

# Rough Guide to Single-Agency & Multi-Agency Child's Chronology

Chronologies help practitioners understand significant events in a child's life and support effective safeguarding. Supported within a Child Safeguarding Practice Review which highlight that chronologies help professionals recognise accumulating risk. This effective safeguarding relies on professionals sharing information and working together.

## What is a Chronology?

- A chronology is a date-ordered summary of major changes and significant events in a child's or family's life.
- It can be:
  - Single agency: one service's information.
  - Multi-agency: combined information from all involved services.
- Chronologies help connect past events with the current situation.
- They support engagement with families by helping them understand their history and circumstances.
- Chronologies are important for everyday practice, supervision, identifying patterns, assessing risk, and monitoring progress.
- Workers must ensure all significant information is recorded and appropriately shared with other professionals.

## Lead Professional Responsibilities

- Ensure all agencies provide a succinct single-agency chronology
- Lead the review and analysis of the MACC
- Remove duplication and cross-check accuracy
- Clarify any disputed or unclear information with the original author
- Attend meetings where the chronology informs decision-making

## What Should a Chronology Contain?

### Content

- ✓ A record of significant events, changes, incidents or milestones affecting the child
- ✓ Should usually begin at birth, sometimes pre-birth if risks are emerging
- ✓ Relevant family history may be included when it affects the child

### Key Events

- ✓ Events that have, or may have, a positive or negative impact on the child
- ✓ Professional judgement determines what is relevant chronologies must be individual to each child

# What Should a Chronology Contain?

## A Chronology Must Be

- ✓ Accurate, evidence-based and child-focused
- ✓ Succinct, using brief entries (e.g. "attended A&E", "bruising noted", "change in behaviour")
- ✓ Based on facts, actions taken, decisions made, and outcomes
- ✓ If there has been a disclosure use the child's words, parental views, and relevant professionals' responses.
- ✓ Free from jargon and acronyms

## A Chronology Is Not

- ✗ A record of every contact
- ✗ A replacement for professional judgement or direct discussion.
- ✗ A substitute for assessment, early intervention or planning
- ✗ An end in itself

## Agency Expectations

- Each agency must ensure they can identify, collect and accurately record significant events
- Contributing to chronologies encourages family engagement and supports effective multi-agency work.

## Multi-Agency Child's Chronology (MACC): Why and When?

- A MACC integrates all single-agency chronologies to form a complete picture of the child's life
- Helps identify critical events, patterns of risk, unmet needs or lack of progress
- Useful where one event alone seems insignificant but becomes important within the broader pattern.
- A MACC is particularly helpful when:
  - Immediate risks have been addressed but further assessment is needed
  - Emerging patterns suggest needs aren't being met
  - Support provided has not improved circumstances
  - Families struggle to engage with services
  - Perplexing Presentation or Fabricated or induced illness is suspected
  - A case is complex and professionals feel "stuck".
- Its purpose is to support early intervention as early as possible, informed multi-agency planning, and improved decision-making.

## Who Is Responsible for Developing a MACC?

- When a planning meeting decides a MACC is needed, a Lead Professional is appointed based on the child's needs
  - For concerns around perplexing presentation or fabricated/induced illness: Lead Paediatrician leads the health chronology
- Children's Services collate all single-agency submissions into the final chronology.