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One-minute Briefing

Case note recording of home visits

1. Introduction

Home visits are an integral part of children's social work intervention. An opportunity to assess home environment, see the child's bedroom, observe interactions between parents and children, and develop your relationship with the child and family.

This document provides guidance in respect of writing up the details of the home visit to ensure that the voice of the child is clear, evidence based practice is supported and we record consistently across children's social care.

2. The importance of recording

Recording is an integral and important part of social work. It is not simply an administrative task, but it is central to good, child focussed support.

Good quality recording is also a key requirement for social work England registration as the practice standards set out what a social worker in England must know, understand and be able to do. Practice standard 3.11 states that social workers must "*Maintain clear, accurate, legible and up to date records, documenting how I arrive at my decisions.*"

3. Principles of recording a visit/case note

- The most important reader of your case notes is the young person themselves and they can ask to see their files later in life.
- Case notes are a key component of your professional duty
- Good quality case notes and record of visits and meetings are integral to safeguarding as they help identify themes and challenges in a young person's life
- Differentiate between fact or opinion.
- Use facts and avoid vagueness wherever you can. (*i.e. I observed 3 bags of rubbish, a pile of washing, a smell of cat urine NOT the home was "in a state"*)
- Avoid use of jargon, use plain English, and write to ensure that the young people and the family understand what you mean. For instance, if you use "wellbeing concerns" it is not clear to all readers what you mean by that.



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- Avoid cutting and pasting from other forms and documents. Often this leads to errors in recording, potential data breaches and ultimately impacts on the accuracy of information that it's used to make safeguarding decisions.
- Whilst you are using plain English, capture facts and provide professional analysis always remember that you are a professional, and your recording work must reflect that.
- Read through the case notes before you finalise these, check for typos and grammar errors.
- Record your notes within 48 hours of the visit to ensure they are contemporaneous and available to you, colleagues and out of hours workers.

4. Key areas of recording:

Reason for Contact/visit/meeting:

This should provide a headline for the case note and is shown in the case note report on the child's electronic file.

i.e Rex seen alone at home with his mother Mrs Smith to check the progress against the CP plan and how Rex has responded to his first day in school

Detailed Notes:

These provide the notes of your visit. Please include:

- Who was present in the home
- Whether the child was seen and seen alone, if not why not
- The child's view – include the child's words and reflect on any direct work done. If your work is for instance three houses, take a photo of that and scan it in
- Overview of key areas of discussion with parents / carers / child / young person
- Any areas of concern arising from the visit
- Any observations on the child's welfare and the home conditions

Analysis

- Provide a brief analysis of the home visit, including areas of improvement/deterioration.
- Any update on the CIN/CP/Care plan.
- Are you satisfied with the way the plan is progressing?

Actions



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- Any agreed actions to be completed by worker and/or family
- Any other actions to be undertaken following the visit.