

Children and Families Service

Title	Audio Recording of Meetings by Parents and Family Members Guidance
Policy Area	CFS Wide
Sign-off	Lisa Aldridge, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
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Equality and Diversity: Hackney is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities to promote inclusive processes, practices and culture. This policy was updated to ensure that it caters to cultural differences and contains gender neutral language and is inclusive of our LGBTQI+ children and young people.

Anti-Racism Position Statement: “Hackney’s Children and Families Service is committed to eradicating systemic racism, discrimination, injustice, making anti-racism a foundation of our practice. We will be a voice and force for change, for every child and family that we work for and with, to recognise and address the impact of racism on children and families within our practice, to apply our anti-racist principles in all of our interactions with and decision-making about children and to determinedly and actively, demand the same from our partners. We will be committed to calling out racism, discrimination, microaggressions and will ensure that this is addressed at all levels in the council to ensure that children and their families and the workforce are supported and valued.

Within Hackney Children and Family Service, we acknowledge the harm and impact of racism and that the experience of our Black staff and those from other global majority ethnic groups, is not the same as that of our white staff and we are committed to ensuring that all voices are represented and heard at every level providing support to staff who experience work-based racism and microaggressions. To that end, making sure that our workforce reflects the community which we serve, especially at the senior leadership level.”

Systemic Practice: Our core values are driven by systemic principles and they underpin how we do our work in Hackney and the way we behave. This includes:

- **Context: *We see the bigger picture.*** Children and families are part of a wider set of systems and relationships, including race, religion, culture, gender, family stories and beliefs.
- **Collaborative: *We work with, not to.*** We don’t separate or elevate ourselves from families. We want to understand and learn from the people and communities we work with. We understand that our own experiences can affect our views and decisions.
- **Curious: *We always want to understand.*** We know we cannot always know things for certain; we are continuously curiously creating, testing and creating our thoughts and ideas around the way things are and why.

- **Relationships: *We focus on relationships.*** The problem is the problem, not the person. By working together, we believe we can find solutions. We do not blame or judge, and we do not focus on labels.
- **Multiple Voices/ Many Truths: *We know all viewpoints are valid.*** There is no single truth or 'one right way' of doing things. We aim to hear and understand all perspectives in order to open up opportunities for change and to safely manage risk and uncertainty.

Privacy notice: The Council takes the security of personal data seriously. It is necessary in order for our service to do its work that sometimes personal and private information will be gathered, collected, stored and shared in a secure and confidential way. For further information on this, please check the [Council's privacy notice homepage](#)

Audio Recordings of Meetings by Parents and Family Members Guidance

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1. Overview

With the increased use of technology in daily life, more parents and family members are keen to utilise technology to support their own recording, and access to information and discussions held about their family.

Parents and family members are entitled to record information about themselves for their own personal use. There is no law or data protection guidance forbidding this.

The following guidance and agreement form has been created to ensure families are given consistent and clear messages about the recording of meetings and the use of this material. This guidance will be kept under review and updated as required.

2. Principles

Families have a right to access information held about them by agencies in a timely and transparent manner.

All professionals should be prepared to share information with families in a sensitive, balanced and respectful way and not keep anything 'hidden' or 'off the record'.

There may be differences of opinion about situations, events, and impact and these should be acknowledged within records made. It is often unlikely that all will recall the same discussion or event in the same way and recording meetings is one way of having a verbatim record.

3. Practice

If a parent or family member wishes to record a meeting they should let the social worker know beforehand, meetings should not be recorded without the knowledge of the attendees.

Where there are professionals from other agencies attending the meeting they should be notified that the meeting will be recorded and given the opportunity to express any views around this.

Where a professional raises an objection to the meeting being recorded, this should be noted but will not prevent the meeting from proceeding. It is a professional duty to provide information to safeguard children and take part in multi-agency decision making forums. However, professionals can discuss with their line manager and the network how to ensure safety for all within this process.

At the start of the meeting it must be made clear that it is being recorded, who by, and in what way. It must also be made clear if the parent/family members have signed the agreement around the purpose and use of the recording.

It must be made clear to attendees when the recording has ended.

If parents wish for the recording to be uploaded to their child's Children's Social Care record they must make a copy of the recording available to the social worker.

Parents will not be able to record any part of a meeting where information relating to a child; who they do not hold Parental Responsibility for, or have any caring responsibilities for, is being discussed.

Where children are in the care of Hackney Children and Family Services and are of an age and understanding to give informed consent ([Gillick Competent](#)) they will need to provide their agreement for recording of any meeting involving them. If they do not give this agreement then the meeting cannot be recorded.

4. Expectations

Parents should make it clear when they want to record a meeting with all attendees, in advance of the meeting.

Records of meetings are for parents' only personal use, they should not be shared with third parties or on public forums, even if settings are private, for example Facebook, Youtube, other online forums or websites.

Information contained in these records are sensitive and relate not only to the person recording the meeting, but to members of their family and children. Information relating to others should be treated with respect and dignity, and not shared without their express consent.

Recording of meetings should not be used to try and professionally or personally discredit or intimate professionals present.

Should a recording of a meeting be used in a way which breaches these expectations, legal advice will be sought and action taken against those circulating the recording as necessary.

The following declaration must be shared and signed before any recording takes place.

If covert recording is discovered during a meeting, the parent/family member will be asked to stop recording, and/or the Chair of the meeting has a right to end the meeting.

Appendix: Declaration

I **[insert name of worker & role]** have discussed the above expectations around recording meetings with **[insert name of family member]** on **[insert date]**.

Signed:.....

Name:

Position:

Date:.....

I **[insert name of family member]** confirm that I have understood the above principles and expectations of recording meetings which take place with Hackney Children's Social Care.

Please check as required;

☐ I agree to abide by these expectations

☐ I do not agree to abide by these expectations and understand that if my actions breach data protection legislation or other laws, Hackney Council may take legal action as appropriate.

☐ I understand that the declaration and expectations agreed to today will remain in place until such time as I expressly revoke my consent to them

Signed:.....

Name:

Name(s) of child(ren)

Date:.....