



# Northumberland

## County Council

<b>Version</b>	1
<b>B.S.M. approval date</b>	February 2020
<b>Rationale</b>	This process has been devised to provide a consistent and professional approach to chairing meetings
<b>Name of policy author</b>	Christine Hoggarth
<b>Date issued</b>	February 2020
<b>Review date</b>	February 2022
<b>Target audience</b>	Administration and social workers, Managers

### **Chairing meetings**

#### **Pre - meeting preparation**

1. Ensure that admin have entered the required information onto the template and have distributed the agendas at least two days prior to the meeting.
2. Identify which agenda items are for information, discussion or a decision.
3. Be well briefed about each item, and actions taken since the last meeting.
4. Ensure all necessary background papers (including the last meeting's minutes) are sent out with the agenda beforehand.
5. Check with staff that all relevant practical arrangements have been made, e.g. room layout, visual aids, etc.
6. Arrive in good time before the meeting is due to start.
7. Have a brief discussion with the minute taker to give an overview of the meeting.

### **During the meeting**

#### **Communication**

1. Start the meeting. Welcome any new members. Make any necessary introductions.
2. Housekeeping - toilets, fire alarms and fire exits, etc.
3. Request that attendees complete name cards and explain why.



# Northumberland County Council

4. If meeting is being minuted remotely, explain what is happening, ask people to identify themselves before they speak and ask them to speak up where possible.
5. If minute taker is using a DVRD, explain the process and ensure that everyone signs the consent form. Without the consent form, the DVRD cannot be used. DVRD not to be used when police are present.
6. Receive apologies for absence.
7. Ensure that additions or amendments to minutes are recorded.
8. Set the scene. State the objectives of the meeting and each item.
9. Try to be brief when making a point.

## Control

1. Maintain control. Set out any time limits.
2. Allow flexibility and freedom of expression.
3. Keep to the agenda.
4. Ensure time is used effectively.
5. Ensure that proper minutes are taken.

## Coax

1. Ensure full participation.
2. Draw out quieter members and discourage those who are monopolising the meeting.
3. Be prepared to highlight issues that no-one else will, and to be the one who always has to ask the awkward questions.

## Compare

1. Weigh up contributions impartially.
2. All points in favour of a point should be summarised against all points not in favour.

## Clarify

1. Ensure everyone understands what is being discussed.
2. Summarise.
3. Ensure that if jargon and abbreviations are used, all present understand them.
4. Ensure that decisions are recorded, together with who is going to implement them. It can be useful to record decisions on a flip-chart as they are made.



# Northumberland County Council

## Decision Making

1. Ensure that decisions are taken in the context of the organisations strategy and that they are recorded, together with who is going to implement them.

## Guide

1. Remember that above all you are there to guide the meeting.
2. Steer members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.
3. Keep an eye on time.

## At the end of the meeting

1. Summarise decisions taken and action points to be followed up e.g. who's responsible, by when.
2. If possible, agree a date for the next meeting
3. Thank attendees for their participation

## After the meeting

1. Ensure that the minutes are written up and checked by the Chair.
2. Upload, where necessary, to ICS.
3. Distribute copies of the minutes to all attendees via email. Only the family will receive a printed copy of the minutes which are to be given to them by the social worker.