

1. Application of information relating to risk and vulnerability assessments into Social Work Evidence Template

The Social Work Evidence Template can usefully incorporate clear data and defensible analysis regarding risks presented by the abusive parent and vulnerabilities caused by the abuse to the non-abusive parent's capacity to protect self and children. It also enables logical recommendations to be offered regarding interventions, support and other risk management strategies required for necessary change by either parent to take place, or clarity on why such change is unlikely to take place within reasonable timescales.

The following sections have been taken from the Social Work Evidence Template (social work statement for court) and provide, **in blue**, prompts to think about when compiling and presenting the summaries of evidence gathered for risk and vulnerability assessments within family court proceedings:

Section 3: Child Impact Analysis

3.1 Description of the child's day to day experiences during the period under consideration

Think about what has it been like for them, what it's like for them now and why a court order is now being sought?

Gather information on direct harm caused to each child by the abusive parent, and indirect harm caused by the non-abusive parent's experience of domestic abuse leading to inability to meet the child's needs, plus any direct maltreatment by non-abusive parent – consider this in the context of their own abuse – would they have been likely to maltreat the child if not themselves being abused?. Have they hurt the child to prevent worse harm by the abusive parent?

Also consider impact of the abusive parent using post-separation harassment and their failure to make reparation for harm caused to the children.

- **This behaviour by X has had this impact on child**
- **This behaviour by X has had this impact on Y (child's mother) which has impacted on her parenting capacity, leading to this impact on child**

3.2 The child's needs. An analysis of the harm they face. Risk and protective factors

- *The social worker's analysis of the harm the child (or each child) has suffered or is likely to suffer, and why they are at a high level of risk, should touch on the event/s that led to the application. This information should be balanced, and protective factors should be identified here too. The welfare checklist should be applied as appropriate throughout (see section 11).*

- *It may be helpful to specifically consider the interim position, harm and any changes proposed.*
- *Set out the steps taken to meet the child's identified needs e.g. the services and support that have been and/or are being provided as well as the outcomes (or intended outcomes).*
- *The aim here is to provide an understanding of the impact of what has happened on the child (or each individual child within a sibling group).*
- *It is important to note that the same event can affect children within the same family differently, so this differential impact should be drawn out in the analysis, as well as the factors supporting a child's resilience in the face of what has happened.*
- *The evidence used here can be primary – the direct experience of the social worker – or secondary – the social worker's evaluation of evidence from assessments or the views of other people who know the child/ren or who have assessed their needs*

Bullet point summaries (including where evidence came from) of:

- Static risk factors presented by abusive parent (childhood and social adjustment factors; use of the range of domestic abuse behaviours across all adult relationships)
- Negative dynamic risk factors keeping the parent away from safe enough parenting
- Positive dynamic factors that may be moving the parent towards safe enough parenting
- Static vulnerability factors experienced by non-abusive parent
- Negative dynamic vulnerability factors keeping the parent away from safe enough parenting
- Positive (protective) factors – both static and dynamic – that may be enabling or moving the parent towards safe enough parenting

Analysis paragraph using your professional judgement as to why the above evidence leads you logically and defensibly to your conclusion on current risks to the child(ren). Link each parent's dynamic factors to your summary of what needs to change to enable safe enough parenting by either parent, in the context of them remaining together or separating.

3.3 The child/ren's wishes and feelings and how these have been identified (please include the child/ren's own statement, where age appropriate)

Guidance: *It is important that how, when and in what circumstances the child/ren's views were expressed is documented here. For the very young, and those with additional needs or disabilities which may limit verbal communication, the use of creative approaches and direct observation and interpretation by social workers is crucial.*

This space may be used to summarise the direct work that has been completed with the child and the outcome of this, who they enjoy spending time with, plus their view of the care plan and their understanding of proceedings (where applicable).

NOTE: Whilst important to note the child’s wishes and feelings, they do not outweigh the risks identified of harm towards them. Where a child desires contact or residence with an abusive parent, reference how static risk factors regarding that parent enable or prevent that contact being safe, and what evidence from a shift in dynamic factors is needed to move towards safety.

Section 4: Analysis of the evidence of parenting capability

4.1 Summary of work previously undertaken with child/ren and the family that has led to these proceedings e.g. pre-proceedings or convening a family group conference (or similar).

