factors referenced within the Ecomap.*  *This section identifies that not everything needs to change, though what does need to change to reduce the risk of harm.*  *Aspects of continuing risk of harm for the child(ren) is clearly detailed with reference to the chronology.* |

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| **3.2 List of previous assessments and interventions**  *This section clearly outlines all relevant previous assessments and interventions the Local Authority has completed/commissioned, when these assessments took place and the outcome/findings/effectiveness of these assessments. This section also details what action the Local Authority took as a result of assessment findings. Include here work/assessments undertaken in pre proceedings.*  *Whilst noting any positive outcomes however short, this section needs to demonstrate why the application is being made now as a last resort.*  *This section should include any assessments undertaken by core group professionals.* | | | |
| **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.** |
| *This section is your opportunity to explain to the Court the impact of how the child has experienced their care and what you believe the child is likely to have been experiencing. This is your opportunity to bring the child to life.*  *The individual impact upon the child(ren) is clearly reflected. Sibling group differential impact is analysed.*  *Any factors supporting the child(ren)’s resilience in the face of what has happened/is happening is drawn upon.* |
| **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)** |
| *This section demonstrates a good understanding of the child(ren)s needs and the length of time the child(ren) have been in this situation experiencing harm; the long term implications should also be detailed.*  *Each child is different and their experiences will be individual so a good piece of work will reflect this in the narrative.*  *The individual impact upon the child(ren) is clearly reflected within analysis form, making reference to analysis of each child’s daily lived experience and the impact of this upon them. Sibling group differential impact is appropriately referred to in analysis form.*  *The child(ren)’s individual needs are clearly identified and analysed in line with the Common Assessment Framework and Welfare Checklist. The headings of the Welfare Checklist should be used within this section of the SWET.*  *Set out any services provided to meet these needs.* |
| **4.3 The child’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified** |
| *The child(ren)’s wishes and feelings are clearly and adequately detailed. It is clear how these wishes and feelings have been obtained.*  *There is evidence that every effort was made to engage the child(ren) using age appropriate tools, e.g those on the Cafcass website.*  *Where the Statement is in respect of a baby, very young child or unable to share their views, the Social Worker has commented on the child(ren)’s presentation and what could be assumed about what the child(ren) would want i.e. to be brought up within their own family in an environment that anticipates and meets all their needs, keeps them safe from harm and so on; this should not be a set phrase in every statement.*  *Social Workers need to be mindful of those children who do not have speech and what method of communication is used.* |
| **4.4 The child’s own statement (where applicable)** |
| *This can be a direct quote given in italics from what the child has said either to the Social Worker or other key figure, a piece of writing the child has completed themselves and attached as an appendix or the inclusion of direct* |
| **4.5 The child’s participation in the court case.**   * Set out the appropriate level of involvement in the author’s judgment, with reasons. |
| *If the child has/children have capacity to write a letter to the Judge the Social Worker should record that the child(ren) have been supported to do this. Format available on the cafcass website.*  *If unable to write, or if the child(ren) would prefer, the child(ren) have been supported to draw a picture to the Judge or have their statement scribed by a suitable person.*  *The Social Worker should record that, where a child(ren) is 10 years of age or older, the child(ren) are aware the Judge is happy to meet the child(ren) should they want to* |

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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.**  *This section addresses the fundamental question through analysis; Could this parent provide the child(ren) with a good enough standard of care for the rest of their childhood.*  *The social work analysis should evidence a focus upon each parent’s current parenting capability and any capability gaps to meet each child(s) individual needs. Where gaps in the child’s needs and the parents’ capability to meet those needs are identified, this section must explore the capability of parents to make adequate and meaningful change, how long this would take and also parental likelihood to sustain this possible change for the rest of each child’s childhood. Also whether there is any support structures which may assist, or an explanation as to why those supports would not work.*  *The Social Worker has based their analysis on the Assessment Framework (triangle) and Welfare Checklist. It is perhaps more likely that such an assessment will be contained in an accompanying document, or that the concerns have been the subject of further examination in a separate assessment. If an assessment has already been completed you should only provide a brief summary limited to a few paragraphs.*  *This is an area where reference to research can be useful:-* [*www.rip.co.uk*](http://www.rip.co.uk)  *A good analysis will identify patterns and behaviours within the family and identify causes and triggers for those patterns (i.e. explaining why these patterns are occurring?* |
| 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. |
| *The social worker has evidenced understanding of Re BS .*  ***This section is a summary of any positive viability assessments (negative assessments in S7 below)***  *This addresses the fundamental question through analysis, could this wider family member/friend/connected person/s provide the child(ren) with a good enough standard of care for the rest of their childhood. If there is a positive SGO assessment refer to it.*  *The social work analysis is focused upon each wider family member/friend/connected person/s capability and capability gaps to meet each child(s) individual needs in the longer term.*  *All potential impacting factors are considered, for example the impact of parents on the potential placement, risk of collusion, ability to safeguard during contacts, attitude towards the expectation of supervising longer term contacts, whether additional resources or support would be needed to make the placement work for the child.* |

