

LCS

Tel:

Fax:

**Child & Family Assessment****Child/ Young Person's Details:**

<b>Family Name</b>	Smith-Jones	<b>Given Names</b>	Ellie
<b>Actual DOB</b>	1/11/2008	<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Ethnicity</b>	A2 - White British	<b>Primary Language</b>	English
<b>Primary Address</b>	13 Main Street Macclesfield SK10	<b>Telephone</b>	074888 888 888
		<b>Mobile</b>	074888 888 888
		<b>Case Number</b>	200000
<b>Secondary Address</b>	1 Other Street Lichfield Staffs WS1	<b>Current Address</b>	13 Main Street Macclesfield SK10

**About the Assessment**

<b>This assessment was carried out by:</b>	Jenny Platt
<b>Danger Statement/ Reason for assessment:</b>	<p>The Court is concerned that Ellie has become subject to private law proceedings between parents where it seems mum has struggled to look after Ellie and she is now living with dad. This has meant that Ellie has needed to adapt to change and disruption.</p> <p>A section 7 report has been requested and the following areas will be assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With whom the child should live</li> <li>• Whether the child should see the parent with whom the child is not living</li> <li>• How often and for how long the child should see the party with whom the child is not living</li> <li>• The wishes and feelings of the child so far as they can be ascertained</li> <li>• Whether the parties individually can meet the physical and emotional needs of the child</li> </ul>
<b>Has someone with parental responsibility for the child/ young person given consent to contact being made with other agencies?</b>	Yes

**Child & Family Information**

<b>Does the child have a disability?</b>	No
<b>Is the child's name on the disability register?</b>	No

**Important People to the Child (Family and Network)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Katie Jones	Mum	01543 111 111
Edward Smith	Dad	01625 222 222
Wendy Jackson	Dad's partner – Ellie currently lives with Dad and Wendy and Wendy is caring for Ellie	01625 222 222

**Agencies involved in this assessment**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Macclesfield	Jenny Platt	Social Worker	01625 333 333

CIN/CP Team			
St. Peter's School	Catherine Clements	Class teacher	01625 555 555
St. Peter's School	Mrs. Hasley	SENCO	01625 444 444
School Health	Viv Hope	School nurse	01625 777 777

**What tools were used during this assessment?**  
**The minimum requirement is for a genogram and direct work with the child**

A genogram has been completed which identifies the support for Ellie – please see attached.

The three houses tool was used with Ellie relating to both her parents separately as they do not live together.

Signs of Safety mapping tool was used when gathering the information required for this assessment.

## Pen Pictures of the Child/ Young Person and Parents

**Summary of child and family history, including any previous or current professional involvement**

### Previous Involvement

#### **Staffordshire**

Ellie is recorded as having suffered “neglectful care” whilst living with her mum Katie in Staffordshire.

There has been a history of concerns around Katie using alcohol and the impact that this has had on Katie's ability to safely look after Ellie and make sure she has had what she needs. Katie's drinking has been a clear issue over a long period of time, and this means Ellie has grown up with uncertainty and inconsistent care as a result.

In her attempts to stop using alcohol, Katie has attended 5 detox programmes between 2015 and 2018; during this period, Katie has managed to remain alcohol free for four consecutive months.

Historically, when Katie had been drinking too much, Ellie has stayed for periods of time with her maternal grandparents. However, Ellie no longer has contact with her maternal grandparents as Katie has subsequently made allegations of sexual abuse towards her father and brother (this accusation has apparently not been explored by professionals).

Katie and Ellie have been supported in the past through Early Help, a Child In Need plan and by family members.

In 2017 a family meeting was held in Staffordshire when it was agreed that Ellie should live with her dad Edward Smith. Contact arrangements between mum and Ellie were to be agreed informally without using the Court process.

Initially Ellie moved in with her father who at the time lived in Crewe. He subsequently moved in with his new partner Wendy Jackson in September 2017 and they now live in Macclesfield. Katie was upset as dad had not informed Katie of the recent move, taking Ellie with them. During an informally arranged contact Katie took Ellie without telling dad where they had gone. Dad was worried enough to call the police who eventually managed to find Ellie with mum several hours later.

#### **Cheshire East**

As Ellie had moved to Macclesfield, Staffordshire children's services made a Child in Need transfer-in request on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The referral came with a recommendation that a Child Arrangement Order should be sought as this could provide legal security to support Ellie's circumstances.

A planning meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> December and it was decided CAFCASS (Family Court advice service) would be writing a report for the Court. The case was closed to Cheshire East children's services after an assessment was completed that recognised Ellie's changed circumstances were now safe and she was being supported by her dad and his partner in ways that met her individual needs.

