Template for medico-legal reports prepared in order to provide opinion evidence

**Letterhead
Date (typed)
Code (if applicable)
Report prepared for (all identifying information)**

 **Re:** Name of person for whom report relates + any other identifying information (A.K.A. name), DOB

**Author**

    Full name
    Author
    Work address
    Employment and experience
    Relevant credentials regarding expertise in relation to this particular case
    STATEMENT of ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of obligations as an expert witness (these vary with jurisdiction)

**Request for statement of opinion**

Date received, in what format, from whom and details of what they asked for

Any additional communication with this individual or his/her work colleagues

Any communication with others relevant to provision of this report to them (eg opposing counsel or teams, independent legal representative for child), practitioners involved in the management of the child or preparation of reports in your possession

**Information that forms the basis for this opinion**

All written documentation – identify each item (list) and date received (and how it was received)

All photographs and in what format (eg emailed as .jpg files, printed on ordinary white A4 paper)

All conversations/emails re the case – with whom, date

All additional information sourced by the author

Consultations with other professionals regarding the case - with whom, when, what format

Resource materials if quoted in report

Relevant negatives. State if you have not met or examined the subject or his/her relatives.

Details of any material or information you consider pertinent but you were not provided/could not access.

Comment on the quality of the material - particularly photos, x-rays

**Body of the report**

Background

Chronology (ie tell the story)

Information obtained from each item listed above

Quote others’ opinions if you rely on their interpretation – eg radiologist’s opinion. These should be quoted in full. Similarly quote surgeon’s operation notes detailing examination findings. If you    examined the investigations, say so.

Provide a commentary on what you glean from any visual materials particularly those that have not been reported ( eg photos)

**Statement of opinion**

Express opinion in terms of likelihood; do not use legal terms eg “beyond reasonable doubt” or “on the balance of probabilities”)

All (sensible) possible explanations must be considered

Give reasons why you favour one possibility over others and the evidence base on which you based this conclusion

State any factors that do not sit comfortably with, or cast doubt on, your conclusion

**Limitations of opinion**

List factors such as:

* + absence of information – conversations not had, people not consulted, material not available
	+ reliance on other’s interpretations and opinions
	+ preparedness to alter opinion if additional information becomes available

**Signature, date, jurat etc.**

**References if quoted/mentioned in report**