

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CASE RECORDING POLICY

Ref:	Author:
Effective from:	Approved By:
Review Date:	Job Title:
Team:	Date:

**Legislation, Central Government and other External Documents
References**

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

Slough Borough Council and Social Services Department References

- One Source Document
- Archive Policy

1.0 Policy Aim

To provide accurate and clear case recording to help ensure high quality social care services.

2.0 Policy

Organisational Expectations

- 2.1 The Council expects all staff to comply with this recording policy and will ensure that there are sufficient resources available to allow a high standard of recording to take place and be maintained; using the right people and developing better technology and partnerships that facilitate continual improvement.
- 2.2 Good quality recording will reinforce good quality practice and customer care, promoting equal opportunity, diversity and social inclusion. Good quality recording allows the Council to be confident about its decisions

and actions when held accountable to our customers, partnership agencies, auditors and inspectors.

3.0 The Scope of this Recording Policy

- 3.1 This recording policy provides an overarching framework outlining the principles and standards that all social care staff will be expected to comply with in order to ensure a more consistent and better quality service to its customers.
- 3.2 The policy outlines good practice and procedures that are consistent with the current legislative requirements and policy developments.
- 3.3 The scope of this recording policy excludes the arrangements for access to records policy and the archive policy. Each team within Education and Children's Services may have its own specific case recording requirements, however the principles and standards set out in this recording policy will always apply.

4.0 Definition and description of recording

- 4.1 Case recording is the written account of the social care department's work with or on behalf of an individual, their family or carers.
- 4.2 Recording details the individual worker's contact with the customer and others, the work to be done and its objectives, the procedures to be followed, the assessment of need, decisions about eligibility, the care plan, the provision of services, the timing, process, and outcomes of monitoring and reviews.
- 4.3 Recording draws on information and knowledge from a wide range of sources, including partner and other agency policies.
- 4.4 Recording must be accurate, appropriate, timely with all sources of information identified. As a general rule, the Council expects that recording is completed contemporaneously as case work progresses. This will usually be on the same day as contact, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Every contact should be recorded, dated, timed and signed.
- 4.5 Recording includes description, analysis and professional judgement. It is essential therefore that a distinction is made between fact and opinion and where there is a third party contribution.

3.0 5.0 The purpose of recording

- 5.1 The overall purpose of recording is to demonstrate and enable the

work of the department in the assessment, provision, monitoring and reviewing the needs of customers who may require or who are receiving a service.

5.1.1 This includes:

- An accurate account of the work of the department with the customer, their family, family carers, other relevant people and care providers, is maintained through accurate recording within electronic data systems and paper files.
- Recording enables customers to hold the department to account in terms of the work that has been undertaken with them.
- Good quality case recording allows partner agencies, where appropriate, to share information and to gain a social care perspective on the customer's circumstances.
- Case recording should be of sufficient quality to reflect and reinforce the department's policies, procedures and practice.
- Recording helps evidence compliance with the relevant social care and health legislation.
- Recording ensures that Social Care Services remain accountable to customers, Government Departments, and the local community for its actions (including legal liabilities and data protection).
- Accurate, appropriate and timely recording allows individual workers to reflect back on the work that has been undertaken and plan any future intervention.
- Social Care records provide an essential continuity to be maintained in times of departmental or staff changes.
- Recording is a key management tool for supervising and monitoring the quality of the work that has been undertaken.
- Case records can be used as evidence in court and other interagency forums; as the basis for inquiries, inspections, tracking and auditing purposes.
- Recording provides an essential contribution to performance management, the production of accurate business information, practice research, and quality assurance evaluation at all levels in the organisation.

6.0 Ethical dimension of recording

6.1 Staff should be aware of the ethical implications of recording information on individual customers. Many of these ethical dimensions are enshrined in the legislation associated with recording, such as the Data Protection Act.

6.2 Social Care staff should anticipate the implications of sharing information with other external professionals - information from our database may therefore reappear on the database of another agency as a result.