	<p>Cheshire East then received further contact on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 which was a request from the Court for a Section 7 report to be completed by the local authority.</p> <p>Ellie has since been seen on 3 occasions during which direct work was completed with Ellie and the 'My Three Houses' tool was used in relation to both parents on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018.</p> <p>Dad Edward and his partner Wendy have been seen on two separate occasions (24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April). Genogram and mapping has been completed with Edward and Wendy during these visits.</p> <p>Katie was seen on 27<sup>th</sup> April and her views were ascertained during this meeting.</p>
<p><b>Child's Pen Picture</b></p>	<p><b>Ellie</b></p> <p>Ellie is a 10 year old girl who has long brown hair, bluish green eyes and her parents are both of white British descent. When I (Jenny) met her, Ellie was initially shy, but happy to discuss her family life once it was explained to her why it was important for her to talk and offer her views. She presents as a clean, polite and engaging child who has an appealing smile and calm nature.</p> <p>Ellie is a healthy girl; she has no persistent ailments or outstanding health appointments. When Ellie came to live with her dad and Wendy she was described by them as being over weight. It was felt that when living with her mum, Ellie did not have a well balanced diet; she was apparently given lots of 'junk food' and had few opportunities to do meaningful activity. Ellie's dad says that she is a little embarrassed by her weight so both Edward and Wendy have bought Ellie and Jessie (Wendy's daughter) new bikes and are planning to use them at weekends in the local park. Ellie is looking forward to this but like most children, Ellie loves playing on her i-Pad and this is her preferred activity.</p> <p>Ellie attends St. Peter's school and her teacher says when she first started, Ellie presented as anxious and she struggled to make friends. School provided counselling for Ellie which was described by Ellie as helpful. Her educational achievement on entry to this school was assessed as being lower than average. This was identified as not being due to poor ability but more to do with previous parenting and lack of support at home. Ellie's teacher says she is quickly catching up in all areas of work, including developing her social skills and is therefore making positive progress towards reaching expected targets for a child of her age and related level of ability.</p> <p>Overall, Ellie has settled in well in school and she has adapted positively to her new home situation; she now has a good network of friends in school and enjoys family support at home and in the community (see genogram attached for further detail of Ellie's family support).</p>
<p><b>Child/ young person's views and comments on their experience</b></p>	<p>I explained I am a social worker and Ellie said she has met social workers before and knows what they do – "help children who might be upset at home". I asked Ellie if she understood why I was involved as she did not appear upset and she confirmed she thought it was because she had come to live with dad and this needs to be made into a proper agreement about when she can see her mum.</p> <p>We explored what life was like for her when she lived with her mum using the three houses tool (original is attached):</p> <p><b>House of good things</b> – mum would take me places, she would look after me and the dogs and she would not pick me up late from school.</p> <p><b>House of Worries</b> – not being looked after, not cooking meals for me, not looking after the dogs and not taking me places.</p> <p><b>House of dreams</b> – wish mum would not drink, wish when she took me places she would not drink, wish she would not be mean to me.</p> <p>We then explored what it was like living with dad.</p> <p><b>House of good things</b> – I have no worries, that they look after me, I can play with Jessie and John and I get to go places.</p>

