

Chief Social Worker Practice Note

Casework recording (November 2022)

Practice notes are not intended to replace our practice policy and guidance, standards and tools. They provide us with a prompt around specific areas of practice as they relate to current practice trends and findings.

Whakataukī

Mā te rongo, ka mōhio	From listening comes knowledge
Mā te mōhio, ka mārama	From knowledge comes understanding
Mā te mārama, ka mātau	From understanding comes wisdom
Mā te mātau, ka ora	From wisdom comes wellbeing

Summary

When working with tamariki and their whānau or family group, our practice needs to ensure our legislative obligations are met and rights are upheld. Information about tamariki and whānau is a taonga to be treated with care and our approach to recording is a way to uphold their mana.

Recent reviews of practice (including the Chief SW Practice Review), Practice Analysis, Coroner's findings and our regular Quality Assurance audits have identified issues with the consistent recording of all relevant contacts and information obtained from people involved with the tamariki, whānau or family we are working with. This practice note reminds us of why recording information is important, particularly as it relates to informing our understanding of the situation for tamariki and their whānau or family.

Social work documentation (recording) is a vital and integral component of professional, ethical and competent practice. It can be easy to overlook the significance, value and complexity of case recording. Our Practice Framework helps us locate the ethical and legal responsibilities associated with social work recording:



Ngākau whakairo is about the rights, values and professional obligations that sit at the heart of our work embedded within our practice. It draws our attention to protecting the rights of tamariki and whānau or family that we are working with to have their voice acknowledged and recorded, their right to an accurate account of their involvement with us, and for information about them to be treated with respect and care.

Ngākau whakairo compels us to meet our legislative and professional obligations relating to recording of information including:

Social Work Registration Board

The Code of Conduct (Principle 10 – Keep accurate records and use technology effectively and safely) and the Core Competence Standards (Standard 4) outline the expectation of keeping clear and accurate records, the timeliness of making records, and the importance of ensuring they are protected.

ANZASW

The ANZASW Maanakitanga principle calls out the importance of respecting a person's right to confidentiality of information shared in a professional context, maintaining accurate records and sharing these with persons with whom we work.

Public Records Act 2005

Social workers have a requirement under section 17 of the Public Records Act 2005 to maintain full and accurate records for all tamariki and rangatahi, their family, whānau, hapū and iwi that we work with. This requirement is across all stages of our work.

[Social Work Registration Board](#)

[ANZASW Code of ethics](#)

[Public Records Act 2005 – Requirement to create and maintain records](#)

How ethical and professional recording supports mana-enhancing practice

Ethical and professional recording supports our practice by:

- ensuring the voice of tamariki and their whānau or family is heard
- providing tamariki and their whānau or family with the story of their involvement with the organisation, allowing for insight and understanding into the future
- supporting a clear understanding of the holistic needs of tamariki, and whānau or family with special reference to cultural and disability needs
- helping us understand current events in the context of historical information, with a focus on what these events tell us about the lived experience of te tamaiti
- supporting understanding, analysis and decision-making in the pursuit of oranga for tamariki and whānau or family
- supporting critical thought and reflection within supervision and case discussions
- providing professional accountability and transparency to tamariki and whānau or family, and the organisation
- providing information to others in our absence and providing continuity of support.

Professional judgement is required to determine the depth and breadth of how we record our contacts with others and how much information is recorded. In exercising that professional judgement, we must ensure we record any information that informs our

understanding of the safety, care and oranga of te tamaiti and their whānau or family, especially when information is provided by whānau, family or professionals.

The responsibility to record relevant information for a tamaiti rests with the person who received the information. This means that even if the case is not allocated to you, you must record the information you obtain and ensure this is brought to the attention of the allocated social worker or supervisor.

REMEMBER: For some tamariki a written record will be a key resource to learn about their childhood and to understand decisions made with them and about them. If a tamaiti or rangatahi wants to look at, read, and understand their social work record it should be easily understood, accessible and reflect their voice, feelings, wishes and experiences. This is their story about what happened to them and why.

Recording policy and guidance

Our practice policies and guidance support us to ensure our records, casenote recording and documentation is undertaken ethically and professionally. Key messages contained in those documents include:

- Recording is a vital element of good social work practice which contributes to quality assurance and accountability.
- We record the information we have gathered in CYRAS.
- It must always be up to date and relevant, and the language used is important – it needs to be respectful, absent of judgement and free of jargon so te tamaiti and their whānau or family can readily engage with and understand it.
- We record the views of those we work with, particularly tamariki, and their whānau or family. We also record how we have taken those views into account in our process of understanding and decision-making.
- We record our processes and the reasons for our decisions throughout our involvement with tamariki, and their whānau or family.
- Timely recording facilitates analysis and reflection, supports supervision and is a means by which we can be accountable for our actions and decision-making.
- Opinion and fact must be clearly differentiated in case recording. Assessment and analysis need to be supported by clear reasoning. Information we record must be verified or confirmed.

More information about case recording is also contained in the following:

[Case recording | Practice Centre](#)

[Keep accurate records | Practice Centre](#)

[Sharing information | Practice Centre](#)

[See and engage tamariki — guidance | Practice Centre](#)

[Create, implement and review a written assessment and plan | Practice Centre](#)

[Participation of tamariki — providing information, ensuring understanding and incorporating their views | Practice Centre](#)