



CPC Multi-Agency Child Chronologies (MACC) Guidance

**Getting it Right
in Perth and Kinross**
Helping children be the best they can be

Interim @ 4 August 2011

What to do if you are worried about a child or young person?

If you are worried or concerned about a child or young person you should contact the Perth and Kinross Child Protection Duty Team or Tayside Police Public Protection Unit:-

Perth and Kinross Child Protection Duty Team - (24 hours)	01738 476768
Tayside Police Public Protection Unit	0300 111 2222
In an Emergency	Call 999

Child Protection – It's Everyone's Job

Document Control

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Multi Agency Child Chronologies (MACC)

Preface

This interim guidance has been produced by Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee to assist all practitioners and managers working with children, young people, parents and carers who may, at any time, be required to develop and/or maintain and/or contribute to a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC).

This interim guidance is for **all** practitioners and managers working with children and families across the public, private and third sectors in Perth and Kinross. This guidance should **complement**, not replace, any existing single service and/or agency chronology guidance.

In particular, this interim guidance has been incorporated into and supports the recently published – [Perth and Kinross Getting it Right for Every Child Practitioner's Guidance 2011](#).

Introduction/Background

It is widely accepted that vulnerable children and families are best protected and their immediate, short and long term needs met, when individual practitioners, services and agencies, supporting and/or working with them, actively work together and effectively share and exchange information.

Single factors, incidents and/or one off events, in themselves, may appear to be relatively harmless and insignificant. However, where these escalate, multiply and/or compound each other, the consequences, particularly for children and families, can be serious and the outcome devastating.

Policy Context – Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs are met. Children and young people should **get the help they need, when they need it** and their welfare is always paramount.

Here in Perth and Kinross we support the ethos that **child protection is everyone's job and everyone's responsibility**. We consider this to be a shared responsibility for all practitioners and managers across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Scottish Government has set out a vision that all Scotland's children and young people will be **successful learners; confident individuals; effective contributors; and responsible citizens**. This depends very much on how well they have been

supported to develop their well-being. All services/agencies in contact with children and young people **must** play their part in making sure that young people are **safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible** and **included**. This approach demonstrates our individual and collective commitment to **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** across Perth and Kinross.

The entire [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC) approach is best illustrated by the [My World Triangle](#), the [Well-Being Indicators](#) and the [Resilience Matrix](#) shown at Appendix C.

However, there are five key questions all practitioners should consider when considering children's needs:-

1. ***What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?***
2. ***Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?***
3. ***What can I do now to help this child or young person?***
4. ***What can my agency do to help this child or young person? and***
5. ***What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?***

The former Scottish Executive's Child Protection [Audit and Review](#) (2002) '**It's everyone's job to make sure I am alright**' underlines the importance and purpose of individual case records having a chronological history:-

Recommendation 1 (paraphrased)

"To ensure that practitioners have access to the right information at the right time, and in particular ensure that – "Where there have been concerns about possible abuse or neglect, schools, police, health service and social work service files should contain a succinct, readily accessible chronology of events or concerns which can be easily referred to should a further incident or concern arise. This chronology should contain information relating to the child and, where known, information relating to other people in the child's life, for example, any previous deaths of children of a mother's new partner".

This is further supported by a number of recent inquiry reports, significant case reviews and the following two key policy developments:-

- Scottish Executive (2004) Protecting Children and Young People: [The Charter](#); and the
- Scottish Executive (2004) Protecting Children and Young People: [Framework for Standards](#).

Social work assessment has always been concerned to consider past events and their relevance to a person or families' current situation. Past life events are found in most of the indicators of risk which have been produced. (SWIA 2010).

What is a Chronology?

Chronologies have become one of the most talked about and least understood tools in modern child protection work practice. Between and across services and agencies, there is no single, agreed definition and understanding of what constitutes a chronology. It means different things to different services, agencies and indeed practitioners.

There are many definitions of a chronology for example:-

'A list in date order of all the major changes and events in a person's life.'

