**Supervision policy**

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**Buckinghamshire County Council**

**Children’s Services**



## Version Control

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| **Version** | **Update** | **By Whom** | **When** |
| 2 | Page 5 – additional detail added on the purpose of group supervision | Principal Social Practitioner | October 2016 |
| 3 | Additional detail and documents | Head of First Response | June 2017 |
| 4 | Revised and rewritten | Principal Social Worker | April 2019 |

**Date of next review:** April 2020

**Scope of this policy**

This policy applies to all fieldwork and managerial staff within Buckinghamshire Council’s Children’s Services, irrespective of whether staff are here temporarily or on a permanent basis. This policy also applies to social work students placed within Childrens Services. The purpose of this document is to provide Children’s Services staff with guidance to support effective supervision and reflective practice.

**Introduction**

At Buckinghamshire Council Children’s Services our most important asset is our staff and it is recognised that direct work with children and families can be highly rewarding as well as complex, stressful and emotionally demanding. Therefore, we have a duty of care to our workforce and good-quality supervision can support practitioners’ wellbeing and job satisfaction, and will support workforce retention. Supervision should:

* Help facilitate direct work with children, young people and families
* Support proportionate decision-making
* Keep staff well

This policy sets out the core expectations for supervision, which is a key professional requirement enabling practitioners to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families they are working with.

**Working in partnership**

Effective supervision can only be fully achieved where there is a partnership between the supervisee and supervisor. This can take time to build and both parties have a shared responsibility to make the supervisory relationship work. Buckinghamshire Council’s values for the supervisory relationship can be found in the supervision agreement (See Appendices**).**

**Supervision agreements**

Supervision agreements establish a set of “ground rules” that clarify the rights and the expectations on both sides in order to help create a safe, secure and effective supervisory setting. (Shulman, 2005, 2011)

All supervisors and supervisees will be expected to complete and sign a supervision agreement within the first 4 weeks of their employment. Supervision agreements should be reviewed when there is a change in supervisor or if there is a significant change in circumstances for the supervisee.

The supervisee should be emailed an electronic copy of the supervision agreement and the supervisor will be responsible for saving a record of the supervision agreement in the confidential supervision folder on the N Drive. The template for the supervision agreement is Appendix No 2 to this policy.

**Frequency of supervision for workers**

It is recognised that staff require different frequencies of supervision, depending on their role and whether they have previous experience.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee** | **Frequency** | **Additional notes** |
| Students on placement | Weekly basis, considering both case and academic work |  |
| NQSW completing ASYE | First 6 weeks – 90 minutes each week  Week 7 onwards – fortnightly  Month 7 onwards – monthly | In the last 6 months of the ASYE, the supervisee and supervisor may still with to meet more often, rather than having all their case supervisions in one session. |
| Social workers/alternatively qualified practitioners | At least once a calendar month | Staff may wish to meet more often, rather than having all their case supervisions in one session |
| Team Managers | Once per calendar month by Head of Service |  |
| Heads of Service | Once per calendar month by Service Director |  |

**Frequency of case supervisions**

It is important that there is regular supervision on individual children but the frequency of these discussions should depend on the needs, risks and circumstances of the child.

The frequency of supervision, and rationale for this frequency, will be recorded clearly by the manager in each child’s file. This will be reviewed as a minimum every 12 weeks or sooner if the child’s needs, risks and circumstances change significantly.

**Expectations of supervision:**

* Needs to challenge practitioners to reflect critically on their practice.
* Promote a critically reflective and analytical approach to children and families’ needs.
* Conducted in a supportive, safe environment promoted by an organisational learning culture.
* Enable practitioners to apply new knowledge and skills to achieve better outcomes for Buckinghamshire’s children and families.
* Adopt a strengthening families approach which will lead to positive relationships with children and families.

