



## **Title: Audio Recording in child protection settings**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Telford & Wrekin takes the view that Service Users should be involved as much as possible with the decisions that affect the services they access and that by active involvement service users are empowered to challenge decisions concerning the service received by them. All recording of information should be of the highest quality and minutes of meetings should be a clear reflection of issues raised and addressed. It is necessary to ensure that systems exist to facilitate service users and other appropriate persons such as parents and carers being fully informed of issues raised within meetings to which they are invited, whether or not they are in attendance and to also ensure the free and frank discussion of such issues together with compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **2. Policy Information**

2.1 The purpose of minutes of any meeting are to act as a formal record in the form of a memorandum of pertinent issues raised and decisions made for future reference of those in attendance. They are not intended as a verbatim record unless meetings are of a quasi-judicial format. However, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' stipulates that records should use clear, straightforward language, be concise and accurate not only in fact but also in differentiating between opinion, judgement and hypothesis and records in this context should, therefore, include minutes. Service users and their advocates are invited to attend meetings concerning them or their children (eg, child protection conferences and reviews) as the purpose of a conference or review is to draw up a plan of action in co-operation with them. They have an opportunity to challenge the content of those meetings and both service users and professionals are able to request that specific points be noted in the minutes. For this reason minutes once published will not be amended unless there is a factual inaccuracy, however, any written comments made will be attached to those minutes in the client file.

2.2 Due to the sensitive nature of materials discussed during conferences and reviews, Safeguarding Children Boards across the West Midlands Region share Telford & Wrekin's concerns that permitting audio recording of such meetings would have a detrimental affect upon the process for the following reasons:-

- inhibiting the free and frank exchange of attendees views;
- become intrusive and therefore inhibit the process;

- create an incorrect record where multiple-agencies are present – in such a case the transcribing officer would have difficulty identifying officers by voice alone;
- contravene data protection legislation and principles of confidentiality where individuals are asked to leave the meeting temporarily whilst 3<sup>rd</sup> party information is shared;
- ownership and storage of the tape would be an issue for discussion as would the possibility of editing

### **3. Linked Policies and Documents**

Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – (HMSO)

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Procedures

Telford & Wrekin Integrated Working Practice Guidance

### **4. Data Management**

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