'A chronology seeks to provide a clear account of all significant events in a child's life to date, drawing upon the knowledge and information held by agencies involved with the child and family.'

'The purpose of a chronology is early indication of emerging patterns of concern.'
(SWIA 2010)

It is clear that *'one size does not fit all'* and that there are various models and requirements of a chronology depending on the purpose, all of which will contribute to a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC).

What is a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC)?

A multi-agency child chronology (MACC) is a gathering together of single service and agency events, incidents, milestones and circumstances in a child's life, which are considered to be **significant** by individual practitioners. These events etc can be past or present; and may be interpreted as strengths and/or concerns;

A MACC should only include what has been described as the **headline messages**, which clearly signpost to more detailed information held by single services or agencies – and recorded within the service/agency's own chronological record. To be useful, it must be kept up to date through the contributions of all relevant services and agencies to inform risk assessment review and decision making.

A MACC must be managed effectively and it must be:-

- **Factual, accurate and evidence-based;**
- **Succinct – If every event, incident, milestone and circumstance etc is recorded, then the multi-agency chronology loses its value and impact;**
- **Simple in Format – Thus ensuring that information can be efficiently managed, merged and sorted; and**

- ***In the agreed Typed Format – In the first instance, all contributions should be submitted in Microsoft Word Template format, by email if possible;***

Multi-Agency Child Chronology – What might constitute a Significant Event?

Within the confines of this guidance, it is not possible to specify what type of incidents and/or events are considered **significant** enough to warrant inclusion in a Multi-Agency Child Chronology. In most cases, practitioners will require to exercise their own professional judgement.

Any changes, which are considered to have a key impact on the child, whether they be positive or negative, a strength or a weakness, should be considered as a possible significant incident and/or event.

However, the following generic list provides some guidance for practitioners. A significant incident and/or event could include:-

- ***Any changes that indicate a change in the child's child protection status, including protective factors, risk and legal status;***
- ***Changes in the child's family circumstances including the immediate family structure and/or the presence of any significant adults;***
- ***Changes in the child's domestic and/or living arrangements and/or environment;***
- ***Changes in the child's physical health, mental health and/or emotional well-being including acute admissions, failed appointments;***
- ***Changes in the child's developmental growth and/or normal pattern of behaviour;***
- ***Changes in the child's educational performance including exclusion and/or removal from education and/or home education;***
- ***Changes in the parents and/or carers physical and/or mental health and well-being including parental substance misuse and learning difficulties;***
- ***Changes in the service and/or agency supports, including changes of key workers, gradual or sudden withdrawal from service and/or agency support; and***
- ***Changes in the behaviour of the parents and/or carers that is seen as difficult, hostile, evasive, threatening, non-compliant and/or uncooperative including any criminality;***

What it is not?

A MACC is **not** a replacement for individual professional practitioner judgment and/or simple *gut feeling*. It is **not** a replacement for direct discussion between practitioners, both intra and inter-agency. It is **not** a replacement for early identification, intervention and support. It is **not** a substitute for case recording. It is **not** a replacement for risk assessment. It is **not** an end in itself. Likewise, a MACC is **not** a list of every single contact with a child or young person, but supports analysis and decision making.

When should a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC) be developed?

There are a number of occasions when it may be necessary to develop a MACC. It is outwith the scope of this guidance to specify each and every occasion where a MACC may be called for.

However, a MACC may be called for as:-

- **part of an assessment/planning process to identify immediate, short term and longer term needs, risks and resilience;**
- **part of a review process to identify improvement, outcomes or otherwise;**
- **part of a case file audit and/or review process to identify good practice;**
- **part of a significant case review and/or inquiry; and**
- **a requirement for taking forward a child/young person towards permanence both for presenting to the permanency panel and for the legal process;**

An increasing number of adults are requesting access to their personal case records in order to understand events in their lives. The chronological record has been proven to be a critical record which initially shows when key changes or events happened in their childhood which can then enable them to explore further details in the case file.