## The purpose of supervision is to:

* Enable practitioners to *‘critically reflect on the understanding they are forming of the family, of considering their emotional response and whether this is adversely affecting their reasoning, and for making decisions about how best to help’(Munro 2010. Paragraph 4.10)*
* Ensure accountability for practice and a high quality service for children and families.
* Promote and maintain professional standards.
* Build purposeful, professional relationships and communicate effectively.
* Balance the need to manage risk and promote safeguarding alongside a duty to respect rights and address need.
* Understand and manage the emotional impact of social care practice.
* Share, debrief and provide additional support when dealing with distressing and stressful situations.
* Provide constructive challenge to move forward difficult and complex situations.
* Develop the knowledge, skills and values required to practice competently and work in partnership with other agencies.
* Use knowledge and experience to promote new practice approaches.
* Ensure peer and management review of professional decisions encouraging mutual learning and development.
* Communicate with line managers on organisational issues.
* Manage realistic workloads and caseloads.
* Review and discuss personal issues that might impact on professional roles and responsibilities.

**Types of Supervision:**

Employees in Children’s are entitled to supervision in relation to practice and personal development. These include:

* + **Case supervision** (group & one to one meetings): Practice supervision promotes discussion and decision making regarding the plans for individual children and families.
  + **Group supervision:** promote peer network interaction and reflective practice. Group supervision facilitates problem solving, peer support and the identification of specific tasks and actions.
  + **Personal supervision:** ensures practitioners make the necessary links between their personal and professional roles and make effective decisions for children and their families. Provides personal support and contributes to continuing professional development linking with the Council’s Delivering Successful Performance (DSP) programme.

Personal and case supervision is based on both the supervisee and supervisor having a clear understanding of the Knowledge and Skills Statement and its corresponding expectations. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work>

**Delivering Successful Performance (DSP)**

DSP objectives should be discussed in personal supervision sessions to monitor performance and ensure objectives are on target to be met. Extra sessions to discuss DSP can be arranged as necessary.

## Preparation for supervision

The key to successful supervision is effective preparation. Both the supervisor and supervisee should take responsibility for preparing all the information needed.

Actions agreed at the last supervision should be followed up and reviewed in successive sessions.

For case supervisions, supervisees should be clear about key dates/appointments on their cases and consider the following:

* What is worrying me and/or others?
* This is what is working well
* This what I decided to do
* This is what I need help with today

Supervisors will be expected to prepare for case supervision by utilising LCS records and performance reports to check that workflow is being managed, and scheduled visits and other appointments are taking place. Any difficulties in completing tasks should be discussed and a plan with remedial actions developed with the supervisee.

Supervisions should be scheduled in advance for the whole year and recorded in individual outlook calendars.

**Recording of supervision**

What is included in the supervision record should be detailed enough should it need to be revisited however, it should be concise. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to record the supervision.

Case supervisions are to be recorded on the Supervision Case Note template on the individual child/young person’s LCS file within 5 working days.

Personal supervisions are to be recorded on the personal supervision template (see Appendices). The personal supervision notes will be emailed to the supervisee within 5 working days, and the supervisee will have 5 working days to respond to the contents. Otherwise it is assumed that it is accepted the notes are an accurate reflection of the discussion that took place and the actions agreed.

If there are disagreements about the contents amendments should only be made by the supervisor following a discussion with the supervisee.

**Cancellation of supervision**

In the event of cancellation by either party then it should be re-booked to take place within 5 working days of the cancellation or within 5 days of returning to work [if cancellation was due to sickness.]

If the supervisor is absent from work for more than 2 weeks unplanned leave/sickness then it is the responsibility of the supervisee to report to their supervisor’s line manager for alternative supervision arrangements to be made.

**Confidentiality of and access to supervision records**

The case supervision record must be stored on the LCS supervision template for the relevant child/ young person.

The personal supervision must be stored in the relevant secure folder on the N Drive. Each practitioner should have sub folders in place for the following information (kept up to date by their manager):

1. Signed supervision agreement
2. Contract of employment
3. Personal supervision records; all supervision records must be electronically signed and stored in this folder
4. Attendance information (including where applicable fitness to work notes, occupational health report, return to work interview notes, phased return agreements, maternity information, flexible working)
5. Performance and development (any formal/ informal documents, complaints/compliments, DSP objectives, disciplinary/grievance)
6. Key documents (to include personal information, confidentiality statement, driving licence, insurance information including business use, MoT, HCPC and DBS details, details of items on loan ie computer, phone etc)

Whilst supervision offers a private area to discuss cases and personal circumstances the supervision records cannot be entirely confidential. Supervision records are the property of Buckinghamshire Council. There will be occasions where supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervisions [both case and personal] with others, such as their own line manager. This should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee.

