

Learning From Incidents and Inquests

Factual Recollection of Events (FROE) – Guidance for Staff

Introduction

Being involved in an incident can be an incredibly stressful and difficult experience for staff as well as for the patients and family or carers. If you are asked to describe what happened later as part of an investigation, it can sometimes be difficult to remember exactly what happened. It is important that the investigation has all the facts so the correct conclusions and plans can be made and help avoid similar incidents in the future and keep all our patients safe.

Having clear accounts of the event often helps the team to focus their review and might mean that fewer interviews are needed.

This guidance is to help you write a “Factual Recollection of Events” or “FROE”.

Factual Recollections do not replace the medical record. You may look at the patient’s notes when writing your FROE but you should also describe things that are not in notes that might help the investigators understand what happened and what can be learned.

What is a FROE?

Factual recollections are a description of your involvement in an incident at the time it occurred. A FROE should be ‘just the facts’. This is not a personal reflection or thought. It should not be your opinion on why things happened or what you think should have happened... just the facts.

Factual recollections may be used later in an investigation, and you may be asked to explain what is written. Please read this guide carefully.

When to write a FROE

You may have received notification from your line manager or governance team of the reason for the request. Factual recollections of events should be written as soon as possible after the incident or event. Ideally, this should be within 3 days and definitely within 10 working days.

If you have been involved in a Patient Safety Incident, you should not wait for a formal request to complete a recollection of events as it is likely this will be required.

You are entitled to support during this process, and we strongly recommend you seek this where necessary.

Home, Community, Hospital.

If you are unsure why you are being asked to record a Factual Recollection of Events, ask your line manager or member of the review team to explain. The Governance Support Unit will also be happy to help you.

Storage and Sharing of Your Personal Recollection of Events

The Incident Review team might ask to see your factual recollection of events before arranging individual interviews or a Round table review. This will help the team understand what happened and how we can learn from events. Your recollection may be asked for as part of the patient safety incident rapid review file which will be stored until the incident review or inquest is complete. With your consent, this will be available to members of the review team and Trust legal team.

In some circumstances, when a patient has died, you may be asked to provide a written statement for the Coroner, answering specific questions. Your FROE can be used to answer these along with the clinical records. Under these circumstances your FROE may be “requested for disclosure” by the Coroner.

How to write a Recollection of Events

A FROE should be typed. A standard pro-forma is attached.

At the start of the recollection, you should make it clear which patient or which incident the statement relates to, including dates of birth etc.

The recollection of events should also include:

- Your full name: forename and surname (do not use initials)
- Current job title
- Area of work
- Role and place of work at the time of the event
- The location, date and time of the event under review
- Who was on duty with you and any other persons present
- Datix Reference Number (if relevant)
- The date the recollection of events was written

We recommend your FROE should be completed and stored on a Trust computer.

If you keep any other handwritten or electronic notes for outside of this process you must comply with information governance and make sure that they are completely anonymised.

What goes into a recollection of events?

You should write exactly what happened in the order in which it happened. Remember that it should be “just the facts” and should not include your opinions on why things happened or what should have happened. It should be only about that incident and what your involvement was and what you remember, not what you have been told by others.

The recollection should contain as much detail as you are able to provide and be as accurate as possible about dates and times. If the recollection relates to an incident involving a patient, you can request access to the relevant medical /nursing records which can be arranged through your manager or the review team contact.

The recollection should clearly state what you can and cannot remember (if you are unsure about something or can't remember then you can say this) and what has been taken from the records.

Whilst it is important to know who else was involved, you should leave it to them to explain what they said or did.

Your FROE should not contain any personal opinions.

The recollection should be written in the first person (e.g. “I saw.....”)

Avoid as much as possible discussing your recollection with anyone else as this can interfere with your memory and others which may decrease the accuracy of your account.