	<p><b>House of worries</b> – I have no worries.  <b>House of dreams</b> – that we have pets, especially a dog.</p> <p>Ellie also talked about when her parents split up when she was about 5: ‘It was good sometimes but not when she (mum) was drinking.’</p> <p>Ellie tells me that she has been living with her father since September 2017 and that she has had no contact with her mum since Christmas. She is very firm about not wanting any contact with her mum or her maternal sisters until the court date. It is clear from this statement that Ellie wants absolute certainty about what is happening and this is likely because she has lived with so much uncertainty in the past.</p> <p>Ellie tells me she worries when mum drinks (alcohol); sometimes she drinks early in the day and is “passed out before it is even time for me (Ellie) to go to bed”; Ellie is aware that when living with mum, “mum probably didn’t know if I was in bed or even in the house”.</p> <p>Ellie tells me “mum drinks lots of wine” and that “she has been in hospital lots of times”.</p> <p>Ellie tells me that “mum has a boyfriend” – he visits on Mondays, Wednesdays, and all weekend. He drinks in the pub and when he drinks in the home Ellie says she is in bed “but I know he is there because they are loud playing music and laughing”. When mum is not drunk she will cook for Ellie and “she takes me places”.</p>
<p><b>Parent’s Pen Picture</b></p>	<p><b>Father Edward Smith and Partner Wendy Jackson.</b></p> <p>Edward is a 44 year old white British man. He lives in Macclesfield with his partner Wendy Jackson. Edward moved into Wendy’s home in September 2017. Wendy rents a three bedroomed detached house in Macclesfield and has a secure tenancy. She has four children from previous relationships and three of her children live with her and now Edward and Ellie. When Ellie came to live with them, they converted the second living room downstairs into a fourth bedroom.</p> <p>Edward is a long distance driver and works various shifts. Wendy is a home care worker and has one adult client whom she visits three times per day.</p> <p>Although in the early stages of their relationship, Edward and Wendy do appear to be very happy with each other. Wendy seems very supportive of Ellie and I have observed positive interaction between her and Ellie with Wendy encouraging her and praising her, spending time together laughing and playing a board game.</p> <p>Edward has three older daughters from a previous relationship and they live with their mother. Ellie sees her paternal siblings on a regular basis as Edward has maintained a positive relationship with them and has an amicable relationship with their mother. Edward says that his extended family are very supportive of his current living situation and they are pleased that he has now become the main carer of Ellie as they were aware of her past circumstances.</p> <p>Edward and Wendy appear to be providing Ellie with all she needs for instance, making sure she is washed, has healthy meals and is helped at home to develop her self-care skills like teeth cleaning and getting dressed, ready for bed etc. Ellie’s emotional needs are being met by both Wendy and Edward as they have been observed to be providing Ellie with a stable and loving home, where she receives consistent parenting, guidance and boundaries.</p> <p>Ellie is now trying a range of new foods, as it was felt that previously her diet consisted mainly of unhealthy meals, and she appears to be happy and settled within a short space of time.</p> <p>Edward and Ellie have a good bond, and during my visit appeared to be always smiling at each other and sharing ‘secret’ jokes; Edward was gentle, stroking Ellie’s hair and he cuddled her when she went off to play with Wendy when we talked. Ellie has been introduced to set routines in her current home. Wendy has a busy household so she</p>

	<p>says routines are important to her. Ellie has been able to adapt to this new situation really positively. The family sit down for regular meals together, and they say childcare is shared between Edward and Wendy.</p> <p>School report that communication between Edward, Wendy and school is good. They have no concerns about the parenting that Ellie receives in the paternal home and have commented positively on the support Wendy gives to Ellie.</p> <p><b>Mother Katie Jones</b></p> <p>Katie is 49 years old; she has a chatty and open demeanour although was understandably upset at times when talking about her circumstances. She is currently unemployed and lives alone in a 3 bedroomed home in Staffordshire with two dogs which she says keep her company. Katie has two older daughters and she is also a grandmother of one; she says she enjoys spending time with all her children and now grandchild. Her daughters come to visit but she has not looked after her grandchild on his own as she says she is focusing on Ellie at present.</p> <p>Katie describes herself as an alcoholic who is struggling in her recovery process having relapsed at least 5 times in the past three years; she has been admitted to hospital in the past 6 months due to her alcoholism. Because of this on/off pattern of difficult behaviour, Katie recognises the risk of future relapse is significantly high but she wants to try to abstain in the long term. She is in regular contact with her GP and linked alcohol worker. She has blood tests completed on a monthly basis to help her stay on a programme of support.</p> <p>It appears that Katie's network of social support is limited (please see attached genogram for details). She does have a partner who does not live with her and she says he is "a drinker, although he's not an alcoholic like me". Katie tells me that when she is abstaining from alcohol her partner supports her as he will not drink in the house. However when she is drinking he will also drink in the house with her. We discussed how this relationship could be described as co-dependant rather than supportive and Katie says she understands it is not always helpful and "it probably wasn't very nice for Ellie".</p>
<p><b>Parent/ carers' views and comments on their child's experience</b></p>	<p>Edward's view on Ellie's current circumstances is that Ellie is better off living with him; he has been worried about her when she was living with mum and wishes he had done something about it sooner. He now feels he can provide Ellie with consistent good care, stability, security and safety "which she didn't get before". He feels able to ensure that she is not continually upset by being exposed to her mum's behaviours and he is keen that Ellie does not experience future emotional harm due to her worries about mum's alcoholism.</p> <p>Katie acknowledges that the care she gave Ellie was not good enough and that Ellie was placed at significant risk of harm on many occasions e.g. when Katie became so drunk she would pass out early in the evening and would not know whether Ellie was in bed or not. Katie says "I've let her down" and due to her current struggles with alcohol she says she would not be able to meet all of Ellie's needs consistently or safely at the moment. Katie is sorry that she is "not being a proper mum to Ellie" and she has not been able to look after her and make her happy. She agrees that although she would really love Ellie to come back and live with her she understands why Ellie would want to stay with her dad.</p>

