

Single and Multi-Agency Chronology Practice Guidance



Guidance for Practitioners Completing Chronologies

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Introduction

The purpose of this practice guidance is to provide practitioners with an overview of single and multi-agency chronologies and their use in the safeguarding of children and young people.

It is commonly acknowledged that children and young people are most effectively safeguarded if professionals work together and share information.

Findings from numerous Serious Case Reviews have concluded that a chronology could have supported the earlier identification of risks to the child(ren).

The Jay Report (2014) on child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, found "It is likely that the absence of structured chronologies contributed to key information being missed when decisions were made".

Lord Laming stated in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié (2004), "I regard the inclusion in any case file of a clear, comprehensive and up-to-date chronology as absolutely essential".

What is a chronology?

A chronology is a succinct, simple summary of the significant dates/ events in a child's life, in chronological order. It is a tool that all practitioners working with children and families can use to help them understand what is happening in the life of a child/family. It gives a clear account of all the major changes and significant events in the lives of the child(ren) and family.

Chronologies can be compiled by a single agency or be multi-agency, pulling together the knowledge of and information held by agencies involved with the child/ family.

A chronology should be started when an agency becomes involved with a child and family and updated and maintained on an ongoing basis.

The purpose of a chronology

The purpose of a chronology is to record significant events and changes for a child. It is not a running record of everyday events and should not replace case notes or records which include more detailed and sensitive information. Chronologies are essential to:

- Strengthen working with children and their families and help a child and family make sense of their life.
- Gain an overview of events and changes in the lives of children and their families.
- Help practitioners understand the impact, immediate and cumulative, of events and changes on the child and family's progress.
- Highlight strengths/ successes (e.g. improved school attendance) as well as the events which have hurt and challenged a child's development.
- Help understand current events in the context of historical information.
- Support the early identification of patterns and issues. This supports, and is part of, assessing and managing risk, and is particularly useful where there may be no single incident, i.e. where children are experiencing neglect.
- Provide accumulative evidence of emerging needs and risks and flag when a multi-agency response may be required.

What is recorded in a chronology?

The chronology provides a brief record of significant events in sequential date order and may include the below. As well as factual information, the impact on the child should be recorded:

- ✓ Significant changes in the family structure: For example, separation, divorce, marriages/new relationships, bereavement, birth of a new sibling, presence of a significant adult, housing moves/ home environment, unemployment.
- ✓ Factual information and events: Including missed/ 'not brought' appointments, when a child starts or moves school, missing school, exclusions, offending behaviour, changes in peer relationships, missing episode.
- ✓ Significant changes in the child/ young person's wellbeing.
- ✓ Significant changes in the parent/ carer's wellbeing which impact on the child.

Key factors for an effective chronology

Accurate	The chronology must be based on up-to-date and accurate recording. Any inaccuracies or deficiencies will impact on the quality of the chronology and limit its usefulness.
Up to date	Chronologies should reflect the best knowledge about a child or adult's history at a point in time. It will need to be amended and updated in light of any new information.
Detail	The chronology should contain sufficient detail but not substitute for recording.
Involving the child and family	Involving the family in the chronology promotes and strengthens family participation, develops an understanding of family members perspectives on events and their impact on individuals, and helps to identify progress or lack of progress.
Actions	Identify what we did as result of any event/issue.
Child Impact	Chronologies should focus on the significance and impact of events/issues on children so that a fuller understanding of the child's lived experience can be obtained.

Multi-Agency Chronologies

One of the actions from the Serious Case Review on [Child Q](#) was the development of multi-agency chronologies to ensure all agencies are aware of key issues and events for children, and are working from one summary chronology.

All agencies involved in the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC), Core Group (CG) and Review meetings must complete and submit a chronology via the secure delegation portal. The Chair of the conference will explain roles and expectations in relation to sharing information to the multi-agency chronology at the start of the meeting.

See also

[MAC Tutorial 1 for Agency Professionals](#)

7 Minute Guide: Multi-Agency Chronologies (MAC) in the Child Protection and Safeguarding

Process

please note: MAC is mandatory for children on CP plans for neglect but can be used in other forums such as Children in Need and Team Around the Family.

7. At the Child Protection Review Conference

The MAC will be presented as a separate document and will serve to inform decision-making/change of plan at any given point in the child protection process.

6. At Core Group

The Core Group will use the MAC as a tool to assessing progress made/strengths and identify impact of continued harm. The MAC will be updated, prior to or at each Core Group meeting.

1. At the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

The Chair of the ICPC, will explain that all participating agencies are required to complete a chronology and that they will receive an email with a link to the MAC Portal.

A Multi-Agency Chronology (MAC) is an intervention tool to evidence the **lived experience of children** experiencing neglect or where neglect is an emerging issue of concern. The MAC tool was a key recommendation from an Oxfordshire Serious Case Review and forms one of the key interventions as part of the 2021 OSCB Neglect Strategy.

A MAC gives a deeper understanding of the lived experience of the child(ren), the impact of key events and frequency of professional contact, e.g. a single incident may take on a far greater importance in the life of a child when placed in the context of a clear, time lined integrated chronology

5. Involving the family in the MAC

The Social Worker will share the MAC with the family to obtain their perspective on events and develop understanding of the impact on the family.

2. Following the ICPC

The Safeguarding and Reviewing Administrator will notify the relevant team that a MAC needs to be completed. Copying in the relevant Business Support Team Leader, all agencies (including those invited but unable to attend), within 24 hours of the conference. The MAC will then be discussed at the initial core group.

3. Prior to the 2nd Core Group Meeting

All participating agencies to complete their chronology in the MAC Portal, there is no requirement to email the MAC contribution as this is automatically populated into children's information system known as LCS, 10 working days prior to the 2nd Core Group Meeting.

4. Collating the MAC

The Team Administrator will email the allocated Social Worker, 5 working days prior to the Core Group, to confirm the MAC is completed by all agencies along with any contributions outstanding. Following review and initial analysis, the Social Worker will approve the MAC.