Supervision Policy and Guidance for those undertaking Social Work Functions

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

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Introduction

Croydon Adult Social Care (ASC) wants to ensure that good quality, strengths based supervision is in place to assure best practice, support staff wellbeing and improve outcomes for residents, families and carers in our Croydon community.

The purpose of supervision is to establish accountability and promote professional development, health, and wellbeing. The process of supervision ensures a link between the values, policies and statutory responsibilities of the organisation and the delivery of practice excellence.

Strength based supervision embodies the principles of CLS, the ASC strength based practice approach. There is a strong focus on building positive relationships and establishing partnerships. Recognition of individual strengths and abilities, empowerment, critical self-reflection and acquiring skills and knowledge are all important elements of strength based supervision as well as assuring best practice and accountability for statutory responsibilities.

Supervision can take a number of different forms. Some teams have, in the main, peer group supervision, for example in Wellbeing Teams that manage registered services within a 'buddying' self-managed structure. Section 4 provides more detail on this and other supervision options.

High quality supervision has many benefits, it builds staff resilience, informs decision making, and enhances fulfilment and commitment to practice and to Croydon's vision and ambition. Most importantly, it supports a culture of best practice which promotes better outcomes for Croydon residents.

1 Policy Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of core principles and minimum standards for supervision available to staff within ASC. It applies to supervision for all ASC staff, including practitioners and other operational support staff, administrative staff, managers and temporary staff (agency) working within ASC.

The policy and practice guidance:

- a) Establishes expectations and standards.
- b) Promotes and ensures equality and diversity is mainstreamed into all supervisory discussions holding an anti-discriminatory lens on all actions and decisions.
- c) Supports staff to understand their role and the effectiveness of their contribution to the safe delivery of services.
- d) Promotes development of skills, knowledge, behaviours, values, attitudes and (where applicable) professional capabilities necessary to carry out their role.
- e) Assures professional supervision for social workers and occupational therapists.

2 Expectations

2.1 The ASC Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible and accountable for:

- The implementation of this policy and that supervision resources and learning and development opportunities are in place.
- Ensuring that this policy is reviewed as a minimum very two years, in line with standard procedure, and before this if statutory changes.
- That there is a robust system for assurance and governance of practice principles and standards.

2.2 Line Managers are responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring that there is an effective system in place for supervision with their staff group.
- Ensuring supervision is occurring for their staff at the recommended frequency.
- Ensuring supervision is of acceptable quality and in line with the policy and practice standards. A quality assurance framework will support managers to assess the quality of practice.
- Accessing resources and learning and development opportunities to support supervision.
- Ensuring staff with a professional registration receive professional supervision.
 This is of particular importance where the line manager is from a different professional background to that of their staff.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 *Supervisees* are employees who receive regular line management supervision from their respective manager. If an employee holds a health or social care professional qualification e.g. in social work or occupational therapy they should have access to professional supervision – see section 4 Supervision Options.

Supervisors are expected to have regular one to one supervision for their staff. Wherever possible supervisors will also be of the same profession. If this is not the case then professional supervision will be arranged.

- 3.2 Supervision is a collaborative practice and both participants have a responsibility to prepare and participate to ensure good supervision takes place.
- 3.3 Supervisors must ensure that supervision is a safe and collaborative space for supervisees to reflect on their practice. Discussion together about emotional resilience is important as is the development of skills and knowledge that empower supervisees to do things differently and manage their workloads.

Supervision should support staff to be creative and develop their practice in accordance with the CLS, the ASC strengths-based practice approach.

4 Supervision Options

4.1 Line Management Supervision

The recommended model of supervision in Croydon is the 4x4x4 model. This model aligns well with a strengths-based approach and provides a useful framework for approaching supervision for both the supervisor and supervisee. It focuses on 4 main areas, management, development, support and mediation. Further *information can be found in appendix 3*

During the Covid-19 pandemic supervision practice, whilst working remotely out of office, has been developed and refined. This virtual supervision practice may continue under hybrid working. *Further information can be found in Appendix 4*

4.2 Professional Supervision

Social workers and occupational therapists should have access to professional/clinical supervision. This can be provided as part of the line management supervision if the manager is of the same profession, if not then this should be arranged through another medium, e.g. with a manager of the same profession or through professional group supervision.