## Signs of Safety Assessment

<b>What are we worried about?</b> (Harm and complicating factors)	<b>What's working well?</b> (Strengths and Existing Safety)	<b>What needs to happen?</b> (Next steps in working toward safety)
<p><b>Past Harm</b></p> <p>When living with her mother Ellie has often witnessed her mother getting drunk and then completely 'blacking out'.</p> <p>On one occasion when mum was taking Ellie to school, mum collapsed and fell on the ground outside school. Another adult had to take Ellie into school. Ellie was frightened when this happened.</p> <p>Sometimes mum has fallen asleep with a cigarette in her hand. Ellie gets frightened in case a fire starts. When she was living with mum she was constantly worried about what would happen to her mum; like the times mum has been rushed to hospital.</p> <p>The last time Ellie had contact with her mum, mum absconded with Ellie. Dad had to involve the police in order to know she was safe and have her returned home to him.</p> <p>Ellie is frightened and worried about future contact with her mum.</p> <p>Ellie has worried in the past when mum rings her. This is because mum will quiz her about things like: 'what are you eating; what's it like there?' This makes Ellie upset and she will hang up on mum. Ellie's siblings (maternal) have also tried to quiz Ellie about where she lives which also creates anxiety for Ellie. Ellie is currently refusing contact with both her mother and her sisters.</p> <p><b>Complicating factors</b></p> <p>Mum uses alcohol excessively and has recurring relapses; she has been admitted onto 5 detox programmes within a 3 year period.</p> <p>Mum's current boyfriend also uses alcohol and they drink together; this is not supportive for Katie as she needs encouragement to stop using.</p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Ellie is now living with her father and his partner where she is well cared for and has lots of love and encouragement. She has quickly developed a strong bond with Edward and Wendy. Jenny (social worker) and school staff have seen Edward and Wendy encouraging and supporting Ellie and making her laugh and smile.</p> <p>School, Edward and Wendy say that Ellie is more settled since going to live with her dad. Her confidence and ability is increasing in her school work and with her friends and peers.</p> <p>Ellie would like to see her mother in the future and feels able to be in control and offer her view.</p> <p><b>Existing Safety</b></p> <p>Ellie has told her father and Jenny that she does not want contact with her mother or her sisters until 'it goes to court'.</p> <p>Dad has recognised Ellie may not be safe when spending time with her mum and he has used his parental responsibility to protect Ellie. Dad has listened to Ellie who has said she does not feel safe with mum so is clearly listening to Ellie's concerns and taking action in relation to her wishes and feelings.</p> <p>Dad has stopped contact between Ellie and mum although he acknowledges that Ellie needs to have safe opportunities to develop a positive relationship with her mother; he is agreeing to monthly contact in the future providing mother is sober when the contact takes place.</p> <p>Mum says she knows that her parenting of Ellie whilst drinking was not safe. She has made sure Ellie was looked after by grandparents in the past when she used alcohol and Katie now agrees that Ellie should continue to live with her father to keep her safe.</p> <p>Mum has recognised she needs help to stop her drinking and she is involved with her GP and alcohol services; she is able to discuss her difficulty and</p>	<p><b>Next Steps.</b></p> <p>Child in Need (CiN) planning meeting is to take place on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at school; both birth parents have agreed to attend.</p> <p>Ellie's wishes and feelings will be obtained by Jenny using the '3 houses' tool and this will be presented at the CiN meeting so that Ellie's views, wishes and feelings can be included in any decisions being made about her.</p> <p>Living arrangements are agreed between parents who have listened to Ellie's view: Ellie will stay with dad and Wendy and she will have contact under a safety plan with mum (and her maternal sisters).</p> <p>Contact arrangements are agreed on a basic level (see attached plan) - plan to include support for Ellie to feel safe while having contact with mum (work to be completed with Ellie). Conditions relating to contact will be further clarified at upcoming CiN meeting.</p> <p>Section 7 report to be completed and approved by service manager by court deadline.</p> <p>Words and pictures explanation to be created with Katie for Ellie about Katie's drinking and how she has come to live with dad and Wendy.</p>

