

## ADVICE & GUIDANCE FOR STATEMENT WRITING

Please ensure your reflective statement is returned to the Nurse Manager within 48 hours unless otherwise communicated to her.

In addition to the RCN Template you will have been sent, please see below.

You will also receive a SOS Medical Staffing Template to complete. Below are some helpful tips from the RCN, but if you require further assistance, please contact Lorraine Gallier, Nurse Manager, SOS Medical Staffing at [lorraine@sosmedical.co.uk](mailto:lorraine@sosmedical.co.uk)

### Be clear

- State the times you were on and off duty on the day/s in question. Check the off-duty rota to be sure.
- Give brief details of the work environment at the time, including your job role, area of responsibility and the number of patients in your care. For example, were you the nurse in charge?
- Be clear about what you did, saw and heard. You have a right to see the clinical records to help you write your statement accurately. If you're denied access to the records, explain this in your statement and do not attempt to 'guess' at what they say.
- Use the first person (i.e. 'I'). For example, say 'I gave Patient x 500mg of Paracetamol' rather than '500mg of Paracetamol was given'.
- Relate the facts from the beginning and keep them in chronological order, giving precise dates and times. Be consistent in using 'am' or 'pm' or the 24 hour clock.
- Avoid jargon or official language.
- Explain clinical or health care procedures and avoid general statements such as 'routine observations were made'. If normal procedures were not followed, explain what is normal and why there was a departure from the accepted procedure.
- State what is personal recollection and what can be corroborated as fact with reference to, for example, health care records, reports, clinical guidelines or standards.
- Where known, please use full names and job titles of colleagues.
- Always write the subject of an abbreviation or acronym in full the first time you mention it.

### Be relevant

- Don't speculate, elaborate or exaggerate, or use emotional language – you may be called as a witness to give oral evidence based on your statement.
- If you cannot remember something, say so.
- It is acceptable to form a view based on your professional judgement. Document the facts or evidence on which you based your conclusion. Relate how this impacts on patient care or service levels.

- Don't assume that the reader knows anything of the facts of the case, such as a patient's medical history, your environment or clinical routines and procedures. Any intelligent lay person should be able to understand the content.
- Avoid giving opinions or making judgements that you cannot support by factual evidence or corroboration; a good phrase to use is "Based on the information available to me at the moment..."
- Hearsay is second-hand, rather than first-hand evidence, for example: 'I heard Susan say that she had seen Jill give the injection'. It can be admissible in certain legal proceedings, for example a Coroner's Court or Fatal Accident Inquiry, but it must be clear that it is hearsay evidence. Only relate what you were told by another/ others - you have no way of verifying the accuracy of others' accounts.
- In any summary, recap the main points and avoid adding new information or comments.

### **Be compliant**

- Keep patients' and relatives' identities anonymous - for example, use 'Patient X' throughout the statement.
- Follow any professional codes [NMC Code of Conduct](#), particularly the section titled 'Promote professionalism and trust'). Also ensure you're following your employer's local policies and confidentiality guidelines.
- Remember that you could be challenged on the content of your account, and your statement could be used in criminal proceedings or disclosed to all parties in a disciplinary or grievance hearing.

### **List all documents referenced in your statement and, if possible, where to find them**

Examples include:

- Patient records, notes, and departmental documents
- The relevant Datix/incident report/untoward incident form
- Local policies or procedures
- National standards or evidenced based information
- Professional codes and guides

### **Format your statement**

Please use the template sent to you by SOS Medical Staffing

### **Check it**

Review each paragraph carefully, checking that your statement only communicates exactly what was asked for or required. Look at whether the facts can be evidenced. Check that the facts you provide are clearly and objectively explained.