



MACSAS Information on Keeping Records

When you decide to report any concerns regarding child sexual abuse by clergy or sexual exploitation as an adult you may need to think about keeping records.

The main reason for doing this is so you are clear about who said what, when, where and it helps to keep your mind from becoming confused.

It is also helpful if someone later denies saying or writing something. Records help in any case of litigation or just meeting with officials.

Although you may be upset at this time it is important to keep letters, notes, and a record of telephone calls. Both received by you and ones you send.

How to keep records?

This can be very simple. The best way is to buy some files with dividers. On each divider mark what is filed in this section. E.g Bishops, Police, Accused, Solicitor etc.

Section 1: Letters from Bishop
Letters I send to Bishop (Copies)

If there are two Bishops, then file in alphabetic order, i.e. Bishop Bloggs should be filed before Bishop Hogg. All letters should be filed in date order.

Section 2: Letters to my solicitor (Copies)
Letters From my solicitor

Section 3: Letters to the police
Letters from the police

And so forth...you can have as many sections as you need.

Always record the date a letter was received (you can get rubber stamps from stationary offices). Always date any letter you send.

How to log telephone calls

These need to be noted. It is illegal to tape record telephone conversations without the other person's permission (which they might give, but mostly won't).

Keep a telephone file or notebook. What you need to record is:

Date	Time of call.	Person who called.	Why they called.	Describe conversation fully.	What decisions were taken (if any).	Any threats / aggression or emotional content /distress from caller or yourself (be honest about yourself).
25.6.06	11am	Bishop [name]	To tell me he had got my letter & was going to talk to child protection Committee.	See below*	He would speak to child protection committee & phone next week.	He sounded nervous and unsure of what next, I conveyed my thanks.

*You need to write down as much as possible of what the caller said and how you replied.

E.g.

"I had a call from Bishop [name] today [date & time]. He said he'd got my letter but needed to talk to the child protection committee. He said he would do that on Monday and try to phone me next week some time.

I said I was pleased the letter arrived safely and I was glad to hear from him. I asked if my concerns could be addressed quickly as I was very stressed.

He said he understood that and would do his best. The call then ended.

You need to record all phone calls you made about the case as well.

Meetings

These should also be recorded.

Keep another file with:

- Date of meeting
- Time of meeting
- Where meeting was held
- Purpose of meeting
- Was there an agenda (file copy)
- If any reports or papers were prepared obtain copies for file
- Who was present at the meeting?
- What was discussed?
- What was the outcome?
- Who was going to be responsible for what?
- What follow up was agreed?

Notes could be filed under weeks / months of the year, chronologically.

Example of meeting record:

Today [date] myself and my therapist [name], together with the police [name and number] from [name of police station], met with the Bishop [name] to discuss what we could do now that X.[name] was dead. We met in the therapist's office at [address] and the meeting lasted from 2-4pm.

The police officer [name] was particularly concerned that X [name] may have been a prolific offender and he was concerned to see X's [name] files. The Bishop [name] said clergy files were not accessible but he would look at them and discuss with [name of policeman] privately. My therapist asked the Bishop how I might be helped with therapy fees. The Bishop said he would arrange a package of care for me. I tried to clarify whether that would be funding to continue with my therapist. The Bishop said he would have to ask the child protection pastoral officer.

And so forth

Sign at the end: Name.....date & time wrote up record.

Continuity sheet

It is especially important to keep track of decisions made and whether this has been followed through to completion. You may need to create a way of recording action promised/decisions made and who did what when, where etc. This includes anything you did too. For example:

<i>Type of contact & date</i>	<i>The person in question's name and promises made</i>	<i>Completion of task / promise</i>	<i>Completion of task date</i>
Telephone call 27 th June 2007	Bishop [name] promised to talk to child protection committee after getting the letter I wrote on 16 th June 2004.	Bishop rang today & said he'd now talked to committee and would like to see me.	27 th June 2007
Meeting on 30 th August 2007	At meeting on [date] police officer wanted to look at files of X [name]. Bishop said he'd look and meet with police officer privately.	Police got information from Bishop on files.	6 th October 2007
30 th August 2007	Bishop said he'd enquire about my therapy fees [date].	Bishop's secretary phoned and said therapy fees would be paid for 6 weeks.	14 th October 2007

A form like this can be simply compiled on a computer and put with the record of telephone call or meeting.

If you have not recorded anything to date it might be a good idea to try and get copies of letters or simply start today.

Some warning points:

- Always record fact, not speculation or rumour.
- Always date recording. Include the day, month & year.
- Keep as close to what was said as possible when writing report.
- Record if possible immediately after event. If your files are not close to hand find a piece of paper and write down immediately. *This is the paper you file, don't throw away.*
- Always keep your records safely locked away. Do not carry into public places where you might leave them accidentally behind.
- Consider keeping a copy with another person.
- Check with a solicitor / police if the case is going to court, how much contact you should have and with whom.
- You can still record progress of case and what is said to you.

You might have your own 'system' this is great. Lesson here is to **have** a system!

If you have any ideas let us know and we will post on website

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