Chronologies

A Chronology is a list in date order of significant events in a child or young person's life and a concise record of fact.

A good chronology can help us carry out more effective assessments. We can analyse the facts in a young person's life to spot patterns, risks and opportunities. A chronology is not an assessment, nor is it an end in itself.

It can help you understand what is happening in the life of a child or family and is also useful for other workers (e.g. emergency duty workers, agency workers or others who are covering a case)

Chronologies are also useful ways to help us work more closely with children, young people and families. They should be shared with families. We can share the positives on the child's journey but also show why we are worried.

Chronologies allow us to check out our thinking, gives an opportunity to critically reflect on the child's lived experience over a set period of time, identify repeating patterns and outcomes, risks and timescales and identify/prevent "drift".

Coventry Safeguarding Children PARTNERSHIP

One Minute Guide

Chronologies and Genograms

November 2021

Benefits of keeping up to date Chronologies and Genograms

It is immediately ready for court allowing people to make good decisions

You can use it to complete assessments, highlighting gaps and missing details that require further assessment and identification, identify previous periods of professional involvement.

It will reveal risks, demonstrate patterns & cycles and show work already completed.

Genograms

A Genogram is a graphical representation of family relationships showing the quality and proximity of relationships and patterns across generations.

Genograms are more than a diagram/ family tree.

Genograms can be used as a visual tool to encourage young people to talk about their family, and can be approached as a 'work in progress', developed over time, allowing the young person to tell their story at their own pace. This enables the worker to more sensitively respond to elements of the story when and if the young person feels safe enough to share.
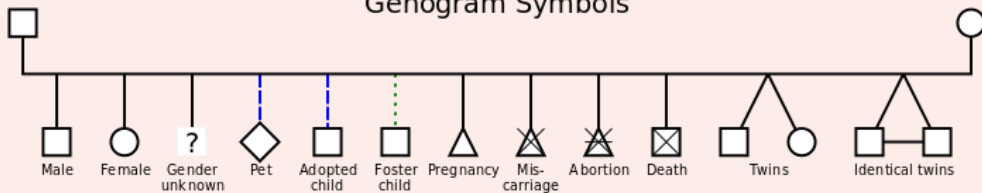
Genograms should be completed with families on your first home visit (or if this is not feasibly possible on your second home visit at the latest)

They should include the full names and age / date of birth of family members (and friends).
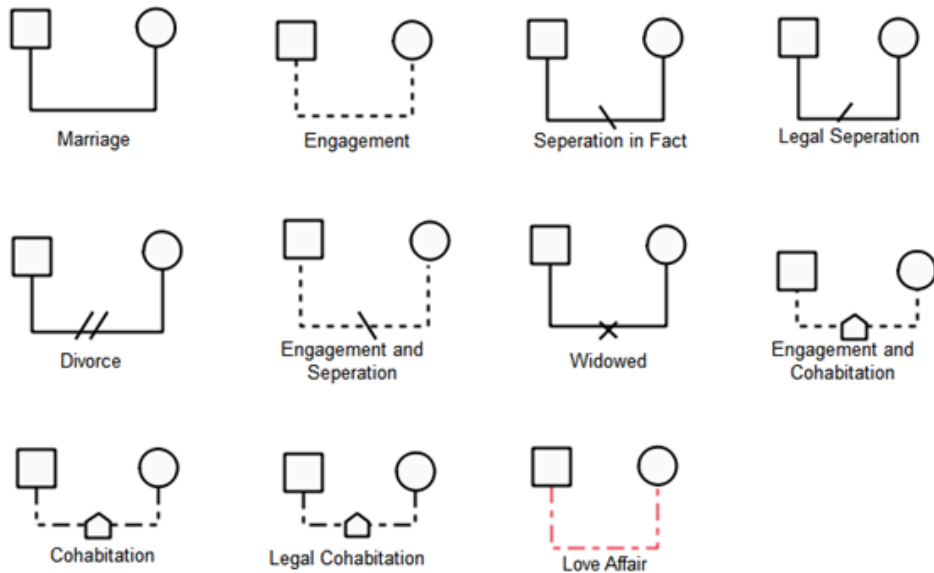
All children should have at least three generational genograms uploaded onto protocol. Relationships should be added and linked, ensuring people's files are not being duplicated.

The completion of genograms should help the Social Worker to understand who is in the family, who sees the children, the family dynamics, who is in the support network, the family history etc.
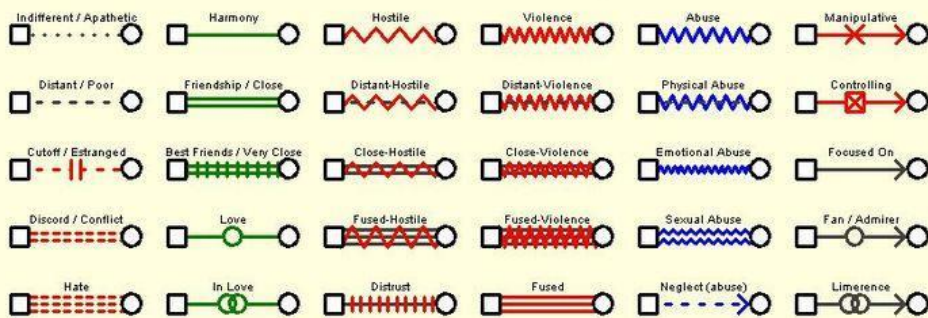
Genogram Symbols

Male Female Gender unknown Pet Adopted child Foster child Pregnancy Mis-carriage Abortion Death Twins Identical twins

Family Relationship Symbols

Marriage Engagement Seperation in Fact Legal Seperation

Divorce Engagement and Seperation Widowed Engagement and Cohabitation

Cohabitation Legal Cohabitation Love Affair

Emotional Relationships Legend

Indifferent / Apathetic Harmony Hostile Violence Abuse Manipulative

Distant / Poor Friendship / Close Distant-Hostile Distant-Violence Physical Abuse Controlling

Cutoff / Estranged Best Friends / Very Close Close-Hostile Close-Violence Emotional Abuse Focused On

Discord / Conflict Love Fused-Hostile Fused-Violence Sexual Abuse Fan / Admirer

Hate In Love Distrust Fused Neglect (abuse) Limerence

What goes into a chronology?

Family History - Date of birth of parents, other births, deaths, marriages, divorces, new partners and separations.

Serious stress factors - Unemployment, accidents, injuries, domestic abuse incidents, other critical incidents (leading to investigation), hospitalization, arrests, court appearances, prison, youth custody, deaths.

Parental History - Care history, mental health, crime, substance misuse, domestic abuse, relapses.

Police logs - Domestic abuse, drunken behaviour of carers, charges, proceedings.

Home - All house moves with dates and addresses, including temporary moves; people moving in; homelessness, eviction; changes of placement.

Social care involvement - Take up, refusal, loss of support and services offered to family; positive strengths or events; initial referral and assessment; specialist assessments; allocation of workers; transfer or closure of case; conference decisions.

Education - Change of schools; exclusions and prolonged absences; exam results or significant achievements; special educational needs.

Health - Significant ill-health; self-harming behaviour; periods in hospital; injuries; operations; diagnoses of chronic or disabling conditions; patterns of missed appointments; evidence of neglect such as tooth decay.

This is not an exhaustive list – use your professional judgement. Seek advice from your safeguarding team.

You do not need full information to start a chronology, it can be started with single agency information.

Key Contacts and Further Information

- **Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership**
- **GENOGRAMS: When a picture is worth a thousand words**
- **Coventry Children's Services Tri-x: Chronology Practice Guidance**
- **Recording Guidance and Expectations**