|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority  social work evidence template** |  | 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 PLO 2014.

**The child (ren)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Names** | **Gender** | **Date of Birth** | **Child’s current placement status** | **Child’s current  legal status** |
| Surname last |  |  | Local authority foster placement/at home/with relative | S20 accommodated, s38 ICO/EPO… |
| Include all children subject to the application |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Authority and Social Worker details** | |
| Case number | This is the Court case number – for an initial statement you won’t usually have this so you can state “TBA” |
| Filed by [local authority] | Kent Council Council |
| Social work statement number in the proceedings, e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd | Take into account whether there are SW statements filed by any other SW |
| Social work statement number for this witness e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd | Number of statements you have provided to date |
| This witness’s name, qualifications, experience, and office address | Name, title (Social worker…) date of qualifying, years of experience, based at… |
| This witness’s HCPC registration number |  |
| Dated | This should correspond with the date of signing below |

Contents page – We suggest this is the last thing to be completed as the page numbers may change

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | | Page no. |
| **Section 1** | Case details | |  |
|  | 1.1 | Family composition |  |
|  | 1.2 | Genogram |  |
|  | 1.3 | Ecomap |  |
|  | 1.4 | Summary of reason/s for order sought |  |
| **Section 2** | The social work chronology | |  |
| **Section 3** | Analysis of harm | |  |
|  | 3.1 | The social work analysis of harm and risk |  |
|  | 3.2 | The outcome and analysis of local authority involvement |  |
| **Section 4** | Child impact analysis on each individual child | |  |
|  | 4.1 | Analysis of the child’s daily life and experience |  |
|  | 4.2 | Any continuing risks the child faces |  |
|  | 4.3 | Analysis of the child’s welfare and development needs |  |
|  | 4.4 | The child’s wishes and feelings |  |
|  | 4.5 | The child’s own statement (where applicable) |  |
|  | 4.6 | Benefits and detriments to the child of any proposal/s for assessment, expert evidence adjournment or other delay |  |
| **Section 5** | Analysis of parenting capability | |  |
| **Section 6** | Analysis of wider family capability | |  |
| **Section 7** | The proposed care plan for each child | |  |
|  | 7.1 | Table of realistic placement options |  |
|  | 7.2 | The preferred and proposed placement option, with the reasons |  |
|  | 7.3 | The contact plan |  |
| **Section 8** | Views and issues raised by other parties (where known) | |  |
|  | 8.1 | Mother’s views |  |
|  | 8.2 | Father’s views |  |
|  | 8.3 | Views of wider family members |  |
|  | 8.4 | Views of any other parties or significant others |  |
| **Section 9** | Updating where there are minor changes | |  |
|  | 9.1 | Update on matters set out in the application |  |
|  | 9.2 | Any proposals for further evidence assessment that the court should consider |  |
| **Section 10** | Statement of procedural fairness | |  |
| **Section 11** | Signature | |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **1. Case details** |
| **1.1 Family Composition**  This section should include family members and relationships, especially the primary carers and significant adults/other children 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. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Relationship** | **Parental Responsibility** | **DOB** | **Nationality** | **Ethnicity** | **Address** |
| This list should not include the child/ren | Relationship to each child subject to the application | Please confirm yes or no as to whether they hold PR |  | Citizenship | Ethnicity = racial ancestry | Please consider whether this should be withheld |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**1.2 Genogram (mandatory)(but format may be adapted)**

**This must be completed. Standard software may be used**

Include family members and their relationship to each child

Include all other relatives

**Key:**

Female

Male

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

**This is optional. You may have to cut and paste this in**

**Include those who keep the child safe and those who pose a risk or threat**

|  |
| --- |
| 1.4 Summary of reason/s for order sought |
| I make this statement in support of the local authority’s application for a…*insert order seeking*….in respect of the *child/ren.*  Set out the immediate reasons causing the local authority to commence these proceedings. Do not set out not historical information.  List the areas of general concern e.g. neglect / domestic violence / alcohol use / suspicious injuries, drug usage, DV, previous children removed, non-engagement etc. The information you give should be relevant to the welfare of the child.  Briefly address why there is a need for an Order, and bear in mind the No Order principle.  This will generally be approximately half a page or a bit more; It is advised that you use numbered points. |

