



Making meetings matter - the 3As report

by Emily Sheen.

Last week we looked at ways to improve efficiency and save time in meetings – today we introduce a tool designed to ensure boards can be alerted, advised and assured on issues raised in meetings.

Board meetings are time-consuming and costly, so organisations have a responsibility to ensure they are well-run and that the discussions and decisions that emerge from them are not wasted. In short: meetings must matter.

One of the many challenges for NHS organisations in ensuring that meetings matter is how effectively they alert, assure and advise management and the board of directors. One of the mechanisms we use to ensure this happens is a report providing advice, assurance and alerts – the 3As report for short.

The 3As report provides a simple way for groups and committees to report to their parent group/committee or indeed to the executive group or board of directors. A template for such a report is provided below.

As well as listing the name of the meeting and date it was held, the template provides space for information such as:

- whether the meeting was quorate
- the key agenda items discussed
- a review of key risks

- what learning might be shared
- what actions are to be escalated/de-escalated and need consideration by the parent group/committee.

The body of the report asks for

- three key items for advice discussed at the meeting
- three items of assurance
- three alerts.

This three-of-each approach is intended as a guide and is not prescriptive.

The full report should be a maximum of two pages. We suggest that the chair of the meeting takes notes of the 3A items of advice, assure and alert throughout the meeting and agrees them with attendees at the meeting's conclusion for reporting and escalation purposes.

While this 3As format is useful for reporting urgent matters to officers of an organisation in a useful sized briefing note, we would caution against this report being seen as a replacement for assurance reports to groups and committees that require greater detail for reporting for performance and assurance matters.

The 3As summary means the report can be quickly escalated to teams and management at the next level, rather than perhaps waiting for several weeks or even months for meeting minutes to be ratified. In some NHS trusts we have worked with, the 3As report forms the basis

for care group/divisional team meetings, as it helpfully summarises the key points of a meeting. We have also seen the 3As format used as the basis for communication to all team/care group/divisional colleagues.

We hope this outline proves useful. We would be pleased to know if you have already adopted this approach and, if so, whether it works well for you.

Equally, we are happy to assist organisations on the use of the report as part of our broader work on obtaining better, more efficient and effective meetings, our 3 Waves or 3 Cycles approach.

If you have any questions or comments about this blog, please call us on 07732 681 120 or email advice@good-governance.org.uk.

Care Group/Divisional/Committee reporting template

[Insert name] Meeting. Key Issues Report. (This report should be a maximum of 2 sides of A4 paper)		
Report Date:		Report of: [Insert name] Care Group Governance Meeting
Date of last meeting:		Membership Numbers: [State the number of members in attendance] Quoracy met = [For example: 100% attendance including the Chair and DeputyChair]
1	Agenda	The [committee/group name] continues to meet [add in meeting frequency]. The [committee/group name] considered an agenda which is attached [attach agenda when sending]
2a	Alert	The [committee/group name] wish to alert members of the [add in name of group that your meeting reports to under the governance structure] that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Provide details of the key 3 or 4 matters you wish the committee or group that you report to under the governance structure to be alerted to and which have been discussed in your meeting].
2b	Assurance	The [committee/group name] wish to assure members of the [add in name of group that your meeting reports to under the governance structure] that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Provide details of the key 3 or 4 matters you wish the committee or group that you report to under the governance structure to be assured of and which have been discussed in your meeting.]
2c	Advise	The [committee/group name] wish to advise members of the [add in name of group that your meeting reports to under the governance structure] that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Provide details of the key 3 or 4 matters you wish the committee or group that you report to under the governance structure to be advised of and which have been discussed in your meeting.]
2d	Review of Risks	[Provide a brief update on any risk that needs to be escalated, for example if a risk is showing mitigating actions that are outside the agreed timescale or that meet a certain risk score that require their escalation in line with the Trust's Risk Management Policy].
2e	Sharing of learning	[Provide a details of key points of learning that should be shared across the Care Group. This may be taken from the sections above, or additional information]
3	Actions to be considered by the [add in name of group that your meeting reports to under the governance structure]	[Provide any additional actions not referenced above that you would like the committee/group that you report, to consider or undertake on your behalf.]