

Chronology 7 minute briefing Guidance Note

Seven minute briefings are based on research which suggests that seven minutes is an ideal time span in which to concentrate and learn. The technique is widely used in various professions. Learning for seven minutes is manageable in most settings and learning is more memorable if it is simple and not clouded by other issues and pressures.

Why it matters

Increasing pressure on services can make it difficult to release staff for training, but there is still a need to keep learning and developing to maintain a skilled workforce. These short, team based learning events should be a helpful way to support learning.

What to do

Managers should present briefings to their staff on a regular basis. It is important to make the topic relevant to your service. The briefings should not be mixed in with the ordinary day to day issues of the team as this will diminish their impact.

Delivery

The briefing should be delivered face to face where possible to ensure it is not misunderstood, that there can be discussion of the subject and it does not become lost in other paperwork or emails.

Timing

Their brief duration should also mean the briefings hold people's attention, as well as giving managers something to share with their staff. The structure of each briefing is the same, making it easier to find the information.

Information and further discussion

The content is a mixture of new information or a reminder of basic information, with a challenge to think about the application to your service or team.

Each briefing stands alone, even without discussion and also, if time is allowed for conversation, this is likely to enhance learning in the team.

Where possible there is signposting to further information on the topic.

All agencies completing the briefing should record or evidence how they have used the 7 minute briefings via the action plan.

About the Chronology of Significant Events 7 minute briefing

- This practice brief provides some useful information and links to resources for professionals and services to assist them to improve their practice compiling chronologies and using them as a tool to improve outcomes for children and young people
- This information will be relevant to professionals in Ayrshire working with children, young people and their families.

Background to this resource

- The Multi-agency File Audit Report from the audit carried out in November 2024 showed that the use of integrated chronologies requires to be improved by all members of the Team with the Family.
- Learning Reviews carried out during 2023/2024 showed not all practitioners were contributing to an integrated chronology or using it within Team with the Family meetings.

1. Why do children and young people need a Chronology of Significant Events?

Every inquiry into a child's death in the UK over the last 20 years, and the 2001 report of the audit and review into child protection practice across Scotland, has demonstrated clearly that effective sharing of information within and between agencies is fundamental to improving the protection of children and young people. Lord Laming, in his report into the death of Victoria Climbié (2004) was unequivocal in stating: "I regard the inclusion in any case file of a clear, comprehensive and up-to-date chronology as absolutely essential".

2. What is the purpose and function of a chronology?

A chronology seeks to provide a clear account of events in a child's life to date, drawing on the knowledge and information held by each agency involved with the child/young person and family. A chronology may provide an early indication of an emerging pattern of risk and concern. This may be evident by gradual and persistent withdrawal from protective factors such as non-attendance or avoidance of health appointments and non-attendance at nursery/school alongside a frequent attendance at A&E or GP on-call service. Concerns such as domestic abuse, problematic substance use, other concerns impacting on the wellbeing of the child and referrals to the Children's Reporter should be recorded. A single incident, no matter how significant or insignificant it may appear itself can take a greater importance in the life of a child/young person when placed in the context of a time-lined chronology that is shared.

3. Core Elements of a Chronology

From the [Care Inspectorate Guidance](#):-

This guidance lists the Key Characteristics of a chronology and the following Core Elements:-

- **Key dates** such as date of birth, life events, moves (area, school, care settings etc)
- **Facts** such as a child's name placed on the child protection register,
- **Transitions**, life changes.
- **Key professional interventions** such as outcomes of reviews, hearings, tribunals, court disposals, MARAC, Team with the Family meetings etc
- **A very brief, succinct note of an event** – for example, a fall down stairs, coming to school with a bruise, a registered sex offender whose car keeps 'breaking down' outside a primary school. It is imperative that the **impact on the child/young person** is recorded as in 2017 inspectors found that this was not the case within many of our chronologies.
- **Enough information for the entry to make sense.** Statements like: "...[the individual] behaved inappropriately..." do not necessarily have sufficient detail for members of the Team with the Family to understand what has happened.
- **Actions that were taken**, if no action was taken explain why.
- **Not opinions** – these may be for the case record, but the strength of chronologies lies in their reporting of facts, times, dates etc. They are factual and evidence based.

