

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

MINUTE TAKING FOR ADULT SAFEGUARDING MEETINGS



1. Introduction

1.1 The following guidance is for use by anyone intending to take minutes at a Safeguarding Strategy Meeting or a Case Conference, and should be adopted for reference by the Minute Taker.

1.2 The Chairperson should identify the Minute Taker in consultation with their Line Manager as required. It is not appropriate for the same person to Chair the meeting and take minutes at the same time.

2. Preparation

2.1 Following discussions with the Chair/Team Manager/Social Worker, compile details of those required to attend (Name/Agency/Contact details) and agree who will send the invitation (template 'Invite').

2.2 Send invitations with sufficient notice of the meeting date, time and location and if requested attach the Agenda (template 'Agenda')

2.3 Liaise with the Chair or Team Manager before sending an invitation to the Service User or Carer. Mark letters with '*Private & Confidential*' and use the standard (template 'SU/Carer' letter)

- Collate the attendance list
- Gather background of case via Chair or read through previous minutes
- Collate and photocopy reports to be presented at the meeting
- Consider taking spare copies of any previous minutes
- Plan your time and your Chair's time to ensure a pre-briefing, debriefing and time to produce 'first draft'. Try to book a quiet office for typing up the notes
- Pre-briefing – meet with the Chair prior to meeting to agree the structure of the meeting and anticipate the content
- Clarify with the Chair arrangements in place to ensure you are able to keep track of the discussion and maintain accurate notes (e.g. can you interrupt or 'signal' to the Chair if you need a moment to clarify issues or catch up if falling behind)
- You may need to consider:
 - waiting room/area
 - pens/paper for participants

- seating arrangements/name labels on tables
- refreshments (NB: once the meeting begins the minute taker should not leave the meeting)

3. During the Meeting

3.1 At the beginning of the meeting pass around the attendance sheet (template 'Attendance List') and make a note of apologies and those who have not replied and pass to Chair.

3.2 Familiarise yourself with the names/details of those attending, using template 'Room Layout' and follow the Strategy Meeting or Case Conference Agenda for the meeting structure.

3.3 Sit in such a way as to ensure you can communicate with the Chair (ideally sit next to the Chair).

3.4 Introductions should include the Minute Taker, the role you fulfil and any considerations you (or the Chair) have made to help keep a good record of the meeting.

3.5 Your task will be made easier by a Chair who considers the following:-

- provides structure/time limits
- summarises information and points
- acknowledges the needs of the Minute Taker
- allows time for the actions to be written and summarises at the end
- helps the Minute Taker after the meeting to clarify issues and who provides feedback
- follows the guidelines for the standard meeting Agenda
- makes use of reports provided to the strategy meeting (you won't need to repeat this information)

3.6 Don't be afraid to ask "Do you want that recorded?" If you get lost or confused, let the Chair know you are having some difficulty. Try not to get distracted or involved in the discussions, clarify when necessary. Understand when verbatim notes are important and when to summarise the discussion.

3.7 Ensure that any additional papers circulated at the meeting are forwarded to you as the Minute Taker, electronically if possible, for further circulation.

3.8 Ensure that any follow up meetings are agreed and that a note is made of any date, time and venue so that the details can be recorded in the meeting notes.

4. After the Meeting

4.1 Debrief with the Chair – check and clarify your notes. Make sure you both agree and are clear about the discussions and any actions that are to be taken. Consider and agree with the Chair whether it is appropriate to circulate

the '**Actions**' sheet on its own immediately after the meeting agreeing that the full Minutes will follow.

This may be required in serious cases where there could be critical Police involvement or when the Police may be leading the investigation. This will ensure that urgent and immediate actions are not delayed.

4.2 It is also an opportunity to discuss any emotional impact the strategy meeting may have had for you.

4.3 Produce a 'first draft' for the Chair as soon as possible after the meeting (ideally within 2 working days) using the Strategy/Case Conference Minutes template.

4.4 Liaise with the Chair regarding circulation of the notes to the Service User and/or Carer, ensuring any information not shared at the meeting is not included in the minutes (template SU/Carer Std Letter). When the Chair agrees the minutes are to be circulated, Password protect the final version of the document against changes before sending out electronically and save the 'Final' version in a secure storage area as agreed by local procedures. See template for 'email distribution' wording.

4.5 Notes should be circulated within 5 working days of the date of the meeting.

4.6 For part attendees, provide them with minutes of the part of the meeting they attended. This should be agreed by the Chair and main attendees during the meeting.

4.7 Original hand written notes of the meeting must be kept for 8 years.

5. The Minutes should Include:-

5.1 The agreed meeting template should be used and will give guidance on the areas to be recorded and give prompts for the information required. The information for a Strategy Meeting must include the following:-

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Purpose of the Meeting (*to plan the Safeguarding Investigation*)
4. Details of the Allegation
5. Minutes of any Previous Meetings
6. Progress against Action Plan (*Refer to Action Plan document*)
7. Multi Agency Discussion
7. Investigation Roles Agreement
9. Agree Initial Investigation Plan
10. Agree a Safeguarding Investigation Plan (*Complete the Protection Plan Template. All Agencies to agree Protection Plan for Service User*)
11. Other Actions
12. Date of Safeguarding Conference

See Template for Case Conference document.

6. Amending Minutes

6.1 If an attendee of the meeting wants the minutes amending, the Chair may make the amendments if they agree with the suggested changes.

6.2 If the Chair does not agree with the changes requested, the person wishing to make the changes should provide the Chair with their comments in writing, to then be shared with attendees of the meeting and attached as an Appendix to the minutes, making it clear who the comments are from.

6.3 The person making the comments should agree that their comments will be shared. Otherwise, they cannot be included in this way.

6.4 Non-attendees cannot request changes to the minutes.

6.5 Changes cannot be made if a person does not agree with meeting arrangements, information provided, recommendations or outcomes

6.6 Minutes can only be changed if they do not reflect what was said.

7. After Distribution of the Notes

Guidance for internal administration after the notes have been distributed, including attaching the document to the Client's record, is detailed in the template Admin Checklist.

8. Templates

The templates listed throughout this guidance are available from the Safeguarding Secretaries.

9. Contacts

If you require further information, please contact the Safeguarding Adults Admin Team:

Email – safeguardingadultsadmin@peterborough.gov.uk
Telephone – 01733 452438