What are the benefits of a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC)?

Practice and research has shown that multi-agency child chronologies can be extremely important in identifying critical events in the lives of children and young people and can assist practitioners in decision making when working together with vulnerable children and families.

When a MACC is collated together accurately, it provides practitioners with a useful history of significant events; timeline in terms of single service and/or agency practitioner involvement and the effectiveness and/or failure of previous intervention/involvement/support. It provides practitioners with an accurate and fuller picture of the whole case and highlight gaps.

When a MACC is further analysed, it provides practitioners with a valuable tool by which to consider the immediate cumulative impact on a child or young person, both in the short term and in the longer term. It allows practitioners to consider the child or young person's well being, in keeping with the *GIRFEC* practice model, to identify changes, trends and/or patterns, which may be suggestive of potential risk of harm.

Who is responsible for developing a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC)?

It is essential that a MACC is owned by a **Lead Professional**¹ who will co-ordinate its development, between and across relevant practitioners, services and/or agencies. This may be a retrospective exercise in the first instance before becoming an ongoing record.

There is however an expectation that it is the responsibility of each service and/or agency to ensure that they have in place a mechanism to identify and collate all known events etc, considered **significant** in a child or young person's life over time.

Individual services and/or agencies should have in place their own arrangements for the compilation of a Single Agency Chronology.

It is also expected that any service and/or agency practitioner that contributes to the protection of children and young people, will provide up-to-date and accurate information when a MACC is being developed.

Identifying and agreeing who should take on the role of the Lead Professional remains a matter for local decision and agreement. The Lead Professional is responsible for ensuring the collation of the MACC and all services and/or agencies are expected to contribute to the MACC. The process will work best when there is a shared sense of responsibility by all for gathering, recording and passing the information to the Lead Professional.

What might a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC) look like?

At present, information from services and/or agencies and/or practitioners should be collated by the Lead Professional and placed chronologically on a Microsoft Word Template. A Template Format is shown at Appendix B.

¹ Definition of Lead Professional – See [Perth and Kinross Getting it Right for Every Child Practitioner's Guidance 2011](#)

Commissioning a Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC)

There are a range of different circumstances in which a MACC might be identified as being required. However, core arenas for this include Integrated Team Meetings (ITMs); Pre-Birth Assessment Meetings; Professional Network Meetings; Child Protection Initial Case Conferences and Additional Support Needs meetings. This is not an exhaustive list and practitioners are required to use their judgement and to initiate a MACC where it would clearly inform further assessment.

At present, social work practitioners, acting as the Lead Professionals, will continue to record Chronologies on the existing SWIFT database. However, included in the text box there must be a brief description of the **ACTION TAKEN** where appropriate. See the illustration shown at Appendix B.

