

A Chronology of Significant Events

East Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee



Definition

A chronology is a clear account of significant events in a person's life based on the information held by agencies involved and should be used to identify early indicators of emerging patterns of concern.

A chronology provides a brief description and summarised account of events in date order and should be used as an analytical tool to assist in the understanding of the impact of life events on the person and to inform decision making.

N.B. - The Chronology should not replace existing case notes or records which will include much more detailed and sensitive information which is owned by the child and or family and a clear distinction must be made between the two.

Purpose of a Chronology

A chronology should make key information easily accessible and as part of a professionally skilled approach be an essential part of on-going assessment and case management by:

- Presenting a range of issues coherently (identified either on a single agency or a multi-agency basis)
- Providing an overview of factual and precise information which can assist practitioners to identify patterns of behaviour
- Enabling the significance of individual issues to be better understood and links made between the past and the present
- Being used on a routine basis by the practitioner for regular review and analysis of the individual's situation

- Using the information as an integral part of case discussions within formal staff supervision
- Strengthening partnership working with individuals through the sharing and reviewing of information within the chronology.

Recording a Chronology

Entries on a chronology should be in neutral language suitable for professionals and the individual themselves to read and should contain factual information with sources clearly identified.

The information recorded should be clear and concise while being sufficiently detailed to be used as part of the assessment to identify risks and patterns in the individual's life. The entries should be in date order and indicate what action was taken at the time (with no action recorded if this was the case) and the outcome.

The focus of the chronology should be the individual and there should be a separate chronology for each individual receiving a service.

A chronology is not a substitute for detailed case recording but is dependent on good quality recording within the case file and any computerised system. The chronology should be used as an analytical tool in the management of the case and not be seen as an end in itself.

Starting and maintaining a Chronology

A chronology should be started when an initial contact has been made with your service (always check your own agency guidance) and should be maintained throughout the agency involvement. If there is no existing chronology when a case is re-opened or transferred one should be created as a priority.

As part of the assessment process previous significant events in an individual's life may be identified and these should be included within the chronology.

It is recommended that relevant information is entered into the chronology, as it occurs to prevent the task becoming unmanageable and to ensure that up to date information is available for further analysis and planning.

The allocated worker / lead professional responsible for the management of the case is responsible for maintaining the chronology (although the information may come from other sources) and Managers will be expected to monitor the use of

chronologies through the use of identified Case File Audit Tools and routine Supervisory arrangements.

Information to be included in a Chronology

Any significant event / life event which has an impact on the individual should be included and the selection of information must be based on professional judgement.

The following are provided as examples for all service users within your service but should only be recorded where in the judgement of the practitioner it constitutes a key event for the individual:

- **Positive** or negative changes in family situation/dynamics e.g. through separation, divorce, marriage, birth of a sibling, bereavement, custodial sentence, changes to intervention etc.
- **Positive** or negative changes relating to the health of parents or family carers that significantly impact on the individual e.g. hospital admission
- **Positive** or negative changes in accommodation/living arrangements e.g. homelessness, move to permanent housing.
- **Positive** or negative changes in personal relationships
- **Positive** or negative changes in health related problems such as disability, substance related issues, mental health issues, etc
- **Offence** related issues e.g. charged with an offence, victim of an offence
- **Positive** or negative changes in employment, education or training
- **Breakdown** of placement/support e.g. with foster carers, residential, family, carers, etc
- **Admission** to looked after accommodation (planned or emergency) including dates and reason
- **Referrals** from the Out-of-Hours services (SW Stand-by, A&E)
- Lack of engagement/failure to attend formal meeting and reviews
- **Established** pattern of missed appointments without acceptable reasons (including refusal of entry)
- **Any change** of social worker or key worker from the service
- **Any changes** to legal status for child or parent
- **Any changes** of address including placements and temporary accommodation
- **Any threats** or actual incidents of violence to staff including verbal threats
- **Complaints** made against the service by the individual or made against the individual by the service or service provider
- **Significant** risk has been identified and risk assessment completed
- **Details of child** protection concern / referrals and the outcomes of enquiries, investigation etc

- **Dates of child** protection meetings e.g. case discussions, case conferences etc
- **Referrals** to the Children’s Hearing and the Grounds for Referral
- **Dates** of Children’s Hearings and outcomes
- **Dates** of planning meetings and/or review dates for Looked After and Accommodated Children including Partnership Forums

Recording of a Significant Event

In order to ensure that the information contained in the chronology can be used effectively to inform assessment we suggest the following details are provided:

Details of the event
Date of the event
Date Recorded
Source of the information
Recorded by
Action Taken

The information should be brief and factual – if further details are required reference should be made to the individual’s case notes. Generic titles (e.g. police, health staff) should be used when the source of information is recorded for this purpose rather than the identification of an individual member of staff/relative/neighbour.