Professional/Clinical Supervision should be in line with identified professional standards and include the following areas:

- Reflection on application of the knowledge and skill (KSS) and practice capability statements (for social workers).
- The application of specific theoretical frameworks and evidence-based practice and updating knowledge and skills and relating this to practice.
- Professional leadership of practice of complex work i.e. safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Reflection on profession-specific input to contribute to the overall objectives of the service
- Maintenance of registration and professional standards to assure competence in carrying out the professional role.
- Compliant with the ASYE programme if a social worker is newly qualified.

The Chief Social Worker / Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have introduced post qualifying best practice standards for practice supervisors. Research in Practice has delivered some training to support organisations to think about embedding these standards. The standards can be found here. The website with resources can be found here.

The College of Occupational Therapists (COT) has developed supervision guidance to enable practitioners and managers to set up healthy and effective supervision practices. This provides ideas and information that will be useful to those providing

supervision and those receiving it. https://www.rcot.co.uk/files/supervision-guidance-occupational-therapists-and-their-managers-2015

4.3 Group Supervision

Some supervisors are managing large groups of staff, for example in Provider Services, where it may not be possible to provide monthly individual supervision sessions. Supervision for these staff groups may therefore take place in group. However individual sessions should be available as required.

4.4 Reflective Supervision

Many teams hold reflective practice group supervision sessions. Reflective practice sessions are also offered using a variety of models including action learning. Reflective supervision, either one to one or in groups, provides a space for practitioners to reflect and consider the emotional impact of their work, the unquestioned assumptions and biases they bring, varying perspectives (including theoretical perspectives) and ethical dilemmas inherent in practice. This approach enables practitioners to develop self-awareness, critical thinking and sound decision making.

It is also a requirement of the ASYE programme.

4.5 Other Forms of Supervision

For some parts of the Adult Social Care Service, there are other ways in which staff receive support, discuss and seek advice on their work and new ideas and methods of working which can include:

- 'Buddying', Confirmation Practice and self-managed support in Well-being registered Provider Teams – see Appendix 5
- Informal discussions with managers/supervisors
- Peer discussions
- Team meetings
- Practice Meetings
- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Reflective practice sessions
- Specialist advice or consultation.

These are valuable and helpful ways in which staff can broaden their knowledge and expertise. The line manager always remains accountable for the work of their staff and important or sensitive decisions and actions should not be taken without their knowledge and agreement and following relevant procedures.

Where there is a professional supervisor involved, the line manager, professional supervisor and supervisee should work together collaboratively for example, occasional 3-way meetings and sharing supervision notes.

5 Supervision Practice

5.1 Standards

- Supervisors should have the appropriate training or learning opportunities and resources to develop their skills and be effective supervisors.
- ♣ A Supervision agreement must be agreed between parties and reviewed on an annual basis or before if required.
- ♣ Supervision should take place at a prearranged place and time, in a confidential space/way and with an agreed agenda and preparation by both supervisor and supervisee. In virtual settings please remember the use of headsets only makes half of the conversation confidential.
- ♣ Supervisors and supervisees should work collaboratively and have strength-based conversations to develop a strong and positive relationships.
- ♣ Supervision must promote and ensure equality and diversity is included in all supervisory discussions holding an anti-discriminatory lens on all actions and decisions. These diversity discussions should be recorded as part of the notes.
- Supervision will take place on a minimum monthly basis for 1.5 hours.
- A written record of every supervision discussion should be recorded and signed
 or electronically signed in an agreed way by both parties.
- ♣ Where there is a dispute between the supervisor and supervisee, mediation should be provided by the line manager's supervisor in the first instance.

5.2 Practice Principles and Values.

- ✓ Value openness and honesty, empathy, critical reflection and analysis.
- ✓ Work in partnership.
- ✓ Ensure equality and diversity are at the heart of discussions, hold an antidiscriminatory lens on all actions and decisions.
- ✓ Value well-being and promote understanding of individual circumstances.
- ✓ Be clear on standards and expectations, recognise and promote positive practice, appraise and invest in learning and development.
- ✓ Be clear on HR policies and procedures.
- ✓ Prepare for supervision with an agenda and topics for discussion
- ✓ Share reflective discussion to support critical and reflective thinking.
- ✓ Ensure that key discussion points and decisions are recorded

