



Assessments: Timelining Format

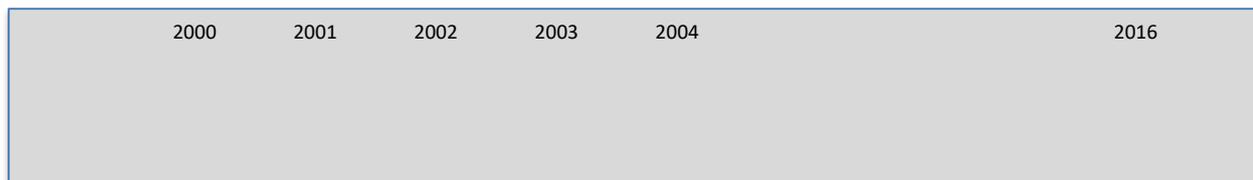
Introduction

The drawing up of a timeline is a key role in the multi-agency timelining meetings. The timeline records in graphic form the information shared and is used by the attendees as a basis for discussion. This approach has been used in Enhanced Case Management which a psychologist is present at (as part of multi-agency case formulation) and by Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service in multi-agency timelining meetings (which do not have a psychologist present). The meetings assist the YOT case manager to gather information about the child's history and background. Anyone attending the meeting who is familiar with the process and willing to assist, can draw up the timeline.

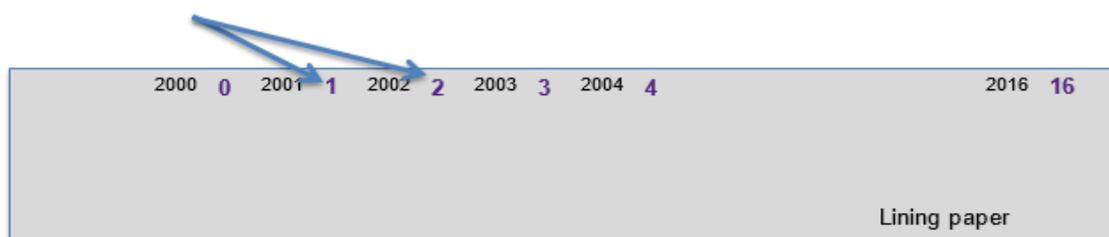
Timeline Layout

The timeline will be developed from a genogram of the child's family, information gathered through the AssetPlus assessment and other sources. It can be laid out as follows:

- The years of the child's life should be set out along one edge of the paper, starting with the year prior to the child's birth.



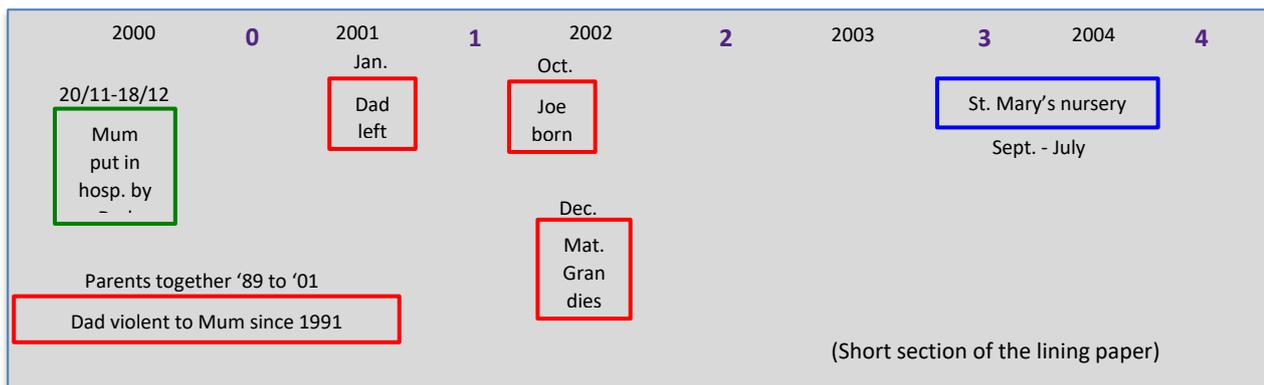
- The age of the child during each year should then be written in between the year dates, at around the time of year the child was born. This allows for the child's age to remain clear throughout. For example, in the illustration below, the child's birthday falls around the middle of the year, e.g. in June or July. Their age during each year is written mid-way between the year dates on either side.



Once this basic structure is in place, the pieces of information shared in the meeting can be added in. This includes, but aren't limited to:

- Parental relationship and circumstances prior to the birth of the child
- Circumstances of the birth – e.g. premature, difficult, emergency
- Post-birth issues including the baby’s health and maternal post-natal depression
- Changes in parental relationships
- Birth of the child’s siblings and half-siblings
- House moves
- School transitions
- Physical and mental health issues
- Parental/carer issues – e.g. substance misuse, illness, absences
- Social services involvement – e.g. safeguarding, looked after child, in need of care and support
- Offences committed
- Losses and bereavements
- Engagement and responses to previous interventions
- Relationships – e.g. romantic, role-model, mentor

Each of these events is marked on the timeline at the appropriate point in time. If an issue or event spans a longer period, then the note on the timeline can show this by using an elongated box (see “St Mary’s Nursery” in the diagram below).



It’s usually clearer to mark events using simple text with a box around it. The use of different colours also helps make different types of information distinct from each other. In the example above, family events are boxed in red, education is in blue, health is in green, etc.

The precision of the timeline is enhanced if the date and/or month of a particular event is marked within or next to the box. This also helps when timelines get very crowded with events and information and the exactness of dates becomes even more important.

It is important to note this is a representation of events and circumstances in the child’s life. It is only one part of the assessment. Identifying positive and supportive individuals and networks around the child are as important as are recognising the child’s strengths, resilience, aspirations and plans for the future.