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

**Local authority
social work evidence template**

**(SWET)**

This document is intended to summarise **not** duplicate other documentation contained within the court bundle and should be succinct, approx. 20 pages in length (excluding appendices), with clear links or references to other sources of more detailed information e.g. an expert report or parenting assessment.

Guidance notes are provided here to assist the author, this text should be removed before submitting the template to the courts.

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| **Local Authority and Social Worker details** |
| Court 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) |  |
| Social work statement number of this witness e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and date of statement |  |
| This author/witness’s name, qualifications and office address |  |
| This author/witness’s Social Work England registration number |  |
| I have been the allocated social worker for [insert name(s)] since [date(s)] |  |

**I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth**

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Signed:

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Date of completion or

most recent update:

**Please ensure that you update the page numbers on the table by clicking on the table followed by the “update” tab, selecting “update page numbers only” once the report is completed.**

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**Accompanying guidance for completing the SWET can be found here:** <https://adcs.org.uk/care/article/SWET>

## **1. Overview of which court order or order/s are being sought**

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| ***Guidance notes to be overwritten:**** *This is an overview, an opportunity to summarise the salient points of the child and family’s circumstances in a few paragraphs, ideally less than one page.*
* *There is no need to repeat in detail anything covered in subsequent sections of the SWET or other documents contained within the court bundle.*
* *State the order being sought from the courts and why the local authority believes action is required now.*
* *Please include references to sources of other information, such as the case summary or the social work chronology to be as succinct as possible.*
* *It might be helpful to think about: past harm, future danger and complicating factors here.*
* *And, if interim order(s) are being sought, please provide evidence of why this is being requested i.e. why now, what has changed?*

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## **2. Family network composition**

### **2.1 The child/ren – use one per template per family**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name(s)**  | **Gender** | **Date of Birth** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current legal status** |
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### **2.2 Child/ren’s family network**

***Guidance:*** *This section should include family members and any other people the child/ren have significant relationships with, such as close family friends. Who is important to them? Please specify the individual’s relationship in respect of each child subject to the application. Please set out these individual’s full names, their dates of birth, their nationality, ethnicity and their current addresses unless this needs to be kept confidential for safety reasons. In such situations, send this information directly to the court as well as Cafcass,* ***do not*** *record it here.* *[This guidance text can be deleted before submitting the completed template to the court].*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Relationship** | **Parental Responsibility** | **DOB** | **Nationality** | **Ethnicity** | **Address (where safe to disclose)** |
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### **2.3 Has anyone listed, above, been identified as an alternative carer(s) for the child/ren?**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Alongside the name, it is helpful to include a brief note about how and when they were identified e.g. put forward by a parent, via a family group conference (or similar), or identified by the social worker. Detail any potential alternative carers who have been ruled out in section 5.*  |

## **3. Child impact analysis (complete for each individual child)**

### **3.1 Description of the child’s day to day experiences during the period under consideration**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Think about what has it been like for them, what it’s like for them now and why a court order is now being sought?* |

### **3.2 The child’s needs. An analysis of the harm they face. Risk and protective factors**

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| ***Guidance notes to be overwritten:**** *The social worker’s analysis of the harm the child (or each child) has suffered or is likely to suffer, and why they are at a high level of risk, should touch on the event/s that led to the application. This information should be balanced, and protective factors should be identified here too. The welfare checklist should be applied as appropriate throughout (see section 11).*
* *It may be helpful to specifically consider the interim position, harm and any changes proposed.*
* *Set out the steps taken to meet the child’s identified needs e.g. the services and support that have been and/or are being provided as well as the outcomes (or intended outcomes).*
* *The aim here is to provide an understanding of the impact of what has happened on the child (or each individual child within a sibling group).*
* *It is important to note that the same event can affect children within the same family differently, so this differential impact should be drawn out in the analysis, as well as the factors supporting a child’s resilience in the face of what has happened.*
* *The evidence used here can be primary – the direct experience of the social worker – or secondary – the social worker’s evaluation of evidence from assessments or the views of other people who know the child/ren or who have assessed their needs*
 |

### **3.3 The child/ren’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified (please include the child/ren’s own statement, where age appropriate)**

