

Safeguarding Adults Minute-Taking

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Introduction

The following identifies many of the issues an administrator may need to consider when asked to take minutes at a Safeguarding Adults meeting. The list is not exhaustive but attempts to provide a comprehensive framework from which to work.

Whilst intended for the administrator, it cannot be forgotten that the role of the Safeguarding Manager, as Chair of the meeting, is crucial in providing support to ensure that the administrator is able to carry out the tasks required.

Preparation

- Compile details of participants to be invited: Name; Address; Agency.
- Ensure invitations are sent with sufficient notice of the meeting date. Always liaise with the Safeguarding Manager before sending an invitation to a service user or carer. Ensure letters are marked "Private and Confidential" and use a standard letter template.
- Obtain background to the case from the Safeguarding Manager.
- Collate and photocopy any Safeguarding Reports to be presented at the meeting, ensuring enough copies and that pages are numbered, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Plan your time to ensure a pre-briefing and a de-briefing with the Safeguarding Manager as well as time to produce the 'first-draft' soon after the meeting.
- Pre-briefing: meet with the Safeguarding Manager to agree the structure of the meeting and anticipated content. The relevant template for minutes will be of use in this task, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Clarify with the Safeguarding Manager what arrangements will be in place to ensure you are able to keep track of the meeting and maintain accurate notes. For example, you may need to signal to the Chair in some way if you need a moment to clarify or catch up with points of discussion.
- You may need to consider:
 - waiting room or area
 - pens and paper for participants
 - seating arrangements and name labels on tables
 - refreshments, though please remember that once the meeting begins the minute-taker should not leave the meeting.

During the Meeting

- Make a note of attendance, apologies and those who have not replied. Pass a copy to the Safeguarding Manager.
- Familiarise yourself with the names and details of those in attendance.
- Sit in such a position to enable communication with the Safeguarding Manager, ideally next to them.
- Introductions should include you, your role and any considerations you or the Safeguarding Manager have made to help keep a good record of the meeting.
- To make your task easier the Safeguarding Manager should provide:
 - structure and time limits
 - summary of information and points made
 - support.
- Follow the structure of the relevant template when taking notes of the meeting, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Make use of Reports provided to the meeting where appropriate rather than repeat information.
- If you lose track of the discussion let the Safeguarding Manager know that you are having some difficulty.
- Do not participate in the discussions.
- Ensure that any follow-up meetings are agreed and that a note is made of any date, time and likely venue mentioned.

After the Meeting

- De-briefing: meet with the Safeguarding Manager to check and clarify your notes. Make sure you both agree and are clear about the discussions and any action that is to be taken. This is also an opportunity for you to discuss any emotional impact the meeting may have had for you.
- Ensure that any additional papers circulated at the meeting are forwarded to you for further circulation.
- Produce a first-draft for the Safeguarding Manager as soon as possible after the meeting, ideally within one working day, using the appropriate template, (See Section 3: Forms and Documentation).
- Distribute only when the Safeguarding Manager has agreed the minutes to be circulated.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Manager regarding circulation of minutes to service users and/or carers, ensuring any information not shared at the meeting is not included.
- Ensure you meet any timescales set with the Safeguarding Manager for circulating minutes and responding to any amendments subsequently requested.
- Retain your hand-written notes of the meeting until the final version has been agreed by the Safeguarding Manager and all participants.

What the Minutes Should Include

The template used will give guidance on the areas to be recorded and give prompts for the information required. The information must include the following.

- Record of attendance.
- Apologies and details of any Reports submitted in lieu of attendance.
- those not present but invited.
- Purpose of the meeting.
- Factual information provided by participants, not duplicating information in Reports.
- Any dispute of facts, noting who and what.
- Professional opinions.
- Opinions, views of alleged victim or adult at risk and carers/family members.
- Summary.
- Any dispute of summary, noting who and what.
- Recommendations and reasons for recommendations.
- Conclusion and any actions identified, noting by whom and by when.
- Date of next meeting where appropriate.

Where Action Plans or Safeguarding Plans are to be produced, information from the meeting must provide the detail for their production. Action Plans or Safeguarding Plans, although separate to the minutes, must be included (where appropriate) with the minutes.