|  |
| --- |
| **2. The social work chronology** |
| Key incidents already listed in the application form can be re-stated here so that the social work chronology contains all significant incidents. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child’s welfare** | **Significance** |
|  | List events which are significant in terms of their impact upon the child.  Entries should be brief, not normally more than about four or five lines each. The immediate incidents causing the Local Authority to commence these proceedings could be covered in more detail at section 1 e.g. breach of CP agreement signed at pre proceedings meeting / admission of child to hospital etc | Brief comments only.  What does it mean for the child?  Examples:  unable to meet needs of child – intoxicated / appropriate family support unavailable / suspicious injury / concern of sexual abuse / neglect of basic needs  evidence of a pattern developing  emerging/persisting/increasing/repeating concerns  lack of insight/motivation to change |
|  |  | New relationships, increasing effects of drink/drugs, |
|  | Refer to adults by their title eg Mr, Mrs. Refer to children initially by their full name then first name only. | Gaps in parenting ability identified, lack of family support  Services offered, failure to engage/follow through |
|  | The chronology should be confined to the last two years unless an earlier event has a current or lasting significance. |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | You can cut and paste the chronology into a stand-alone document if required but try not to exceed 4 or 5 pages. |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **3. Analysis of harm** |
| **3.1** The social work analysis of the harm the child (or each child) has suffered and/or the/any risk of harm the child continues to face, including the analysis of the event/s that led to the application i.e. the threshold as described in the application form |
| Describe the actual harm that the child has suffered and the harm that you assert the child is likely to suffer.  Analyse the harm to the child as caused by the incidents in the chronology  Set out any concerns as to the ability of the parents to protect the child from the harm and ability to accept and sustain changes |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3.2** List of previous assessments and interventions | | | |
| **Organisation** | **Description of assessment/intervention** | **Date** | **Outcome and effectiveness** |
| Eg Health visiting, community services, drug and alcohol services. Experts instructed pre-proceedings |  |  | Give a brief summary here, do not repeat the content of the document, the assessments will be filed separately. |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **4. Child impact analysis** (make specific references to each child) |
| **4.1** Description of the child’s daily life and experience at the time harm was identified |
| The effect of the harm (as set out in paragraph 3.1) on the child.  Your understanding of how the child feels, Evidenced as appropriate by the child’s behaviour (eg at school), comments to you or others (eg foster carer). Ensure that you set out the evidence to support your view; do not speculate.  The effect on the child’s daily life. Changes observed when the child is placed into foster care. If the child is old enough, the child’s own report of the harm and its impact on them.  It is important that you give a clear picture of what life is like for the child living in the current situation. Be as descriptive as possible setting out information clearly and graphically, but concisely so that you can contextualise your concerns and the reasons for the level of intervention.  Comment on the child’s resilience. |
| **4.2** Any continuing risk of significant harm including impairment of development to the child balanced against any factors which mitigate that risk and support for the care of the child (cross-refer to ecomap if used) |
| Explain whether there is still a risk of continuing significant harm – what is the evidence for this, how have you assessed that likelihood? E.g. lack of compliance/no change despite interventions.  Describe the likely long term effects on the child e.g. Loss of opportunities in life, inability to form adult relationships, developmental delay  Ongoing incidents (e.g .violence, drugs), lack of compliance (with advice/CP plans etc.)  Family support. Family dynamics, including between the parents and child  Explain what the protective factors are and whether, with support from the LA and other agencies, the risk of harm to the child could be reduced. Explore this in detail and if you state that no level of support would be sufficient to safeguard, explain reasons. |
| **4.3** Analysis of the child’s needs, against the welfare checklist |
| Refer to but do not set out the full welfare checklist. You should apply a welfare checklist analysis throughout your statement (i.e. always keep it in mind).  Many parts of the welfare checklist are addressed directly in other parts of the statement. Refer here to relevant sections which have not been covered elsewhere, e.g. physical, emotional and educational needs |
| **4.4** The child’s wishes and feelings and how these have been identified |
| You should address the child’s wishes and feeling in accordance with their age and understanding.  Report what the child has said or describe behaviour which can lead to an interpretation of the child’s feelings  Outline any ongoing work to be done with the child to gain more understanding of their wishes and feelings  Confirm that you will continue to assess wishes sand feelings before a final recommendation |
| **4.5** The child’s own statement (where applicable) |
| Complete if the child is of a sufficient age or understanding to give a view to the court, otherwise N/A.  Children should be as fully involved in their own case as their needs dictate. |
| **4.6** Benefits and detriments to the child of any proposal/s for further assessment, expert evidence, adjournment or other delay |
| State the LA position with regard to further assessments. This may not relate to assessments that the LA thinks are necessary but may also relate to the parents’ argument that there should be further expert assessment/assessment of relatives.  You need to balance the positives of any further assessment/delay against the disadvantages. Consider the effect on the child of further assessment and the delay it may cause.  If the application is for separation, address any likely application for mother and baby placement / unit / placement with family members.  If you are proposing an independent expert please make sure that the statement explains why this is necessary and that approval has been granted for this expenditure to be incurred. If it is proposed that the parent should obtain (and fund) the assessment you should indicate whether the LA objects. |

