

## IMPORTANT TIPS FOR USING THE LOGBOOKS

*This worksheet has been compiled to support the use of a logbook and systematic case management. You will find useful information about the importance and purpose of using a logbook as well as how to use a logbook, including notes on making first, second and subsequent entries to the logbook, conducting advocacy, monitoring and follow up, gathering evidence, consent and referrals.*

### **Purpose and importance of using the logbook**

- The logbook creates a systematic way of managing cases.
- The logbook ensures all required information is recorded in a logical manner.
- The logbook keeps the information in one place including supporting documents.
- The logbook is a way to monitor the needs of children and to identify how best to care for them.
- Regular reporting is a way of keeping children safe and making sure they are cared for in the best possible way.
- Documenting interventions helps evaluate and monitor any differences in the child's or family's behaviour.
- The logbook is an effective way of supporting litigation on child rights abuse cases.
- The logbook makes it possible to put pressure on the State to take responsibility for child protection.
- The logbook provides evidence for advocacy work including international litigation, reports to international agencies and reports to State and Federal governments.
- The logbook allows easy access to information about child abuse cases whilst maintaining confidentiality, and they can identify trends and statistics for future work.

## Using the logbook

### **Cover Page**

- Record as much information as possible, and as you work with the child and/or relative keep seeking to get the missing information. You should aim to have the cover page completed. It is essential and important information. There is no space for telephone numbers please add all phone numbers next to the names on the cover page.
- Use one logbook for each child even if they siblings and the abuse is of the same nature.

### **Entry Page**

- An event is anything that happens to the child – a phone call, a visit, a report from another member of the community, a letter to the Commissioner. All activities connected to the child is a separate entry.
- Even if the child is not at home when you visit you need to record you did the visit and the child was not at home. Similarly if you phone and no-one answers you need to record it.
- Each logbook contains 30 events, and if you need more I will send you the logbook electronically so you can print it out.
- Make sure all documents, including witness statements, medical reports and any other additional information you collect, is attached to the logbook securely.
- Logbooks must be locked securely within your organisation and the only persons who should have access are those directly employed by the NDCRW project.
- The information in the logbook should not be discussed with other members in your organisation, unless it is essential in keeping the child safe. The information can and should be shared with the BHRC Legal Intern.
- It is very important to keep contemporaneous entries. This means write them as soon as possible, preferably on the day the event takes place. This is important in terms of keeping accurate records as well as securing good evidence for court. Be sure to write the date and time on each entry.

The law is about  
proof not truth!

**First Entry**

In the first entry include information such as:

- a. How you became aware of the child and the situation;
  - b. Information on who reported the case to you, including their names and contact numbers;
  - c. The nature of the abuse and any injuries sustained - take photos of any injuries and the location where the child may be living regarding the conditions, and any other evidence to support the abuse. Photos are very good pieces of evidence. Seek consent to take photos and record in the logbook that you ascertained consent.
  - d. Details of your initial investigation and risk assessment so you know what the child needs and any risks to the child. Ensure the child is safe at all times.
- You may decide at this stage to interview the child and take their statement. Make sure there are two staff when interviewing a child, and conduct in the interview in a private place not in view of anyone else so the child is safe to be as open as possible.
  - Similarly, you may decide to interview other potential witnesses. Take the statement. Be sure you get the witness to sign and date it and staple it to the logbook or file somewhere safe.
  - Document any reports made to the police or medical interventions. Be sure to get a copy of the medical report from hospitals. Take names and phone numbers of police involved and doctors or nurses involved. Ask the police if it's ok you contact them to follow up the case. Record their response. The police are potential witnesses so it is extremely important their contact details are recorded.
  - Always record what actions need to be taken and the dates they will be done. If the action is not done on the date specified record why it did not happen and write the next action plan even if it is the same as the original plan. This will help you develop the case.



**INVESTIGATE**

**Second Entry**

- This will normally be the follow up action from your first entry. Record the immediate action taken or not taken.
- Continue to undertake your investigation gathering information about the child and the abuse. Record all information from your assessment.
- Undertake a risk assessment making sure the safety of the child is at the forefront of your mind always. Record all information from your assessment.
- If you didn't take statement from witnesses do this as soon as you can so it is accurate whilst fresh in the minds of the witness.
- Record any reports made to the police.
- Always record what actions need to be taken and the dates they will be done. If the action is not done on the date specified record why it did not happen and write the next action plan even if it is the same as the original plan. This will help you develop the case.



**Subsequent entries**

- **Care of the child** – all details of support given to the child and/or relative should be recorded including medical care, counselling, attempts at reunification and follow up to reunification, food/clothes; you may need to source information from other places. Record all interventions.
- **Contact with the Parents** – all contact with parents or other adults caring for the child should be recorded.
- **Contact with Police** – each case must be reported to the police as soon as possible and consent should be sought from the child and/or their parents for this to happen. Record in the logbook when and where and to whom you reported the case and what they said, including if they told you there would be an arrest. Always record the name and contact details of the police officer to whom you spoke. If someone else reported it to the police ask them to record it in the logbook. All cases should be followed up with the police to see if there has been any further progress.
- **Litigation** – any litigation activities in relation to the case should be recorded eg bail, arrests, charges and if so what offence, charged to court, outcome of trial. Your lawyer will help you, so communicate with that person regularly. Your litigation officer will support you in what to document so communicate regularly with them.

**Advocacy**

- All advocacy activities in relation to each case should be documented in the logbook such as letters to Commissioners, media releases (be aware of confidentiality), lobbying of government, involvement of other NGO's.

**Follow up**

- It is very important you do the things you say you are going to do, especially with regard to the child. If you agree to visit the child on a certain day then you must do it or contact the parent to say you won't be attending. The child is vulnerable to feeling rejected and abandoned and it is important you do not contribute to these feelings of abandonment by letting down the child.
- Identify follow up actions in the logbook with dates and who will be doing them. If the action is not one on the date specified make an entry on that date stating why it didn't happen.



**MONITOR**

**Evidence**

- Collect as much supplementary evidence as possible including statements from the child, parents, family, neighbour, copies of statements by the police, photos of injuries, medical records and any other information.
- Remember the law is about proof not truth! Without evidence it is impossible to prosecute, and if we don't prosecute people in society will not get the clear message that child abuse is illegal.
- Decide on a secure way to store the supplementary evidence whether in the logbook or in a separate file. It is good practice to scan all supplementary documents and keep an electronic copy of these. These need to be stored safely as well.

**Consent**

- Try your best to obtain consent from the child and/or the parent to record child's details in the logbook. Explain why you are recording the information and how the information may be used. Discuss issues of confidentiality and the importance of keeping a record of all activities.
- Take extra care in obtaining consent for any pictures taken. More information on consent can be found in child protection policy. Reassure the child that their personal information will not be made public. Make sure you record in the logbook that you have gained consent to record the information.

***Involvement of other NGOs/referrals***

- If referring to another agency be mindful of the information you share. A child being accused of being a witch is not appropriate to share, nor is it appropriate to share with them the abuse and how it happened and what your intentions are in terms of case management.
- Be sure to find out if the NGO has a good reputation for caring for children.
- Gather as much information from the NGO as to the welfare of the child and visit regularly if resources allow. Do not leave the child with the NGO for lengthy periods without regular visits as the child may suffer abuse whilst under the care of the NGO.
- Keep documenting all contacts and visits with the NGO in the logbooks.