6 Recording Supervision.

- 6.1 To establish effective relationships, both parties should sign a supervision agreement setting out how supervision will take place. A template for the agreement can be found in Appendix 1. The supervision agreement must be reviewed annually and if and when there are any significant policy changes.
- 6.2 All supervision discussions held within a formal setting are recorded and copies are signed and kept by both the supervisor and supervisee. A template for recording discussion can be found in Appendix 2.
 - a) Records should clearly detail any decisions that have been made, reasons and any agreed actions, who will take responsibility for the actions, and the timescale for carrying out these actions.
 - b) The detail included in the supervision record is a matter of judgement for supervisor and supervisee. In general the record should be detailed enough so A reference to professional competency or capability frameworks where necessary. A short summary of the discussion and the decisions or action points arising from it should be sufficient in most cases.
 - c) The supervision record should be completed in a timely way, agreed and signed by both parties and stored confidentially.
 - d) If there is disagreement as to the content of the record, this should be recorded by the supervisor and escalated through line management.
 - e) Any decisions made in supervision with regard to a person who receives support by ASC should be clearly recorded on their case notes on LAS.
 - f) 6.3 Supervision notes may be used as part of performance monitoring. The professional supervision record may also be used as evidence to submit to professional regulating authorities to demonstrate adherence to professional standards should this be required. Also for internal supervision audits – though discussions re personal wellbeing can be removed and replaced with "wellbeing discussion"
- 6.4 Specific requirements for supervision are required for newly qualified Social Workers under the ASYE programme and for newly qualified Occupational Therapists.

7 Learning and Development

- 7.1 There are learning development opportunities for supervisors to promote effective practice.
- 7.2 We are working towards embedding the post qualifying standards for practice supervisors (for social work) and using the framework to support and develop training.
- 7.3 Supervision learning and development resources and training opportunities should be found on Croydon Learning.

8 Confidentiality.

- 8.1 Confidentiality is important in the development of supervisory relationships. Creating a safe environment for supervision, where the boundaries of confidentiality are explicit, will assist both parties.
- 8.2 Supervisors are responsible for keeping a record of supervision meetings. All discussions will be treated as confidential on a need-to-know basis. There are circumstances, however, where it will be necessary for supervisors to discuss information gained from supervision with senior managers and/or senior professionals. Similarly, supervision records may be released for the purpose of monitoring the quality of supervision or used as documentation in disciplinary or legal proceedings.
- 8.3 Any major concerns relating to the supervisee's practice or performance identified as a result of supervision should be discussed with the supervisee, before the supervisor reports these to their line manager.
- 8.4 The supervisee should keep a record of supervision as part of their continuous professional development portfolio. Any record should avoid personal identification of adults, carers or third parties. Any information and decisions should be recorded in the relevant file and held electronically.
- 8.5 Confidentiality under supervision does not exclude the supervisor or supervisee from their responsibilities under their respective professional Codes of Conduct and current relevant legislation.
- 8.6 Supervision should be based on anti-oppressive principles and should be sensitive to the protected characteristics stated in the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.7 Supervision notes should not be uploaded to the Corporate appraisal system site as they contain sensitive client information and the security of that storage is not assured. This is in line with practice by Children and Families service.

9 Storage and Retention of Supervision Records

- 9.1 Supervision records should be stored securely and access to them controlled. Ideally supervision records should be held electronically. Both supervisor and supervisee will hold a copy of the supervision agreement. Records may be electronically agreed by email, and the agreement email retained as proof of both parties verifying the record.
- 9.2 A copy of the supervision records will be retained securely by both parties and can be released under certain circumstances see section 8.2
- 9.3 If a supervisee transfers to another team, supervisor, or professional supervisor within Croydon ASC their records should be passed on to the new supervisor or professional supervisor. This should be done with the workers consent if possible, but

if there are issues such as capability/disciplinary etcetera that require continuity of management it may be done without consent. If in doubt, consult the Caldicott guardian.

9.4 When an employee leaves Croydon, HR keep their records for seven years before archiving them. Supervisors should notify HR services to arrange storage of supervision records via the record management process rather than continue to hold them locally.

10 Governance and Quality Assurance

Quality assurance provides governance and ensures that both the organisation and staff are receiving supervision that is of a high quality, is enabling and supports ongoing development and good practice.

