

CHRONOLOGIES

Lord Laming noted the importance of a chronology in child protection in both the inquiries into the deaths of Victoria Climbié (2004) and baby Peter (2008). The report into the care and protection of children in Eilean Siar (2005) recommended that:

'All of the agencies involved in protecting children must gather the information they have on individual children at risk into a chronology of key events and contacts, review it regularly and make sure that it is passed on to the professional with the lead role in protecting the child. The professional with lead role must co-ordinate this into a multi-agency chronology on a regular basis.'

A chronology should:

- be a useful tool in as part of an assessment
- a working tool which promotes engagement with people who use services
- be accurate relying on good, up-to-date case recording
- contain sufficient detail but is not a substitute for recording in the file
- be flexible – detail collected may be increased if risk increases
- be reviewed and analysed (a chronology which is not reviewed regularly is of limited relevance)
- recognise that different constructions of a chronology are needed for different reasons
- recognise that single agency and multi-agency chronologies set different demands and expectations
- record what was done at the time. Many chronologies list events, dates etc. but do not have a column which sets out the action which was taken at the time. This column should **also include a note when there was no action.**

Compiling a chronology

1. The purpose needs established prior to establish the key headings and events that need to be recorded.
2. The data recorded needs to be accurate and in date order
3. Record facts, events in the child's life
4. Considering the child's perspective within the significant event
5. Needs to include:
 - Date
 - Event
 - Key facts – not opinions
 - Key professionals involved
 - Actions taken or not taken

Chronologies are one key part of assessing and managing risk.

'It is important to note that what might be a key event in one child's life, such as period of good health or good school attendance after a long period of absence or exclusion, will not even be relevant to another child. In this respect agencies are asked to use their professional judgement in completing the chronologies.' (GIRFEC Ayrshire 2007)