# Chronologies

Chronologies are an essential feature of risk assessment in adult support and protection activity.

A chronology is:

* a summary of events key to the understanding of need and risk, extracted from comprehensive case records and organised in date order
* a summary which reflects both strengths and concerns evidenced over time
* a summary which highlights patterns and incidents critical to understanding of need, risk and harm
* a tool which should be used to inform understanding of need and risk. In this context, this means risk of harm to an adult

A chronology may be:

* single-agency
* multi-agency

A multi-agency chronology must comply with information sharing guidance and protocols in the way that it is developed, held, shared and reviewed; reflecting information sharing guidance in this document, including duties to cooperate under Section 5 of the Act. It must be **accurate, relevant and proportionate** to purpose.

A multi-agency chronology:

* is a synthesis which draws on single-agency chronologies
* reflects relevant experiences and impact of events for the adult
* will include turning points, indications of progress and/or relapse
* will inform analysis, but is not in itself an assessment
* may evolve in a flexible way to integrate further necessary detail
* may highlight further assessment, exploration or support that may be needed
* is a tool which should be used in supervision

A chronology, whether single- or multi-agency:

* is not a comprehensive case record and cannot substitute for such records
* is not a list of exclusively adverse circumstances

A multi-agency chronology is most likely to be developed by the council officer as part of inquiries, to contribute to the risk assessment and subsequent decisions. Contribution to the chronology is a collective responsibility. Forming a chronology should assist a shared understanding with and between those involved in the risk assessment, as well as to contribute to any subsequent support and protection plan, if appropriate. The perspective of the adult at the centre of the adult protection process should be explored to gain understanding of the impact of events and to check their perception of accuracy.

The format of a chronology should record purpose, authorship and date of completion. It should include the nature and sequence of events; outcomes or impact on the adult; sources of information; and responses to events as necessary for the purpose of this adult support and protection assessment.

Guidance is provided in the Care Inspectorate’s [Practice guide to chronologies](https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/3670/Practice%20guide%20to%20chronologies%202017.pdf) [2017](https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/3670/Practice%20guide%20to%20chronologies%202017.pdf).