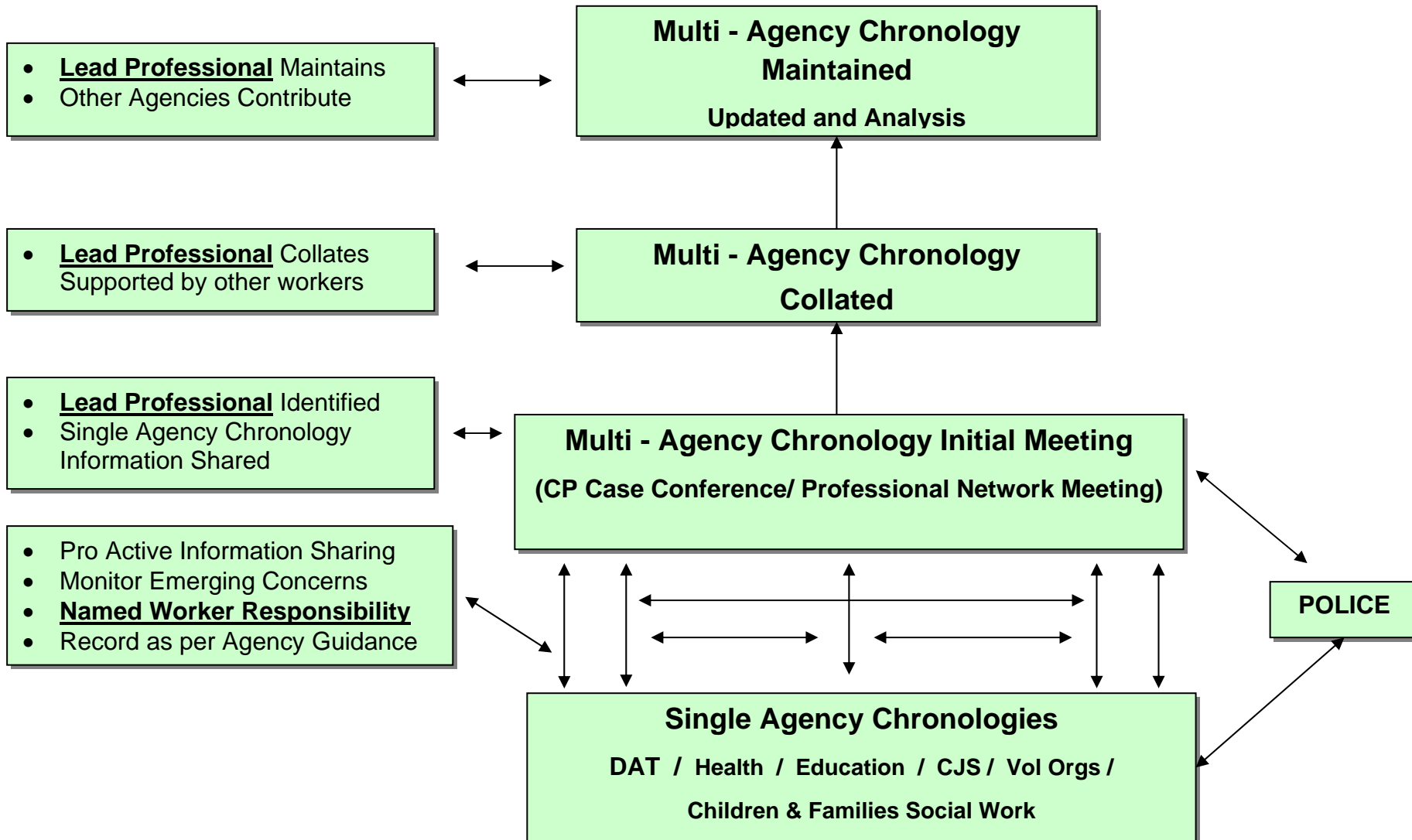
Other service/agency practitioners should continue to use their own systems and/or databases to record chronological information. However, the Template shown at Appendix B can also be when asked to contribute to a MACC.

Conclusion

This interim guidance on MACC has been informed by national and local policy developments, inquiry reports, significant case reviews, inspection reports and research. However, Perth and Kinross CPC acknowledges that further work on developing MACCs will be required.