Some examples of why records may need to be accessed include; quality assurance purposes, disciplinary purposes and for Ofsted inspectors.

In instances where there is an access to files request (Subject Access Request) personal supervisions would not be disclosed. However, case supervision records can be disclosed as part of a Subject Access Request. Elements of the case supervision record which relate to the social worker and the administration of their role would not need to be shared and therefore can be redacted. The information relating to the family would be shared although some information contained in the supervision record could be considered for redaction if:

* It would be likely to prejudice the carrying out of social work because of the risk of serious harm of the subject or someone else.
* In giving it could hinder the prevention or detection of a crime.
* It is legally privileged. (advice/correspondence between team and solicitors). Information in adoption records. (this would need to be dealt with by the relevant adoption team under their regulations).
* It is someone else’s information i.e. third party information.

**Management Decisions**

Management decisions are often made outside the supervision process. These decisions should be recorded separately to the supervision record on LCS using the case note ‘manager decision’ on the child’s file. Discussions culminating in management decisions should not be a substitute for formal supervision sessions.

The frequency of management decisions, and rationale for this frequency, will be recorded clearly by the manager in each child’s file. This will be reviewed as a minimum every 12 weeks or sooner if the child’s needs, risks and circumstances change significantly.

## Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for arranging appropriate professional supervision for all of their staff in accordance with this policy.

Employees are responsible for ensuring they have access to and use personal and professional supervision supplemented by regular discussions with their supervisor in between sessions.

**Resolution process**

If there is disagreement between Supervisor and Supervisee which cannot be resolved between the two parties, the issues should be referred to the Supervisor’s Line Manager and discussed in a 3 way meeting.

## Quality assurance of supervision

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring the supervision spreadsheet is regularly updated for their teams. This information provides the monthly performance data for the senior management team (SMT). Line Managers should keep the spreadsheet for monthly monitoring of supervisions up to date

([N:\Children & Young People\Safeguarding\Munro Units\Monitoring & Performance\Supervision Audits\Input Data](file:///\\buckscc\bcc_net\Children%20&%20Young%20People\Safeguarding\Munro%20Units\Monitoring%20&%20Performance\Supervision%20Audits\Input%20Data))

The quality of case supervision will be monitored by:

* Head of Service/Service Directorrandomly selecting each month one worker per team and looking at both personal and case supervisions that took place in the last 1-3 months.
* Observation of case management supervision through the scheduled quality assurance activity led by the Principal Social Worker and Practice Development Team.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

**SUPERVISION POLICY**

**APPENDICES**

## Supervision Agreement

## Buckinghamshire Council Supervision Agreement between:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of supervisee: |  |
| Name of supervisor: |  |
| Date of agreement: |  |
| Supervisee has read the supervision policy: |  |
| Supervisor has read the supervision policy: |  |

**Frequency**

We agree to ensure that supervision takes place within the appropriate timescales, as set out in the supervision policy

**Values**

We support he values for partnership working in supervision:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The supervision partnership will:** | **The supervision partnership will not:** |
| Be a confidential (subject to safety of service users and staff) | Break confidentiality |
| Be a continuous process of learning and development | Be a one off event |
| Be a two way process | Be one sided |
| Be mutually respectful | Undermine one another |
| Be focussed | Be unprepared for, leading to verbal deluge |
| Be planned and in a private space | Be rushed or interrupted |
| Deal with situations clearly and provide clarity | Be confusing |
| Anticipate, acknowledge, discuss and manage the emotional impact of the work | Avoid discussing the emotional impact of the work |
| Recognise good performance and achievements | Avoid challenge when this is needed |
| Support professional development | Ignore the need for learning opportunities and career development |

**Preparation**

We both agree to be prepared for supervision.

**Supervisee:**

I will come prepared for supervision, knowing key dates and will have given consideration to the cases for discussion prior to supervision using the preparation for case supervision form.

**Supervisor:**

I will consider LCS and performance reports and examine cases in more detail prior to supervision where it is felt it will support the supervision process.