|  |
| --- |
| **5. Analysis of Parenting Capability** |
| **5.1** Analysis of each parent’s capability to meet each child’s needs, including analysis of any capability gap and whether/how this can be bridged in the timetable for the child. Include unrelated members of the household/s where relevant. |
| Mother (guidance refers to all parents)  Refer to any assessments that have been carried out to date relevant to parenting capacity. If no such assessments have yet taken place, you should explain why this has not been possible and you should set out your assessment proposals. Consider what assessments, if any, are required by the Local Authority, explaining why they are appropriate, and who you propose should carry them out as well as clear timescales for these assessments and timescales for letter of instruction. If no assessments are being requested due to previous assessments being relied upon, highlight the information you already have and why no further assessments are being proposed, also highlighting the child’s timescales and impact of delay.  Do not repeat lengthy parts of any assessments carried out to date but cross reference relevant assessments and provide your professional analysis, based on the evidence available, as to why the parents are not able to meet the child’s needs.  Set out current concerns and prognosis for change and timescales.  Appropriate and well-validated assessment tools may be used. Consider at an early stage whether a PAMS assessment will be needed.  Address whether the parent can provide the child with good enough care for the rest of their childhood. |
| Father |
| Other person with parental responsibility  Also mention significant other adults- eg partner of a parent |

|  |
| --- |
| **6. Analysis of wider family and friends capability** |
| **6.1** Analysis of wider family and friends capability to meet each child’s needs, including analysis of any capability gap and whether/how this can be bridged in the timetable for the child. |
| Provide details of any assessments that have taken place in relation to any family members/significant adults who may be alternative suitable carers for the children. If no such assessments have taken place to date, explain why this has not been possible and outline your assessment proposals including details of who shall carry out these assessments and clear timescales for completion. If no assessments are proposed e.g. the parents have indicated that there are no family members/FGC didn’t identify any suitable family members, explain the steps that have taken place to date to identify alternative carers.  Do not provide a summary of the assessments carried out to date. Cross reference and provide your analysis as to why the family members might not be suitable carers having regard to the welfare needs of the child. It is important that you consider whether, with support, the family member would be able to care for the child. |

|  |
| --- |
| **7. The proposed S31A plan – the early permanence and contact plan** |