	shows insight regarding the impact her behaviours have on Ellie.	
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<b>Danger Statement 1</b>		<b>Safety Goal 1</b>
<p>Jenny, Social worker, School, Edward, Wendy and Katie are worried that if Ellie were to be returned to the care of her mother that she would not be cared for properly; like the times when mum has drunk wine until she passed out and did not know if Ellie had gone to bed safely or was in the house. If Ellie were to continue to live with her mother who is still currently struggling with her alcohol use, we are worried Ellie will fret all the time about her mum and she won't be able to settle and enjoy the things other children enjoy.</p> <p>We want Ellie to have a good relationship with her mum, but we are worried that Ellie was scared last time she saw her mum as mum ran away with her and the police had to be called to find them. If scary things keep happening when Ellie sees mum she might not feel safe seeing her anymore and she won't have opportunities to develop their important relationship.</p>		<p>Ellie will live in a safe, secure and loving home where she feels safe and happy, and doesn't need to worry about the adults who are looking after her. There will be a plan in place which says how we will make sure Ellie feels safe when spending time with her mum.</p>
<b>Scaling Question 1</b>	<p>Thinking of everything we know now and if Ellie were to return to the care of her mother, where would we rate things on a scale of 0 - 10 where:  10 = Ellie would be well cared for by safe and sober adults, she would never be left on her own and she would not be worried about mum's drinking  <i>and</i>  0 = Ellie would not get the care she needs, she would be left on her own and she would probably be worried all the time</p>	
<b>Signs of Safety Scaling</b>	1	
<b>Where each person scaled for scaling question 1</b>	<p>Jenny – 2 because mum acknowledges her behaviours are not good and she is working with professionals who can help her however, she is still struggling with her alcohol use and Ellie is really worried after the last time she saw her mum.  Wendy – 1 because she is worried about Mum's partner and his alcohol use as well  Edward – 1 because mum is in a better place than she has been before but he is worried that she's relapsed a lot in the past so she might keep going back to alcohol and not looking after Ellie properly  Katie – 5 because she thinks she would not leave Ellie on her own but she is worried that Ellie wouldn't get all the care she needs</p>	
<b>Bottom Lines</b>	Ellie must be cared for by safe and sober adults that she feels safe with and who can recognise she needs to be protected from harmful adult behaviours.	
<b>What will happen if the plan doesn't work (contingency plan)</b>	If contact with mum can't be safe and Ellie is really worried about spending time with mum we will need to stop contact with mum until it can be safe.	
<b>How is the child being kept safe now? If you are closing the case please outline the safety plan for the child</b>	Ellie is safe and well living with dad and Wendy. Section 7 report to be completed. The case will stay open under Child in Need agenda to support the development of a safe contact plan for Ellie with her mum and until the Court has made a decision about Ellie's permanence.	
<b>Decisions &amp; Further Actions</b>		
<b>Is the outcome of the assessment and s47 enquiry to convene a child protection conference?</b>	No	
<b>Suggested Outcomes</b>	CIN plan – until the completion of Section 7 report and Court decision to support Ellie.	
<b>Is this case being stepped down to a CAF</b>	No	

<b>Signatures &amp; comments (child/young person &amp; family)</b>	
<b>Child/ young person's view of the assessment</b>	Ellie agrees with the outcome of the assessment: she is happy that there will be a plan in place for her safe contact with mum and that it is recommended she stays with dad and Wendy
<b>Family view of the assessment</b>	<p>Edward and Wendy say they are relieved that social care has assessed their care for Ellie as being good and they agree with the recommendation she should remain living with them. They say they were pleased that Jenny took time to speak to them individually and together and were impressed that Jenny spoke to Ellie on her own and managed to ascertain her views on living with mum and now them as no one has asked her about this before. They are in full agreement with the assessment outcome as they believe a plan to support safe contact for Ellie is necessary as Katie still needs help to stop using alcohol.</p> <p>Katie says she has been upset by the assessment because hearing about the direct work with Ellie has made her realise the "horrible effects of my drinking" on Ellie and how Ellie has felt sad and unsafe when living with mum. Katie agrees with Jenny that she is not able to look after Ellie but she would like the situation to be assessed again in future when she has shown everyone she can manage her alcohol use and stay sober and safe for Ellie. Katie agrees with the outcome of this assessment for a CiN meeting and related plan as she says she needs help with making sure contact with Ellie will be safe.</p>
<b>Complaints procedure provided</b>	Yes
<b>Information on access to records provided</b>	Yes
<b>Other relevant/ available information</b>	Brief explanation of Cheshire East transition to Signs of Safety framework and what this means for families undergoing planning processes with the local authority e.g. 'family finding' work to create social support networks around the child and, fully including the child in decisions made about their lives by completing the 3 houses tool and explaining circumstances and plans with words and pictures
<b>Date of other information provided</b>	24/04/2018 (paternal family) 27/04/2018 (mum)
<b>Name of Social Worker completing assessment</b>	Jenny Platt
<b>Signature</b>	Jenny Platt
<b>Name of Manager</b>	Jo Stevenson
<b>Signature</b>	Jo Stevenson