



MAHI MIHINARE
ANGLICAN ACTION

CASE RECORDING POLICY

Good case recording is an essential part of working with clients. It is the basis of good assessment and also the basis for planning and monitoring work. Case recording shows how and why decisions were made and provides data for evaluation purposes. We have a duty to our clients who can access their records at any time to record our work with them accurately and fairly.

In Anglican Action, it is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure that their records are maintained to an acceptable standard. It is the responsibility of team leaders to ensure that these standards are maintained. Senior managers, and the Agency's own internal auditor are responsible for the quality assurance of the Agency's work against these standards and for ensuring that any learning or required action is followed up.

It is recognised that not everyone is a good writer, and some people have a reluctance to put anything down in writing. One employer is noted as saying:

"My staff are good at what they do, not what they write down."

At least one social worker [not employed by Anglican Action] has said:

"I didn't become a social worker because I wanted to be a typist or a computer programmer. I want to work with people, not waste my time in front of a machine"

These comments fail to recognise the reality of working with people, which involves case recording. A professional relationship with a client must involve case recording, because notes form the basis for evaluation. Evaluations cannot be made on the basis of memory alone.

In an important enquiry held in England into the death of a child in care, the chairperson of the enquiry team said:

"The case file is the single most important tool available to social workers and their managers when making decisions as to how best to safeguard the welfare of children under their care. It should clearly and accessibly record the available information concerning the child and the action that has been taken on the case to date. Reference to the case file should be made at every stage of the case and before any significant decision is made."

Recording principles

The following principles underpin good case recording:

- Good case recording is central to social care practice
- Case records must be based on good professional practice
- All contributions from clients, their families and other professional assessments as well as care plans, must be recorded appropriately
- All management decisions must be recorded, including those who made those decisions, when and for what reasons.
- Case recording must comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993
- Case recording must be accurate, justified, proportionate, fit for purpose and legible
- The content of case records must give a sufficient account of all significant work undertaken

These principles are important. If they are not followed, it may mean that important information contained in a file is missed. In the enquiry mentioned above, the chairperson said:

“It may be that a contributory factor in the failure of various professionals involved in [the child’s] case was that information was not presented in a sufficiently convenient and accessible way. If only a limited amount of time is available for supervision, for example, the manager concerned may feel it is not worth spending it trying to make sense of a jumble of papers in the file.”

Recording standards

The following standards are designed to ensure that our case recording meets professional and legal requirements

Standard 1: Case recording will be timely, accurate, fit for purpose, proportionate and fair

Case recording must –

- be of an acceptable professional standard
- be contemporaneous – as close to the time of an event or incident as possible
- accurately and impartially record what has happened and in sufficient detail
- properly reflect the work done
- be relevant. It is not necessary to record material which is not relevant
- the notes must not be just a summary of facts. They must include the worker’s assessment of the situation recorded in the notes, and may include a professional opinion, where appropriate, based on observational evidence.

Standard 2: Case recording is a key part of the work undertaken with clients

Every client must –

- be informed of Anglican Action’s policy on case recording
- be assisted to understand the purpose and content of their case records and be invited to contribute to these

- be informed of their right to access their case records and how to do this
- have their views taken into account and for these to be recorded clearly and accurately. This includes encouraging them and supporting them to read their records, correct errors and omissions, recording any dissent and personal statements
- be informed about decisions and outcomes of requests for service
- receive written copies of their assessments and care plans, and be kept informed at all times. [There should be a case note to record what documents have been given to whom and when.]

Standard 3: Equality and diversity must be fully reflected in case records

- case recording identifies special needs arising from ethnicity, race, culture, gender, age, religion, language, communication, sensory impairment and sexual orientation
- case records reflect anti-discriminatory practice and demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of all people in the community
- the recording demonstrates that those with language and communication needs are assisted to have their say and access services they need
- case records contain sufficient information for monitoring and planning purposes, and to promote good equal opportunities practice

Standard 4: Effective management and oversight of case recording

In Anglican Action, responsibility for oversight of case recording is a shared responsibility

Team leaders –

- are responsible for the quality of their teams' case recording
- ensure that team members use case recording effectively as part of their assessments, to make good plans, to aid decision-making and the monitoring of care plans

The Mission Development Manager and Mission Enabler

- ensures that staff have appropriate development and training opportunities to learn about good professional recording standards and how to put them into practice

The internal auditor –

- routinely monitors the quality of case records and efficiency of recording practice
- ensures the secure storage of case records and other confidential information, in accordance with Privacy Act requirements

Source for this policy "Recording With Care: Recording Policy and Guidelines" [Worcester County Council]

Refer

http://worcestorshirecs.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_record_care_guideline.html