Multi- Agency Child Chronology – Practitioner’s Flowchart

Appendix A

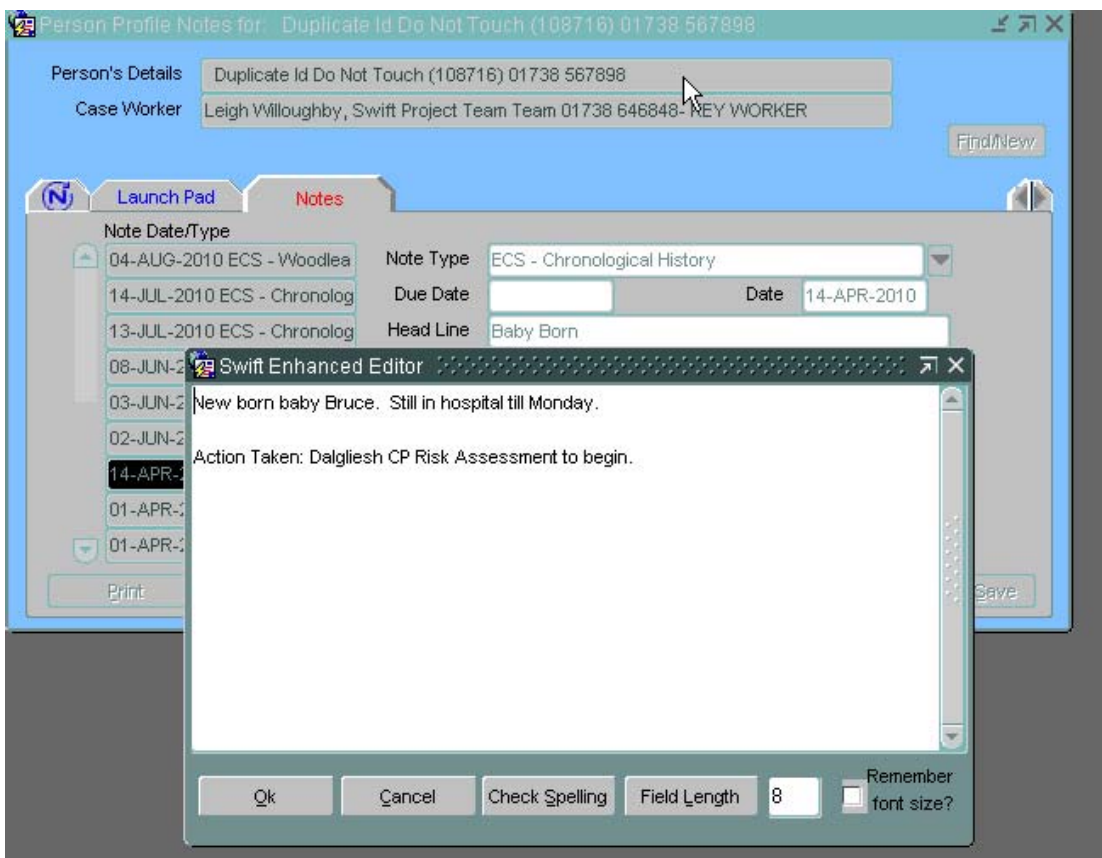


Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC – Social Work)

Updated Guide on Recording ECS - Chronological History

In order to record actions within a Chronological History, a sentence needs recorded stating:-

Action Taken: "What action taken to be typed here" This will then appear on the chronological history print.



If you have any queries or require help, please contact SWIFTHelp@pkc.gov.uk or Telephone 01738 476899

Multi-Agency Child Chronology (MACC) – Other Service/Agency

Full Name of Child or Young Person:

Age and Date of Birth:

Place of Residence:

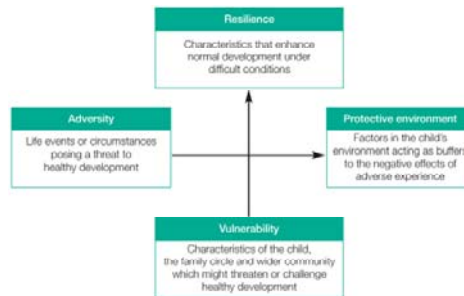
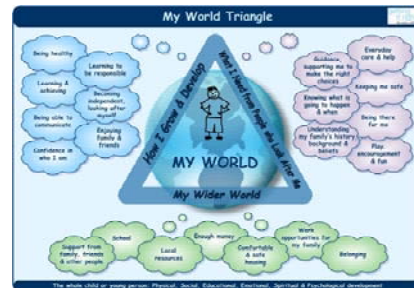
Status of Child:

Lead Professional:

Date	Significant Event	Service and/or Agency	Recorded By	Action Taken

Elements of the GIRFEC Practice Model

- My World Triangle
- Well-being wheel
- Resilience matrix



The GIRFEC Practice Model