Date	Organisation	Description of assessment /intervention	Outcome and effectiveness
			<p>As a result of the activity / work undertaken, what dynamic factors changed in order to mitigate the baseline of static risk concerns?</p> <p>Please remember that attendance at a programme, or verbal intent towards this, DOES NOT REDUCE RISK.</p> <p>If a parent refuses to attend or disengages without good reason from work required to reduce risks, then this in itself may become a static risk factor relevant for assessing likelihood of future similar engagement.</p>

For the child’s mother, father and anyone else with parental responsibility, please consider:

- *Analysis of the capabilities of each parent to meet the child/ren’s needs, including relevant risk and protective factors and an analysis of the evidence of any capability gap (why is an order being sought now?) and if/how this can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale*
- *The analysis should address the fundamental question: ‘Can this person provide this child/ren with a good enough standard of care for the rest of their childhood?’*

- *Include details of support or interventions (either past or present) from any professional agency involved with individual members of the family or the family as a whole, as applicable, detailing learning, changes, progress and the gaps that remain.*
- *If a parenting assessment is required, is in progress or has been completed, please include this information here.*
- *Indicate whether there is an international dimension and whether the relevant consulate has been notified.*
- *Please also use this space to record details of attempts to seek out absent parents.*

Mother

(If this is the non-abusing parent) – Logical conclusions can be drawn from baseline and analysis of vulnerabilities and protective factors within 3.2

- *Specifically consider vulnerabilities solely caused by the abuse (which the mother has the potential to heal from once the abuse stops), and protective factors which she adopted despite the abuse.*
- *Consider also vulnerabilities that pre-dated current relationship and what has been, or needs to be offered as support / education to address those vulnerabilities*

Father

(If this is the abusive parent) - Logical conclusions can be drawn from baseline and analysis of risks within 3.2

- *Specific focus can be put on dynamic factors that have been tested out with the parent – eg: sincerity of motivation to change, adherence to previous requirements, engagement with any other support services or a perpetrator behaviour change programme.*

5. Analysis of the evidence of wider family and friends’ capability as alternative carers for the child/ren

Demonstrate what is known about the capabilities of wider family members and/or friends to meet child/ren’s needs as alternative carers, including an analysis of skills or resource gaps and if/how they can be bridged in the child/ren’s timescale. Key considerations for a viability assessment:

- *Unsuitable family network members should be excluded via a comprehensive filtering process.*
- *In considering the viability of someone to become a child/ren’s permanent carer, three additional tests should be met in line with the current Regulations that apply to proposed placements. They are:*
 - a) *That the carer understands in broad terms the needs of the child/ren*

- b) That they understand the level and type of care the child/ren will need throughout their childhood because of their earlier experiences*
- c) That the carer has expressed an authentic willingness to be part of the team around the child/ren until matters are fully resolved.*

- *With reference to (a), it would be helpful to share an overview of what information has been shared with potential carer(s) to enable their understanding of the issues.*
- *The genogram and ecomap (as appropriate) in Section 12 below should be comprehensive and inclusive, clearly identifying relatives who are already protective contacts for the child/ren.*
- *It may also be helpful to reference the status or outcome of viability assessments – if they have not yet started, include details of when such assessments will happen or note whether they are currently in progress.*

Include evidence of family members contributing towards or condoning the abuse, as a static factor for them, that either precludes suitability to care for child(ren) or requires specific change to be evidenced before doing so.

8. The range of views of parties and significant others

This section has a vital opinion-sharing purpose:

- *Set out and analyse the individual's views about what should happen for the child/ren in the future.*
- *Facts should be confined to those relied upon in evidence.*
- *Where possible, an indication of whether the facts are accepted or contested should be given here.*

8.1 Mother's views

This can also be useful in reflecting some of the dynamic factors – insight and attitude towards her experience of abuse and attachment to the abusive partner; ability to recognise the harm caused to the children.

8.2 Father's views

This may reflect some of the dynamic factors – insight and accountability for the harm he caused the children and their mother; sense of ownership and entitlement regarding the children; remorse and empathy; level of genuine motivation to make genuine change and place children's welfare at the centre of his thinking and actions from now on.

2. The social work chronology (last two years)

- *List significant events which can be evidenced. It may be helpful to include details of the nature of assessments carried out, family engagement, interventions and their successes. Please note there is no need to include detailed supervision notes here.*
- *Focus on the **last two years** unless prior events are felt to be both significant and relevant, then provide a summary drawing out key incidents or events in the box, below [NB delete this guidance text before submitting].*

Date	Incident or sequence of incidents relevant to the child's welfare	Significance
	This can help with your analysis of risk and vulnerability factors: Actions by either parent that are linked to static factors of concern; attitudinal and other dynamic (changeable) factors which evidence a move towards or away from safe enough parenting.	