The supervision sessions will be booked by the supervisor.

**Anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice**

We will ensure that supervision is based on anti-oppressive and anti- discriminatory principles and should be sensitive to race, gender, disability, impairment, age, religion and sexuality.

**Record keeping**

We will ensure that supervisions are recorded in line with Buckinghamshire County Council’s supervision policy.

**Disagreements**

If we cannot agree on an item, then the disagreement will be formally recorded within supervision. We acknowledge that either party have the right to refer to the next tier of management if we have been unable to resolve the issue amongst ourselves.

**Final statement**

It is our responsibility to ensure that we are familiar with the policy and understand what we can expect from each other. We agree that supervision will be given and received in accordance with Buckinghamshire County Council’s Supervision Policy wherein more details regarding supervision can be located.

Signature of supervisee:

Date:

Signature of supervisor:

Date:

# Personal and professional supervision

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Supervisor:** |  | |
| **Name of Supervisee:** |  | |
| **Date of Supervision:** |  | |
|  | | |
| **Agenda items** | | **Discussion (to include actions where appropriate)** |
| **Personal discussion:**  (to include anything brought to the supervisor’s attention that may impact on supervisees work) | |  |
| **Professional development:**  (Including reading, research, training, learning and development, career progression, audit, feedback from service users and other professionals and how all these examples can influence future practice). | |  |
| |  | | --- | | **This section is only relevant to qualified social workers**  Knowledge and skills statement for social workers  <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338718/140730_Knowledge_and_skills_statement_final_version_AS_RH_Checked.pdf>  **Consider progress/ development against the following:**  The role of child and family social work  Child development  Adult mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, disability and physical ill health  Abuse and neglect of children  Effective direct with children and families  Child and Family Assessment  Analysis, decision making, planning and review  The Law and the family justice system  Professional ethics  The role of supervision and research | | |  |
| **DSP and Performance:**  (Consider progress against DPS objectives, workflow, visit timeliness etc) | |  |
| **Annual Leave/TOIL/sickness** | |  |
| **Team development/health and safety:**  (lone working issues, resources to complete work, occupational health, etc) | |  |
| **Equality:**  (Identifying possible discrimination in the workplace with regards to the protected characteristics. Concerns regarding lack of opportunities to progress) | |  |
| **Any other business** | |  |

**The personal and professional supervision notes will be emailed to the supervisee. When the notes are received by the supervisee there will be a period of 5 working days to respond to the contents. Otherwise it is assumed that it is accepted that this is a reflection of the supervision record.**

# Case supervision

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Supervisor:** |  |
| **Name of Supervisee:** |  |
| **Date of Supervision:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Review of previous actions  (Check previous actions completed, were the actions effective?) |  |
| Case Discussion - focus on current risks, strengths, needs and explore the following |  |
| LCS Number: |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **This is what is worrying me and/or others** | 1. **This is what is working well for the child** | 1. **This is what I have decided to do** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **This is the issue that I am asking for support with today:** |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Progress against the plan/impact on child and/or family  (Discuss progress/gaps in the plan; consider feedback from the child and family) |  |
| Actions going forward  (Summarise actions for supervisee and supervisor, why action has been set. Include completed and outstanding actions from audits |  |

**Instructions** (to the supervisee)

Take some time to think about and respond to statements 1-3 ahead of supervision. Be prepared to discuss your responses. If you can’t respond to statement 3, try to respond to number 4.

If you are considering whether or not you require ad hoc supervision and you have managed to respond to questions 1-3, consider whether you now feel you can hold onto the case until your next scheduled supervision.