From the [National Guidance on Single Agency and Integrated Chronologies](#):-

A chronology is not a record of an agencies involvement it is a record of significant events that impact on the child/young person's life. This may include positive or negative changes in:-

- Family Circumstances e.g. separation, divorce, bereavement, imprisonment, change of address, birth of a sibling, change of school, homelessness etc.
- Physical and mental health and wellbeing of the child or a close family member.
- Performance, lack of engagement, contact arrangements, exclusion etc.
- Identification of Wellbeing Needs, Additional Support Needs.
- Child's Plan including LAC or Child Protection or Co-ordinated Support Plan.
- Social inclusion, bullying, positive support networks etc.
- Outcomes/impact on the child of Team with the Family meetings, Children's Hearings etc.
- Threats of incidents of violence from child or parents.
- All relevant concerns or positive improvements.

4. Compiling a chronology

- Deciding on the purpose of compiling a chronology in the context of the assessment of the child/young person. It may be as part of an assessment process or for a learning review.
- Identifying the key events and their impact on the child/young person.
- Making sure that what is recorded is accurate and in date order.
- Recording facts, significant events in the child/young person's life.
- Taking account of the perspective of the child/young person and parent(s)/carer(s) at the centre ie understanding the significance of events for them.

Not all information held in a single agency chronology will be relevant and proportionate to be shared in an integrated chronology. Professional judgement will be required when assessing relevance to the purpose for which it is required. In particular, care should be taken not to produce unmanageable lists of events that make it impossible to identify risks or patterns of behaviour.

Chronologies have a wider application than risk assessment and management. A chronology can be a valuable tool for planning and supervision. When staff are very busy juggling many different demands, progress in working with a child/young person and their family may drift. Several months can pass without any action and such unacceptable delay is not always easy to identify from a record. A chronology of significant events can help to flag up delay and drift.

How do I record a Significant Event?

- The Event (what happened)
- Action Taken (what you did)
- Outcomes / **IMPACT** (what the meaning of this is to the child/young person)

5. AYRshare Quality Assurance Standard 2 Chronologies

AYRshare is where the integrated chronology is compiled and shared.

For children and young people who have a Team with the Family and an AYRshare record:-

1. Add/share all significant events that are relevant for an Integrated Chronology into their AYRshare chronology as soon as they happen.
2. Ensure that members of the Team with the Family are contacts on the child/young person's AYRshare record.
3. Significant events should be added immediately so that the Team with the Family including the named person and lead professional receive a notification and are aware of any changes in circumstances when they are working with the child/young person. All members can then take appropriate action to protect or promote the wellbeing of the child/young person.
4. The chronology should be printed and taken to all Team with the Family meetings to aid discussion on progress and any needs identified and it should

be considered when decisions are being made. The chronology can be printed by date range so that only the significant events since the last meeting are taken along for discussion if that is appropriate.

5. The chronology should be analysed and inform the child's plan (My Plan).
6. The chronology should be reviewed and discussed with the child/young person and family before each Team with the Family meeting so that their views can be taken into account.
7. Keep the chronology succinct and factual. State what the significant event is and any action or outcome from that event. The impact on the child/young person must be clear. Any additional detail should be included within the Wellbeing Assessment and plan.

The [AYRshare Quality Assurance Standard for Chronologies](#) must be followed.

6. A Chronology is **NOT**

A chronology is not a diary or record of an agencies involvement with a child/young person, it is a record of significant events in that child/young person's life.

A chronology is not an assessment, it is informed by, and is part of, an assessment.

A chronology is not an end in itself but a working tool which promotes engagement with children/young people and their families. It requires to be analysed and used as a tool to identify emerging patterns and identify delay or gaps in provision.

It does not act for you! It is the responsibility of every member of the Team with the Family to ensure that any action necessary to protect and support the wellbeing of the child/young person is carried out as part of a plan (My Plan).

7. Chronology Guidance

There is [National & Care Inspectorate Chronology Guidance](#). The National Guidance covers single agency chronologies and integrated chronologies. The Care Inspectorate Guidance cites AYRshare as a good practice example of a chronology tool. There is also a [Chronology Checklist](#)

Chronologies, as part of a skilled and focused approach, can be an essential tool in caring for and protecting children and young people and by:

- bringing together issues identified by different agencies and presenting them coherently
- contributing precise data which can help practitioners to identify patterns of behaviour which will contribute to an assessment
- using their findings as an integral part of supervision and peer review
- strengthening the partnership between the Team with the Family and children/young people and their families.

Supporting documentation:-

[Team with the Family Guidance](#)

[Child's Pathway](#) and [Practitioner Guidance](#)

[Information Sharing Flowchart](#) and [Information Sharing Charter for Children and Young People](#) and [Information Sharing Charter for Parents and Carers](#)

[AYRshare Quick Guide](#)

AYRshare 7 minute briefing should be delivered within a reasonable timeframe as they go hand in hand.