**Genogram or Family tree**

**Guidance on compiling a genogram**

A genogram or family tree covering three or more generations may be compiled using the symbols below. Practitioners who have not drawn a genogram before should practice it with colleagues beforehand. In order to compile a genogram, the worker needs a large sheet of paper, pen or pencils (various colours if possible) and a table at which to work.

Other relatives in addition to parents and children can be involved in compiling the genogram. More than one session may be needed if the exercise is used to discuss the family’s history in detail and to enter significant dates and other information. Working on a genogram also provides the worker with an opportunity to observe family relationships, for example: how open family members are with each other, how well they respond to each other’s needs, how flexible they are and how much they know about each other (Protecting children. A guide for social workers undertaking a comprehensive assessment, Dept of Health [1994])

Hand drawn genograms should be scanned and saved to the agency’s electronic record as required.

Alternatively genograms can be drawn electronically using word insert tools.

Either way both can be copied and attached as appendices to wellbeing assessments for the convenience of service users.

**Genograms are a means of providing evidence informed practice**.

A **genogram** can also usefully be combined with a **shared chronology** or an **ecomap** to show the connections between particular individuals that may reflect inter-generational patterns of behaviour; neglect, not in work, alcohol misuse, drug misuse, mental health, violence etc.

Genograms analysed in an assessment can show intergenerational cycles of behaviour and most importantly can be used to show the availability of reliable support networks.

**Genogram symbols**

Unborn

Male

Deceased Termination or Miscarriage

A dotted line should be drawn around the core family living in the same household

**Relationships**

Male

Male

Enduring relationship (marriage or cohabitation) Separation

Male

Male

Transitory relationship Divorce

On the next page is a basic genogram of family Y showing core family living in the same household. Information can be added such as for example cousins and lines of relationship (see Ecomap guidance). Creativity and colour is often useful however it is important to remember, newly introduced symbols or coding must be shown in the key of symbols. If the genogram is to be relied upon as evidence in court, for example to support analytical thinking in an assessment of wellbeing, it is helpful to reproduce a printed version.

Three Generation Genogram of family Y, showing step parent and sibling/half sibling relationships in a family

Gfather (38)

Maternal Gfather (46)

Paternal Gfather (64)

Grandparents

Uncle (40)

Uncle

Uncles/Aunts

Stepfather (28)

Father (34)

Parents/Carers

(Inc step parents)

Child/Children

Male Female

Unborn

Living in same household

Divorced

Separated

Transitory relationship

Deceased Age ( )

Male Female

Unborn

Living in same household

Divorced

Separated

Transitory relationship

Deceased Age ( )

Key of symbols used

**UN born**

**Twin Child (1)**

**Twin Child (7 wks)**

**Child**

**(6)**