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## Timelines

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Last review date: October 2021 (new practice guidance)

Approved by: Linda Hrstich-Meyer

Owner: General Manager Historic Claims

*Timelines provide an account of the role the State played in a claimant's life, generally based on the claimant's personal and family files as well relevant institutional records. Just as every claimant's experience is unique, so is their interest in understanding decisions which were made about their time in care or events which occurred during this time. Timelines should be factual, provide a meaningful account of the claimant's involvement with the State for the purposes of assessing their claim, and built upon by Claimant Support to support Historic Claims to deliver a seamless end-to-end claims process.*

*This begins with understanding what is important and meaningful to the claimant.*

*A claimant's interview or correspondence with the Ministry may raise questions about their time in care or decisions which were made. Factors such as the age of the claimant, the passage of time since they were in care, the trauma they may have experienced, and moving through multiple placements can contribute to confusion about their care journey. This can be helped by constructing a factual account of a claimant's care journey to share with them.*

*Timelines are constructed and built upon for two purposes; to support the assessment of a claim and to support a meaningful discussion with a claimant about their care journey. Having a visual aid at the point of providing feedback to a claimant may support them to reflect on their care experience and claim before the conclusion of the process.*

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### **Consider the purposes a timeline can serve**

- It provides a visual picture of the key events during the course of the claimant's involvement with Child, Youth and Family or its predecessor agencies; the events that brought the claimant to attention, the events that occurred during state involvement and those that led to involvement ceasing.
- It provides the context within which the claimants allegations sit.
- It shows a claimant's movements in and out of care, in and out of placements, and identifies the duration of those placements.
- It marks those periods of time that we did and did not have legal responsibility for the claimant.
- Significantly, for the claimant it can provide an overview of their involvement with Child, Youth and Family or its predecessor agencies, and either confirm their recollections of events, or assist them in understanding more about their care journey.

## **What to include in a timeline for the purpose of assessment**

A timeline with relevant factual information is created during the assessment process and documented in the Assessment template.

The timeline constructed in the assessment template is focussed on the information relevant to the assessment of the claim (*i.e. if the claimant was in care for a number of years and traversed multiple placements, but their claim is related to one incident, the assessment timeline can focus specifically on that period in their care journey*).

Timelines need to be factual, based on records, and easy to understand. Terminology used should be easy to understand, and where legal statuses are used, these should be referenced by their full order (rather than purely the section of the relevant Act) (*e.g. Guardianship order to the Director-General, s.31(3) Children and Young Persons Act 1974*). Placement names should be written in full (*e.g. Hamilton Boys Home*). Non-Government Organisation or section 396 provider placement details should be noted as such. Caregiver details should clearly define their role (*e.g. DSW caregiver, family/whānau caregiver*).

A timeline constructed during assessment may include:

- The key events that first brought the claimant to attention. This is particularly relevant where there are allegations relating to pre-care involvement.
- The legal basis on which the claimant was in care or under our control. Equally important is to note the periods of time when the claimant was not in the care of or involved with Child, Youth and Family or its predecessor agencies.
- The correct legislative reference under which orders were made
- The dates that placements start and finish (*e.g. Ministry placements, informal whanau care arrangements*).
- The dates that orders and agreements start and finish.
- Key events, relevant for the purpose of the assessment (*e.g. noting secure admission dates if the claim relates to treatment in secure, noting when a claimant was removed from a caregiver's home due to an assault*).

## **Additional information to consider including in a timeline for the purpose of providing feedback to a claimant**

Where relevant, and where it will form part of the basis of providing feedback to claimants, the timeline can be built upon by Claimant Support, which may include additional information that is relevant to the claimant's experience in care that was not relevant for the purpose of assessing their claim. This may include areas of interest directly raised by the claimant, or key issues that Claimant Support consider will support a meaningful feedback.

This may include:

- Key events that occurred for the claimant (*e.g. the death of a family member, the point a separation from a sibling occurred, moving to another part of the country*).

- Key dates and decisions relating to a claimant's time in care, to be able to respond to questions that claimants may have about their involvement with the State.

The nature of the timeline, where relevant, can be developed to meet the individual claimant's needs, taking into account what will be meaningful to them, any learning disabilities which may require a different presentation of the information, and support a discussion about their experience in care.

The presentation of the timeline (e.g. a table, visual timeline) for Claimant Support's purpose of providing feedback to a claimant will depend on the individual claimant's needs and nature of the claim. Where legally represented claimants request a feedback meeting in person, or where they specifically ask for a timeline, the same approach is given to considering what will be meaningful in a timeline.

**Approve** practice guidance – Timelines

Approve/Decline



Linda Hrstich-Meyer

General Manager Historic Claims

26.10.2021

Date