# Personal and professional supervision - Managers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Supervisor:** |  | |
| **Name of Supervisee:** |  | |
| **Date of Supervision:** |  | |
| **Agenda items** | | **Discussion (to include actions where appropriate)** |
| Personal discussion  (to include anything brought to the supervisor’s attention that may impact on supervisees work) | |  |
| Professional development  (Including reading, research, training, learning and development, career progression, audit, feedback from service users and other professionals and how all these examples can influence future practice). | |  |
| |  | | --- | | Knowledge and skills statement for leaders  <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691540/Knowledge_and_skills_statement_for_practice_leaders.pdf>  **Consider progress/ development against the following:**  Lead and govern excellent practice  Creating a context for excellent practice  Designing a system to support effective practice  Developing excellent practitioners  Support effective decision making  Quality assurance and improvement | | |  |
| **DSP and Performance**  (Consider progress against DSP objectives, individual team performance, managing staff absence) | |  |
| **Need to Know and Escalations**  (high risk children/young people that need to be brought to the attention of senior managers) | |  |
| **Annual Leave/TOIL/sickness** | |  |
| **Team development/health and safety**  (lone working issues, resources to complete work, occupational health, etc) | |  |
| **Equality**  (Identifying possible discrimination in the workplace with regards to the protected characteristics. Concerns regarding lack of opportunities to progress) | |  |
| **Any other business** | |  |

**The personal and professional supervision notes will be emailed to the supervisee. When the notes are received by the supervisee there will be a period of 5 working days to respond to the contents. Otherwise it is assumed that it is accepted that this is a reflection of the supervision record.**

**Recording case supervision – tips for supervisors**

**Limit the social worker’s update**

- Let the social worker know they will only have 10 minutes to update you about each case they want to discuss so need to structure their thinking to give you the most relevant information, new concerns or anything else they are a worried about.

- Resist the urge to type or ask questions – just listen. When the 10 minutes is up, you can then spend a few minutes asking clarifying questions, before moving on to discussing what is most concerning the social worker about this case or what they most need help with from you this session.

-This approach should help avoid getting trapped in lengthy discussions about where things are up to and allow more time for analysis, reflection, discussion of emotion and how theory or research may inform the work.

**Ask the social worker to help create the written record of the session**

-Wilkins’ research found many supervision records included considerable detail of all the activity a social worker has described. Much of this information will be elsewhere on the case management system so simply refer / signpost to this where possible.

- Then agree together what *new* information needs to be recorded, based not on what has already happened and been recorded (e.g. the home visit) but on the new thinking and reflection achieved together during the supervision discussion. (*From tips for recording supervision – less typing, more talking*)

**Let the practitioner know that it is acceptable – and welcome – to talk about emotions**

- Being able to talk about one’s emotions and those of others is widely considered essential for social workers. While managers will usually ask about a practitioners’ emotional wellbeing (“how are you this week?”) and social workers often use supervision to talk about feelings of frustration, it’s less common for these discussions to go much further. - - For example, if the social worker is frustrated by a parent, you might explore how this is playing a part in their assessment and decision-making. Are there times when they have been more or less frustrated with the parent? How might the parent be feeling? How might they experience the social worker’s frustration?

- If managers ‘give permission’ to talk about emotions by asking questions about how the social worker felt and/or saying how they might have felt in a similar situation, it allows for discussions that involve emotion as a more integral part of the work. (*From Tips for talking about emotions in supervision)*

**Record the child’s views**

-Children and family social workers are routinely interested in what children say and in their wishes and feelings but more often spoken *about* rather than their views being recorded directly.

-Try asking the social worker two simple questions in relation to each case: What does the child think about what is happening to them at the moment? What do they want to happen?

-By doing this, you can not only prompt the social worker to think about the things the child has said (or not said) and their behaviour and what this might mean, you can also ensure this is recorded and, where possible, acted upon. It would also be important to record the rationale behind any decision not to do what the child wants.

**Make some records on paper, not a computer**

Using paper allows you to be much more creative in terms of what and how you record. Large sheets of paper, to map out concerns within a genogram, to explore what risks are etc can be a helpful way to visualise concerns. The aim is not simply to replicate the same kind of recording in a different way but to enable supervision to lead to better thinking, feeling and reflecting, rather than creating a (duplicate) narrative record of activity.

**Recording analysis**

Supervision records often record **what** and **when** things should be done, with much less discussion of **how** and **why**. When recording actions, include ‘why’ as well as ‘what’. Having to record why particular actions are required may highlight the need for a more explicit consideration of why certain decisions have been made. Often, the reason for a particular action may be implicitly understood. Asking (and recording) ‘why’ should help to make your implicit reasoning more explicit.