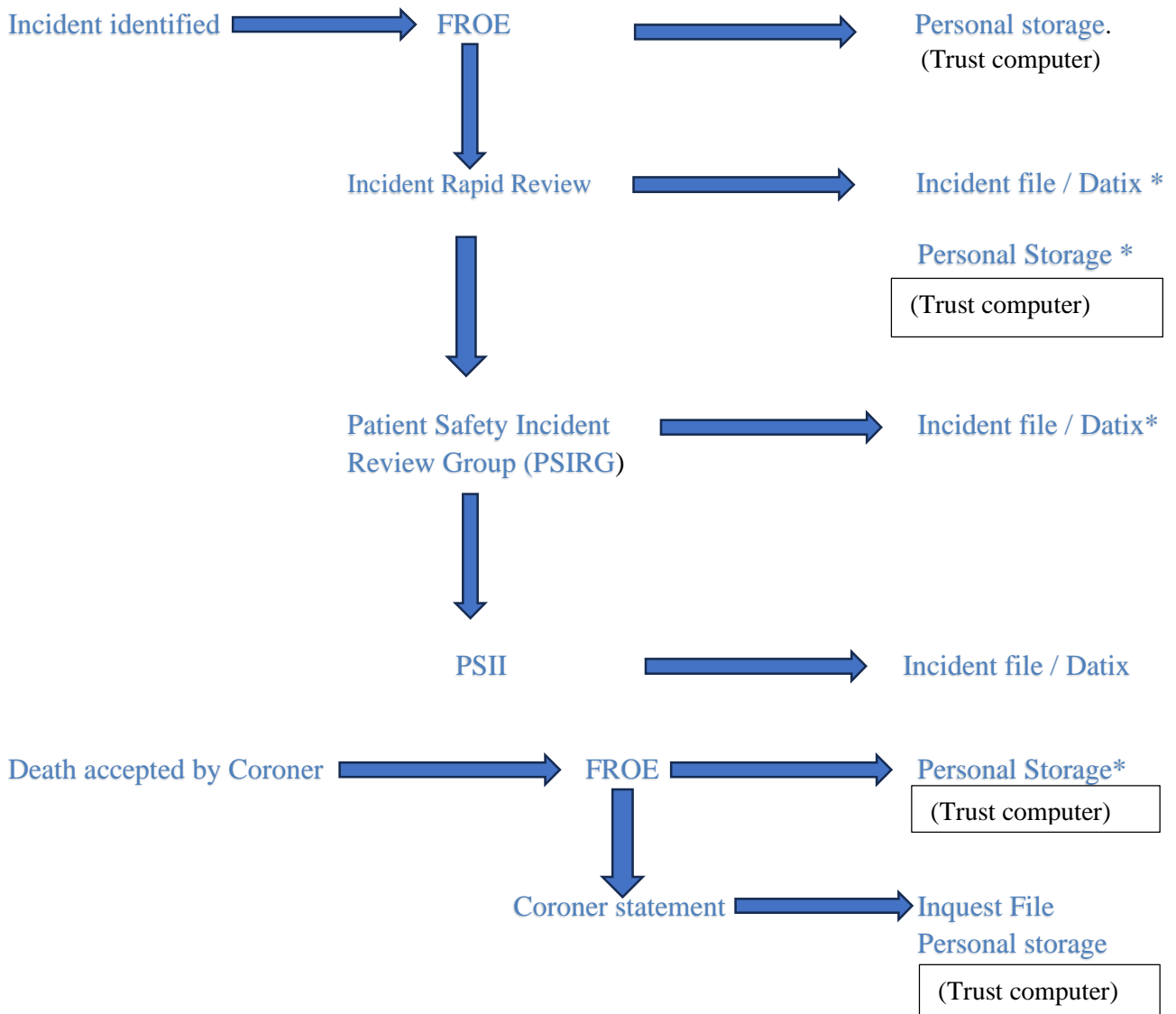
A statement of truth should come at the very end of the recollection of events. The wording to use is ***'I believe that the facts stated in this recollection of events are true'***.

Further Advice

Further advice can be sought from a number of sources including: -

- Your Line Manager /Educational or Clinical Supervisors/Head of Service
- Trust Legal team: sfh-tr.legal@nhs.net
- Governance Support Unit: sfh-tr.governancesupportunit@nhs.net
- Your Trade Union or Professional Defence Organisation.
- Quality and Safety Staff or Divisional Governance Teams
- Supporting Our Staff [Intranet Search Page \(nnotts.nhs.uk\)](http://nnotts.nhs.uk)

FROE Storage



* FROE may be stored personally or provided on request to the Incident review team.
 FROE's may be stored in the incident or inquest file by mutual consent.