**7.1 Table of realistic placement options**

Add additional tables for each child in a sibling group. Only list realistic options, whatever the number ie, 1, 2, 3, etc. The LAC Care Plan should be filed separately.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Child** | **First realistic option: [please describe option]**  **Return to parent -** The child (ren) could be returned home to the care of the parent either under no order, supervision order or care order. *A*cknowledge that this is an option available to the Court even if the Local Authority disagrees. | |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
|  | - The parent can exercise PR for the child  - The relationship with the parent will be preserved  - Child will return to familiar surroundings  - The child will maintain family ties  Insert information relevant to the particular child and circumstances throughout. | - The child would continue to suffer significant harm  - The parent is unable to make the necessary changes within the child’s timeframe  - the care plan for the child may not be acted upon |
|  | **Second realistic option: [please describe option]**  **Placement with foster carer under a care order -** | |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
| - child has security and stability  - Child will be protected from significant harm  -Parents cannot not remove the child  The LA can carry out its care plan | -child may have to change placement or move far away from relatives/school  - child remains a child in care  - child lacks legal permanence  - Continuity of care may not be maintained  - siblings may be separated |
|  | **Third realistic option: [please describe option]**  **Adoption -** A separate application for a placement order will have to be lodged by the LA | |
| **Factors in favour** | **Factors against** |
| -Child is provided with security, stability etc  -Child will not be exposed to further abuse  -Child will not remain within the care system  -Parents could not remove the child | * Family ties are broken * The child will move homes, carers and school * there may be a delay whilst a family is found |

There may be other options, eg placement with relatives. Just set out the three most realistic options.

|  |
| --- |
| **7.2 The preferred and proposed placement option for each child, with a welfare analysis of why including a proportionality evaluation that is a comparison of that option against the other/s. Analyse the support available for each realistic option.** |
| Set out your preferred option and why you favour it, and why it is better than the other options, bearing in mind the welfare needs of the child.  You should take into account the support that would be available from the LA and other agencies under each option. Make sure the Court is told what the Local Authority will do to support a placement even if the Court disagrees with the Local Authority plan. Do not just state the negatives.    Why would a particular option not meet the needs of the child? How will you satisfy the Court that there is no practical way of providing the assistance and support necessary for alternative placements to be effective? Do not simply say that resources are unavailable.  What assessment/enquiries have been undertaken for us to have reached a particular conclusion? Again, make sure that you cover the positives and the negatives + support to be offered if the Court prefers this option even if the Local Authority does not support it?  ,You must explain why the LA has reached the decision that a particular placement option is in the best interests of the child (ren) and why.  Consider the impact on a child of ceasing to be a member of their birth family (for adoption), the impact on sibling/family relationships etc. Has this been a finely balanced decision and if so, what led to this being the preferred outcome?  Explain the extent to which we consider it is likely that an adoptive placement will be available and timescale if possible. |

**7.3 The Contact Plan**

**The contact plan must be kept under review as circumstances change.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Child** | **Who contact is with and their relationship to the child** | **Brief rationale for the level of contact proposed** | **Level of support/ supervision** | **Frequency and duration** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **8. Analysis of views and issues raised by other parties** |
| **8.1** Mother’s views |
| The focus must be on the analysis of their views – explain what efforts have been taken to obtain their views, explain the views that they have expressed and provide your analysis as to why their views do not accord with the welfare needs of the child. |
| **8.2** Father’s views |
| This should include the views of the father with and without PR. |
| **8.3** Views of wider family members |
| Include any significant family members. |
| **8.4** Views of other parties or significant others e.g. Cafcass, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) |
| Note the specific requirement to set out the view of the IRO as well as the guardian. |

|  |
| --- |
| **9. Update** |
| **9.1** Update on matters set out in the application form, if any. |
| This may be completed for the IRH or FH if updates are minor. It will be more normal to file and serve a final care analysis on the national template provided for this purpose.  If this is not relevant, state N/A. |
| **9.2** Any proposals for further evidence/assessment that the court should consider (any such proposal should be analysed in 4.6 in relation to any implication for the timetable of the child) |
| Briefly set out your further proposals for evidence/assessment. Do not repeat the information in section 4.6. |

|  |
| --- |
| **10. Statement of procedural fairness** |
| **10.1** Have the contents of this statement been communicated to mother, father, significant others, and the child? |
| The actual statement does not need to have been shown to the parties. Information may have been shared through the CP process or the PLO process, and/or set out in the letter of issue (if sent) and explained when that letter was delivered. |
| **10.2** How has the Local Authority been clear in its communications, transparency and disclosure/s of its concerns to mother, father, wider family members and significant others? |
| Through invitations to CP meetings and sharing minutes  Refer to relevant letters that have been sent e.g. LBP/Immediate Issue Letter (if sent) etc.  Note if they have received legal advice to your knowledge |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **11. 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 |  |  |