Writing a Personal Recollection of Events

Draft for Consultation

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Writing a Personal Recollection of Events - Guidance for Staff

Introduction
The purpose of this guidance is to assist you in writing your requested Personal Recollection of Events. This may have been requested as part of a review into an incident.

Written Personal Recollection of Events are extremely helpful to Review Teams in building a picture of events when reviewing such issues. The availability of personal recollection of events for the incident review also often allows the Review Team to limit the number of staff interviews that are required.

You will have received notification from your manager of the reason for the request. If you are at all unclear as to why you are being asked to submit a Personal Recollection of Events, clarify this with your line manager or member of the review team. The main purpose of writing a personal recollection of events is for you to have a contemporaneous record of the event, for you to use in relation to an incident review or other process.

Personal Recollection of Events must be produced as soon as possible, but within 10 working days of the date of request. Ideally staff involved in a serious incident should not await a request to complete a recollection of events as it is likely this will be required and is useful to undertake and store for your own records and reflection.

Personal recollections are records of truth so please ensure you are aware of the formal status of the recollection and read this guidance carefully before preparing and submitting your recollection as you will be held to account for the information within.

Storage and Sharing of Your Personal Recollection of Events.

Your recollection will be kept as part of the core serious incident review file which will be stored by the organisation for 10 years and will be available to members of the review team.

You should be aware that the Personal Recollection of Events submitted by you as part of an incident review may be used to support further review of an event or other issue if this later becomes the subject of e.g. a complaint, an investigation under one of the HR procedures, or if a case is subject to a Coroners Inquest, or a legal claim.

Incident information is within the remit of the Freedom of Information legislation and as such we are required to disclose if requested:
- Final Incident Review Reports
- Action Plans
- Review timelines

It is our view that the final incident review report contains all relevant information from any documents within the core file and therefore release of that would meet FoI requirements. The position in relation to information that must be released under FoI legislation is constantly evolving in line with decisions made by the Information Commissioner and all requests will be

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reviewed and considered on an individual basis; full redaction principles will be applied to any information released.

Always ensure you retain a copy of your recollection of events.

**Presentation of a written Recollection of Events**

A recollection of events should be written clearly in blank ink, if possible typed, onto A4 paper. At the opening of the recollection clear reference must be made to indicate whom or which incident the statement relates to, including dates of birth and any significant dates etc.

The recollection of events must also clearly state;
- Your full name: forename and surname (do not use initials)
- Current job title
- Area of work
- Role and place of work at the time of the event
- The location, time and date of the event under review
- Who was on duty with you and any other persons present
- NIMS Reference Number
- The date the recollection of events was given

**Content of a recollection of events**

The recollection of events should follow a chronological order and is a factual account of your involvement with the incident/ person concerned; the content must be objective, factual and not contain comments or matters reported to you by others.

It should be confined to your involvement with the service user or incident. It is essential to know the identity of others involved but leave it to them to say what they said or did. You must not express opinions or criticise colleagues.

Your recollection of events must not contain any expressions of personal opinion about matters outside your field of expertise. It must not contain hostile, offensive or unnecessarily defensive comments.

The recollection should be written in the first person (e.g. “I saw.....”)

The recollection should contain as much detail as you are able to provide and be as accurate as possible with regard to dates and times. If the recollection relates to an incident involving a service user, you may require access to the relevant medical records which can be arranged through your manager or the review team contact.

The recollection should clearly indicate what you can and cannot recollect from memory (if you are unsure on something or can’t remember then you can say this) and what has been taken from the records.
Make reference to polices, procedures, and guidelines in use at the time (where appropriate) and if possible attach a copy of the item referred to in your statement.

Explain any reasons for deviating from the guidelines/policy.

If you must use abbreviations, ensure the full terminology is given at least once, by the abbreviation in brackets. It is permissible to use technical terms but you should try and explain these in lay terms wherever possible.

You must sign and date each page of the recollection and indicated at the end of it if there are any enclosures.

A statement of truth must come at the very end of the recollection of events. The wording to use is ‘I believe that the facts stated in this recollection of events are true’.

Do not include the following in your recollection of events:
• Comment on matters reported to you by others; it should be confined to your involvement with the incident or situation.
• A subjective opinion on the incident, or people involved.

Further Advice
Further advice can be sought from a number of sources including: -
• Your Departmental Manager
• Your Trade Union or Professional Organisation.
• Quality and Risk staff

Provide your feedback to this document here