7.0 Responsibility for recording

- 7.1 The **allocated social care worker** (who may be a social worker, day or residential services worker or community or family support worker) has a professional responsibility to ensure that all information about a customer is appropriately, accurately and timely recorded on the customer database. The worker also has the responsibility; wherever it is appropriate, to share what they have recorded with the customer. This professional responsibility means that others undertaking particular aspects of recording (for example, specialist assessments, specific case work observations or events) or specific recording tasks (for example where business support staff complete recording on behalf of allocated social care workers), are doing so on behalf of that allocated social care worker, who retains overall responsibility for compliance with this policy.
- 7.2 **Home, Day, Family Support, Residential and other similar** staff have a professional responsibility to ensure that service-specific records are kept according to their own procedures and to ensure that appropriate information is shared with the allocated social care worker.
- 7.3 **First line managers and/or supervisors** have responsibility for ensuring that the quality of recording meets the principles, standards and requirements as outlined in this recording policy. Supervisors must always countersign records at summary, evaluation and closure stages. Contact sheets must be countersigned and dated by supervisors at a **minimum of three monthly intervals**. Supervisors must also note discussions, decisions and conclusions arrived at during supervision. All key manager to manager discussions, memoranda and emails must be placed on individual files. There should be regular review of client records to identify patterns, which may indicate cause for concern or at least investigation and assessment.
- 7.4 **First line managers** should manage workloads so that staff have sufficient time to record their work and case recording should be used in supervision to ensure that they accurately reflect the work that has been undertaken.
- 7.5 **Senior managers** will ensure that case recording is used in supervision arrangements to ensure that the quality of recording is in line with this policy, and that auditing process take place on a regular basis.
- 7.6 The **Council** will ensure that there are adequate resources in place to allow recording to be effectively and efficiently completed. That is, that there are: a sufficient number of PCs in each office; the office environment is conducive to recording; there is a sufficient number of staff employed; and time for training. Sufficient weight and support will be given to recording so that it is not seen as a burdensome adjunct to other activities. Recording is an integral part of the social care workers core activity.

8.0 Checklist of Recording Principles and Standards.

Each principle has its own set of standards that have to be complied with, in order to maintain a high standard of recording. The Council expects is that staff comply with them when recording;

PRINCIPLE 1:

Good quality recording is essential to accurately reflect the work undertaken by the Council.

It is recognised that good quality recording will reinforce good quality practice and customer care, in terms of promoting equal opportunity, diversity and social inclusion.

8.1 Standards

- *Case recording must reflect anti-discriminatory practice and demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of all people in the community*
- *Care must be taken when recording to ensure that confidentiality and the principles of the Data Protection Act (1998) are taken into account*
- *Managers are expected to read the files for which they are responsible and ensure the development of good quality recording*
- *Case records will be regularly audited by senior managers and counter signed*
- *There is an explicit expectation that recording is a core function of social care work and that some practitioners may expect to spend up to 40% or more of their time on recording.*

PRINCIPLE 2:

Recording enables customers to hold the Council to account in terms of the work that has been undertaken with **them**.

Case records are produced for the benefit of the customer as well as to document the Council's work. The record is maintained between the customer and the local authority not the customer and the individual worker. The record must also be compiled with the customer in mind, with regard to language, continuity and integration of entries from different agencies/practitioners.

8.2 Standards

- *There is a clear chronological narrative that makes sense to the reader.*
- *Entries are recorded by date of event, not date of writing up*
- *Where other workers are contributing towards cases of allocated social workers (or teams), opportunities are made for those other workers to contribute to the continuing record of service received and further developments/issues in the care of that person.*

- *Case recording should be easily accessible to the customer, written in plain English and based on facts verified with the customer and made with their consent.*
- *Records are presented in a format that is easy for customers to understand and adapted to their communication needs when necessary.*
- *Customers are provided with relevant case documents as appropriate, for example Care Plan and the Single Assessment Process summary documents, as a matter of course.*

PRINCIPLE 3:

Effective Partnership working is based on shared information

It is crucial that key information is shared, appropriately and in accordance with joint protocols, between all professionals working with the individual customer, regardless of whether they are providers, assessors, public/private or which agency they represent. The information proposed to be shared should be defined and explained to the customer, as and when necessary. The customer needs to give their consent to sharing information with other agencies in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