Emerging Patterns of Concern

A chronology of significant events /I life events can be used as an early indication of an emerging pattern of concern. This may be evident by gradual and persistent withdrawal from protective factors such as non-attendance at health appointments and non-attendance at nursery/school alongside a frequent attendance at A&E or GP on-call service. Events such as domestic abuse referrals, referrals to the Children’s Reporter and referrals of concern being raised should also be recorded.

- Each professional or agency is responsible for recording any such event as and when they become aware of them
- Chronological history of events should be completed for every child on a caseload
- It should be updated contemporaneously for every child on the chronology page specifically for that child within the family
- It should include any event that may potentially impact negatively on the welfare of the child though not necessarily involving them (e.g. domestic abuse incidents)

- It is only necessary to record a brief description of the event on this page as detail will be recorded in the assessment, care plan or progress notes for the child or parent where appropriate
- All agency referrals, such as Social Work, Pre-5 Services, and any specialist service should be recorded

SPECIFIC SERVICE EXAMPLES – NOT EXHAUSTIVE!

The following areas have been identified by each of the agencies, as worthy of recording but not every area will be recorded for every child only where it is a key event:

Education

- Positive or negative changes in family/ care structure separation/ divorce/ bereavement/ custodial sentence etc.
- Positive or negative changes in family circumstances e.g. housing / birth of sibling
- Physical and mental health and wellbeing of child / parents / carers
- Referrals to Specialist Services
- Positive or negative changes in attendance
- Positive or negative changes in performance, attainment or achievement
- Positive or negative changes in parental presence, engagement or support with child's learning
- Episodes of exclusion or re-integration
- Significant periods of absence e.g. illness, pregnancy, etc.
- Social inclusion within the school setting including evidence of bullying or positive support networks
- Decision to initiate an Integrated Assessment.
- Any other relevant low level concerns or positive celebrations

Health

- Positive attachment to child / children
- Understanding of and commitment to child's physical and emotional health needs
- Positive or negative changes in family/ care structure e.g. through separation/ divorce/ bereavement/ custodial sentence
- Positive or negative changes to child's physical or emotional wellbeing.
- Positive or negative changes in family circumstances e.g. housing / birth of sibling, emotional well being.
- Referrals to Paediatric Services, Therapy Services, Other Agencies.

- Increase or decrease in attendance's at GP , Accident and Emergency, Out of Hours and NHS24
- Incidences of hospital admissions
- Childhood illnesses or periods of good health
- Positive or negative changes in disability
- Dates of immunisations and screening
- Kept or missed appointments for ante-natal, post-natal appointments, immunisations, child health surveillance, hospital appointments
- Formal health assessments e.g. CMA's
- Any other relevant low level concerns or positive celebrations

Social Work Services

- Positive or negative changes in family/ care structure e.g. through separation/ divorce/ bereavement/ custodial sentence
- Positive or negative changes in health related problems such as disability, substance related issues, mental health issues
- Positive or negative changes in family circumstances e.g. homelessness/ birth of sibling.
- Referrals to Family Support Services, Home Support, Childcare or other agencies.
- Dates of Social Work Services Involvement
- Evidence of engagement or lack of engagement (appointments kept)
- Reason for involvement
- Evidence of resilience or coping strategies
- Dates of child protection referrals / enquiries
- Dates of child protection related meetings e.g. case discussions, case conferences.
- Dates and categories of previous child protection registrations
- Dates and reason for child being looked after and accommodated
- Any other relevant concerns or positive celebrations

Housing Services

- Positive or negative changes in family/ care structure separation/divorce/ bereavement/ custodial sentence etc.
- Positive or negative changes in family and housing e.g. relocation, eviction, transfer to private tenancy etc
- Positive or negative changes in maintenance of tenancy agreements
- Positive or negative changes in neighbour relations or anti-social issues
- Any other relevant concerns, positive celebrations

Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)

- Dates of referral
- Referral reason e.g. care and protection, youth justice, domestic abuse, school attendance.
- New legal status and / or changes to legal status
- Any decisions made about the child

Finally

It is critical that practitioners record their observations of a child when they feel this *could be* significant to the child's well-being. The same applies to any other information, an event or concern they have witnessed or have been told about.

When an observation, event and / or concern is established as potentially important in the practitioners and / or the child/carers mind, this should be recorded. **It could be appropriate that the observation, event and / or concern is shared with others and information requested from other agencies to assist in any decision making.** Always consider information sharing in relation to the family too. ANY change in circumstances or status should always be recorded and form part of a chronology.

ALWAYS refer to your own agency guidance on Chronologies in the first instance.

REMEMBER to take the chronological information you have relating to significant life events with you when you attend any meeting about the child / young person you know.

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ercpc