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| ***Guidance:*** *It is important that how, when and in what circumstances the child/ren’s views were expressed is documented here. For the very young, and those with additional needs or disabilities which may limit verbal communication, the use of creative approaches and direct observation and interpretation by social workers is crucial.* *This space may be used to summarise the direct work that has been completed with the child and the outcome of this, who they enjoy spending time with, plus their view of the care plan and their understanding of proceedings (where applicable).* |

### **3.4 The child/ren’s participation in the court case.**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Child/ren should be as fully involved in proceedings as their needs dictate.* *Set out the appropriate level of involvement for each child in line with their best interests, with clear reasoning.* |

## **4. Analysis of the evidence of parenting capability**

### **4.1 Summary of work previously undertaken with child/ren and the family that has led to these proceedings e.g. pre-proceedings or convening a family group conference (or similar).**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Organisation** | **Description of assessment/intervention** | **Outcome and effectiveness** |
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For the child’s mother, father and anyone else with parental responsibility, please consider:

* *Analysis of the capabilities of each parent to meet the child/ren’s needs, including relevant risk and protective factors and an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap (why is an order being sought now?) and if/how this can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale*
* *The analysis should address the fundamental question: ‘Can this person provide this child/ren with a good enough standard of care for the rest of their childhood?’*
* *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.*
* *If a parenting assessment is required, is in progress or has been completed, please include this information here.*
* *Indicate whether there is an international dimension and whether the relevant consulate has been notified.*
* *Please also use this space to record details of attempts to seek out absent parents.*

*[This guidance text can be deleted before submitting the final template to the courts.]*

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| **Mother**  |
|  |
| **Father** |
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| **Other members of the household and/or person(s) with parental responsibility** |
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## **5. Analysis of the evidence of wider family and friends’ capability as alternative carers for the child/ren**

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| ***Guidance to be overwritten or deleted****: Demonstrate what is known about the capabilities of wider family members and/or friends to meet child/ren’s needs as alternative carers, including an analysis of skills or resource gaps and if/how they can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. Key considerations for a viability assessment:** *Unsuitable family network members should be excluded via a comprehensive filtering process.*
* *In considering the viability of someone to become a child/ren’s permanent carer, three additional tests should be met in line with the current Regulations that apply to proposed placements. They are:*
1. *That the carer understands in broad terms the needs of the child/ren*
2. *That they understand the level and type of care the child/ren will need throughout their childhood because of their earlier experiences*
3. *That the carer has expressed an authentic willingness to be part of the team around the child/ren until matters are fully resolved.*
* *With reference to (a), it would be helpful to share an overview of what information has been shared with potential carer(s) to enable their understanding of the issues.*
* *The genogram and ecomap (as appropriate) in Section 12 below should be comprehensive and inclusive, clearly identifying relatives who are already protective contacts for the child/ren.*
* *It may also be helpful to reference the status or outcome of viability assessments – if they have not yet started, include details of when such assessments will happen or note whether they are currently in progress.*
 |

## **6. The proposed S31A interim care plan – the ‘realistic options’ analysis**

### **6.1 Options considered for the placement. Please have regard to the following:**

**Realistic options**

1. *To be defined as realistic, the proposed placement must be assessed as sufficiently resilient and sustainable to justify the label of ‘permanent’.  Evidence of a robust filtering process is required to ensure each option assessed as realistic meets that standard.*
2. *In care proceedings, no arbitrary limit can be placed on the number of realistic options available for the child/ren, 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/ren the prospect of recovering from any trauma they have experienced: personal growth and development within a family where they are 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 their unique identity.*
4. *Determining the rank order between realistic options is a matter of professional judgement about the relative importance to the child/ren of various attributes of the carers and/or the relationship between the carers and the child, or the carers, child and birth parent/s. Ideally, placements should be listed in order of preference / strength.
[NB this text can be deleted before filing the completed template with the courts].*

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| **Long-term placement options explored** | **Is this option realistic and viable or has it been discounted?** | **Reason(s) why it is viable or why it has been discounted?** |
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### **6.2 The preferred and proposed placement option for the child or each individual child if part of a sibling group**

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| ***Guidance:*** * *This is a proportionality evaluation that compares the preferred carer against the other realistic options, there is no need to repeat the information set out in the table at 6.1.*