8.3 Standards

- *As a general rule, disclosures to third parties of personal information supplies by or about a client should be made with the clients awareness and consent, which should be recorded on the file. Exceptions to this rule include emergencies (eg. in cases of danger to the client) or where the client is judged incapable of giving consent (eg. a child under a certain age) and there is no parent or guardian to act on their behalf.*
- *Personal information about a client must not be disclosed to anyone who has no legal entitlement to receive it*
- *Workers identify themselves in the case record by name, agency and role, not initials, in the appropriate section of the database at the time of writing the entry - to ensure other readers of the record know who they are*
- *Everyone working with a customer can contribute to the ongoing record*
- *Everyone working with the database must record information to a standard pattern, in the 'right' screen*
- *All records regarding one customer are cross-referenced and compatible to ensure an easy transfer or integration of information*
- *Sharing information within the council is explicitly promoted and this standard should apply to all partner agencies, where appropriate.*
- *The information to be shared by external providers with the Department and vice-versa should be clearly identified at the earliest opportunity and defined for each customer's record*

PRINCIPLE 4:

Good quality recording needs to be supported by the availability of an effective, efficient and user-friendly database.

All social care staff working with customers must have access to Initial and Core Assessment processes for children. These are our main recording instruments for assessment and recording provision. Where paper systems exist they should complement this.

8.4 Standards

- *Information Technology should support and complement the recording policy and guidelines*
- *Policy on retention and archiving of documents must be adhered to..*
- *Induction includes reference to recording standards and a clear understanding regarding time to be spent recording*
- *Induction, ongoing and refresher training is available to all staff*
- *Training integrates 'systems usage' with exploration of social care values, language, quality of information.*
- *All staff receive guidance regarding what to include and what to leave out of records*

PRINCIPLE 5:

The maintenance of good quality recording with standards that are customer focussed, based on partnership working and placed on a database requires careful monitoring.

A coherent auditing system for case recording needs to be built into every specialism, at all levels of social care that monitors, assists and raises expectations.

8.5 Standards

- *Clear management instructions should be communicated oversight of files and quality of file entries*
- *There is an explicit expectation that supervision will include monitoring of record-keeping and guidance re standards of record-keeping*
- *Managers evidence monitoring of recording practice in supervision.*
- *An audit framework is established for each team, with 6-monthly internal quality audits taking place*
- *Audit checklist is reviewed regularly to identify weaknesses that need addressing*
- *Records are regularly checked for accuracy*
- *Managers ensure good use is made of existing procedure guidance.*
- *Guidance/ training is provided on expected standard of file entries to ensure they are objective, clear, concise, relevant.*
- *Quality recording guidelines are issued for providers - ensuring 'fit' between records, whether paper or electronically-based.*

9.0 *Public Information*

- 9.1 Our customers and the public will have clear information regarding access to their records, purpose of recording, sharing of confidential information, statistics, giving feedback and on complaints procedures.

10.0 **Procedure**

10.1 *Content of Records*

- Every contact should be recorded, dated, times and signed
- Information recorded must be accurate and relevant
- Evidence on which decisions are based should be clearly shown
- Records should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion
- Issues around ethnicity, culture, gender, disability etc should be identified
- Descriptions of the actual observations of the worker should be set out
- Unsubstantiated information will be recorded on the file only if it is considered to be of current or possible future significance. The status of this information must be made clear. Attempts should be made to check its veracity as quickly as possible
- All decisions must be recorded indicating who was involved in the decision making, what information was taken into account, the reasons for the decision, date decision made, and signed.

Recording of contact or meetings should include:

- Context:** Date
Where meeting took place
Who was present
Purpose of the contact
- Content:** Role of each person involved in the contact meeting
A summary of what was said by each person, including the views of the children or observations of the children.
- Assessment:** Social workers interpretation of the information obtained
- Action:** Plan of action agreed with the service user.

11.0 **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the _____ Manager and on a yearly basis on the date specified on page 1 of this policy.