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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.**

*This section is distinct to the Care Plan which still needs to be filed as a separate document.*

*Discounted care options should be listed here and this includes family and friends carers. It may include parents and use of professional judgment is required as to whether a parent should be included as a realistic option.*

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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.**

*A separate table of realistic placement options* ***has*** *been added to the statement for each sibling.*

*The Social Worker has clearly detailed how the Local Authority proposes the child(ren) can each be given the security, stability and care they require for the rest of their childhoods.*

*Only realistic placement options are listed. Parents should not be included as a realistic placement option(s) if they are not a realistic option, as this will have been covered already in section 5.1 (Analysis of each parents capability to meet each child’s needs) and then in the concluding analysis about the preferred option in 7.3.*

*‘In favour’ and ‘against’ factors detailed within each table are clear, and all factors ‘in favour’ and ‘against’ are detailed in full to justify the proposed plan competently.*

*This should not be cut and pasted between the children but clearly detailed to the children as individuals..*

**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** |
|  |  |
| **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.** |
| *This section clearly details the Local Authority’s preferred and proposed placement option for each individual child and how this decision has been reached.*  *It is clear that the Social Worker has fully considered Re BS case law.*  *The rationale is clearly reflected within this section in relation to how the Local Authority reached the decision of the proposed placement option for each child.*  *The Social Worker has clearly detailed how the Local Authority proposes the child(ren) can each be given the security, stability and care they require for the rest of their childhoods.*  *If applicable, the Social Worker has made reference to the proposed LA Care Plan being filed as a separate document as per the guidance* |

**7.4 The Contact Plan**

*The Proposed Contact Plan is solely designed to meet the needs of each individual child, not the adults involved. School times and out of school activities should be considered.*

*For each person having contact the significance for the child must be clear and to value to the child.*

*The rationale for the venue, frequency and length of contact sessions is appropriate and in the best interest of each child.*

*Contact levels should reflect quality not quantity.*

*The level of support/supervision proposed during contact sessions is clear and robust enough to ensure the child(ren)’s holistic needs are met during these times. These considerations are not restricted to the risk of harm but could also be the risk of destabilising the placement.*

**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** |
| *The Social Worker has provided a clear, thorough account of Mother’s views and response to the Local Authority’s core concerns, evidence and care planning for the child(ren).*  *Should it not have been possible for a thorough account to be obtained from Mother, the Social Worker has clearly outlined every effort made to engage her and to obtain her views.* |
| **8.2 Father’s views** |
| *As above for father* |
| **8.3 Views of wider family members** |
| *As above for wider family* |
| **8.4 Views of other parties or significant others e.g. Cafcass, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), court appointed experts** |
| *The Social Worker has provided a clear, thorough account of the views significant others; for example the Core Group of professionals surrounding the family, foster carers relevant, the Child Protection Chair, Independent Reviewing Officer and Children’s Guardian (Cafcass).*  *The above professionals should be named and addressed as Mr/Mrs/Ms in line with the guidance provided.*  *If there is any disagreement in relation to the Local Authority’s evidence or care planning, this is reflected.* |

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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.** |
| *The Social Worker can explain all assessments have been undertaken, eg within pre proceedings and no further delay is expected.* |

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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?** |
| *The Social Worker has clearly detailed how they have worked openly and transparently in communicating the content of the statement with each relevant person.*  *This section evidences that if it has not been possible to share the content of this statement with certain key individuals, every effort has been made by the Social Worker to do so.*  *The Social Worker is clear in this section how he/she has communicated- home visits, core group meetings, 1:1 office meetings, conferences etc.*  *Paper invites sent to each parents for Core Group Meetings etc.*  *Evidence of additional methods of communication has been used if required.* |

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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.

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.