GUIDANCE ON THE RECORDING OF MINUTES

Prior to recording minutes, consider the following:

- What purpose(s) do the minutes serve? (The content should reflect this.)
  (are they to provide a formal record of the meeting? to evidence progress? to demonstrate to staff that an issue or action was considered or taken?)
- Who is the intended audience for the minutes?
  (is it those who attended the meeting? Senior Management? staff?)
- Is it clear who can authorise wider release of the minutes?
- How long do the final minutes need to be kept? (Your group can decide this.)
- Who are the confidential items to be kept from? (staff? management? the public?)
- Is the confidentiality time-limited?

When recording the minutes, consider the following:

- When writing, bear in mind that the public may eventually read the minutes.
- Always identify the Chair and the minute-taker.
- Names of attendees are not treated as 'personal information' under Data Protection as the focus of the meeting is not about them. If concerned, consider recording posts or job titles rather than names, or initials only.
- Beware of recording unnecessary personal information. (One minute I read included the work address, names and mobile numbers of newly appointed staff.)
- When Adult/Child Protection or staff disciplinary issues are legitimately raised at a management meeting for discussion, remember that it should not be necessary to include in the minutes any identifiable details about the individuals involved.
- Try not to include unnecessary financial or service related detail.
- Be aware of negativity in the minutes. Examples I read included: *disgruntled staff, uninformed managers, districts do not seem to be taking the situation seriously, 'worst' and 'best' figures, no policy in place for involvement of service users, staff disagreeing with each other, poor quality of work by sections of staff*, etc.
- Be careful with comments about named non-KCC establishments (a Norwich Union employee was sacked due to a leaked defamatory internal email about the Woolwich Building Society).
- Be sparing with the use of accepted terminology that may be seen by others as negative - such as 'wealth depleters', 'frequent flyers', 'dumping' by other LAs, etc.
- It is acceptable to use abbreviations that are in common use in the Directorate. It may be helpful to write them in full at their first use but this is not essential.
- Indicate if an author of a tabled report or paper has said it is not to be published.
- Separately minute any exempt information as 'Information Not For Disclosure'. Where non-disclosure is time-limited this should also be indicated.

When final minutes and reports are available:

- Attendees should consider destroying draft documents and their own annotated copies of papers and agendas once final formal versions are available.

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