

'Spotlight on' series

Chairing a meeting

Effective chairing is critical to the success of a meeting, but formal training is rare. Follow our tips to help develop your skills for the role.

1 Prepare adequately



Circulate agendas and papers a week in advance to allow evaluation.

Have a clear aim and prioritise the agenda items with most potential impact.

Mark papers 'For discussion' or 'For information' so that you spend the meeting making decisions rather than reviewing information already known by attendants.

2 Allow everyone to introduce themselves and their role



3 Keep to time



Build extra time into the agenda for any overrun.

Consider timing items on the agenda to give clear guidance on allocated time.

4 Ensure everyone contributes



Encourage contribution from quieter attendants.

Don't allow one or two attendants to dominate (including yourself!).

5 Don't avoid the difficult conversations



This will help to build trust, and improve teamwork and outcomes.

By discussing these earlier in the agenda you can avoid finishing on a negative note.

6 Don't get too involved in the delivery of actions



Maintaining oversight is difficult if you're too engaged in the detail.

7 End each agenda item by summarising key decisions and action points



Ensure action points are clear and achievable, and allocated to individuals.

8 Seek feedback



Consider using a development tool or provide feedback informally via email.

Remain open to areas of improvement.

Useful links

www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Chairing%20a%20Meeting%20MLDT.pdf

www.fmlm.ac.uk/resources/chairing-a-meeting

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