*It is helpful to explain why siblings will not be together, if that is the recommendation, and to reflect on the ‘cons’ of the placement even if it the best option.* * *An analysis of the likely impact of the preferred option on the child/ren should be included.*
 |

### **6.3 Summary of diversity and cultural considerations**

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| **Guidance:** *Please have regard to* [*protected characterisitcs*](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights) *including gender, religon or belief, race, disability, and how the child/ren’s cultural identity and beliefs will be met.* |

### **6.4 Summary of any health, wellbeing and educational considerations**

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| **Guidance:** *It may be helpful to very briefly say how schooling arrangements have been considered as part of the care planning process and whether the child or one of the children has any regular medical appointments or ongoing health needs that have been factored into this decision. Consideration should also be given to ensuring the child’s interests and activities are supported.* |

## **7. Family time/ the plan for contact**

***Guidance:*** *The contact or family time plan should involve siblings and anyone else with whom the child/ren has a significant relationship, in line with the genogram and ecomap. It must be kept under review as circumstances change. [NB this text can be deleted before filing].*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Child** | **Who contact is with and relationship to the child** | **Frequency and duration** | **Level of support/ supervision required** | **Brief rationale for the level of contact proposed** |
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## **8. The range of views of parties and significant others**

***Guidance:*** *This section has a vital opinion-sharing purpose:*

* *Set out and analyse the individual’s views about what should happen for the child/ren in the future.*
* *Facts should be confined to those relied upon in evidence.*
* *Where possible, an indication of whether the facts are accepted or contested should be given here.*

### **8.1 Mother’s views**

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### **8.2 Father’s views**

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### **8.3 Views of anyone else holding parental responsibility or wider family members**

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### **8.4 Views of other parties or significant others**

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| ***Guidance:*** * *Significant others may include**the**Cafcass guardian, CP chair, a health visitor, the IRO or court appointed experts.*
* *Where possible a short statement or email from the IRO should be included here.*
* *Please be sure to include the full name and job title of anyone providing a statement for inclusion here as well as the date on which they provided it.*
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## **9. Case management issues and proposals**

### **9.1 Record case management issues here alongside details of any further proposed assessments**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Use this space to list any factors that may lead to delay, including any special factors or the vulnerabilities of key participants plus any further proposed assessments including why they are necessary. For example, this may include the assessment of family members in other countries, a parent having bail conditions, or the requirement for an interpreter or an advocate etc.*  |

### **9.2 Significant events happening in the near future which are relevant for the child**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event e.g. transitioning from primary to secondary school** | **Source of evidence/document reference** | **Significance** |
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## **10. Statement of procedural fairness**

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| ***Guidance****: Confirm here that the local authority’s concerns and the contents of this statement have been communicated to the child/ren, mother, father, and significant others, and state how this has been communicated. Have these concerns been clearly understood? If not, please be explicit about attempts to engage parties and any help that has been provided to them to participate in the process. This may include access to legal advice and representation, translators, advocates etc.* |

**[All guidance text to be deleted before submitting to court.**

**Please update the table of contents.]**

## **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 their age and understanding); |
| b) | Their physical, emotional and educational needs; |
| c) | The likely effect on them of any change in his/her/their circumstances; |
| d) | Their age, sex, background and any characteristics of his/hers/theirs which the court considers relevant; |
| e) | Any harm which they have suffered or are at risk of suffering; |
| f) | How capable each of 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 theirlife) 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:1. the likelihood of any such relationship continuing and the value of the child of its doing so,
2. 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,
3. the wishes and feelings of any of the child’s relatives, or of any such person, regarding the child.
 |

**Appendix**

## **12. The social work chronology (last two years)**

* *List significant events which can be evidenced. It may be helpful to include details of the nature of assessments carried out, family engagement, interventions and their successes. Please note there is no need to include detailed supervision notes here.*
* *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 [NB delete this guidance text before submitting].*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child’s welfare** | **Significance** |
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### **12.1 If there has been involvement with the family over a longer period, please summarise this involvement here.**

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| ***Guidance:*** *Summarise historic incidents and events of relevance e.g. any previous proceedings with a connected person, if this seems helpful for context purposes and is not covered in the chronology of the last two years, above.*   |

**[All guidance text to be deleted before submitting to the court]**

### **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)

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

Male

### **12.3 Ecomap (risky and protective contacts) (optional)**

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.