A framework for quality assurance is developing and there are some current tools in place but we want to ensure this is more inclusive and supports a strengths-based way of working together.

The quality assurance framework will include

- LGA Social Work/Care Health Check
- Anonymous Staff Supervision Survey for all
- Self-assessment using recommended tool
- Peer discussions
- Feedback forums/channels e.g. quarterly surgeries.
- Audit of Supervision Training attendance and quality
- Peer Review
- Practice observation of social work task
- Supervision (not training, but auditing supervision itself) Audit

END

SUPERVISION AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

This agreement is between		(Supervisor)
And	(supervisee).	

We agree to abide by the supervision guidance and will ensure that supervision sessions are conducted in a positive manner based on mutual respect for each other's skills, knowledge and experience.

Arrangements for supervision

- We will meet for supervision every ... weeks for a minimum of 1.5 hours (at least monthly).
- Supervision dates will be booked as far in advance as possible. Scheduled
 dates will only be postponed due to unforeseen absence by either of us or in
 the event of a major incident occurring.
- Any postponed dates will be immediately re-scheduled and the session held within 7 days of postponement.
- We will hold sessions in an agreed designated space (or virtual meeting) free from interruptions.
- If the supervisor is likely to be away for more than 1 month, supervision will be undertaken by, or another member of the management team as agreed with the supervisee.

Agenda

- We will prepare for supervision by identifying any work or issues to be addressed and will notify each other in advance about what we would like to discuss.
- We will follow the set agenda but will prioritise as necessary at the beginning of the session.
- We agree that time will be set aside during every session to allow for reflective practice and wellbeing.

Recording

We will agree who will take notes and how these notes will be shared and agreed. Decisions relating to case files will be recorded on LAS. Records relating to the supervisee will be held in their personal supervision file.

Confidentiality

We agree that the content of supervision is usually confidential but acknowledge that this might not always be possible. Exceptions to this include but are not limited to: auditing or inspection of case files, following staff performance processes, absence issues.

Mediation of disagreements

If there are any areas of disagreement between us, these will be recorded on the supervision record and we will try to resolve them between ourselves in the first instance. If agreement cannot be reached than the supervisor's supervisor will be asked to mediate in the first instance.

Equalities

We will ensure that equalities and anti-discriminatory practice is included in any case discussion. An awareness of the principles of Croydon's equalities and valuing diversity policies should underpin our conduct of supervision.

Review of supervision

We will review all aspects of supervision, including this contract, at least once a year, or as needed depending on changing circumstances or service requirements.

Professional or Clinical Supervision

Where the supervisor and supervisee are from different professions, the supervisor/supervisor will ensure the supervisee has access to regular supervision from a manager with the same professional qualification.

Signed:	
	supervisor
	supervisee
Date	

Record of Supervision Discussion

This form should be used during supervision to record discussions and actions. It can be adapted for role requirements for example administrative staff, senior managers etc. All supervision should ensure that there is discussion on well-being, reflection and development using a strength based approach. Some prompts are highlighted to aid discussion.

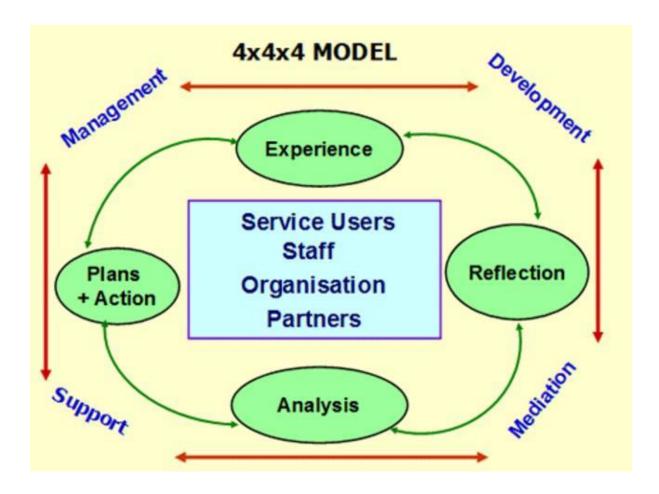
Both parties should sign the form at the end of the session and each keep a copy stored securely for future reference. Please see the additional guidance to support your discussion.

Subject	Comment/discussion
Checking in	
 Physical/emotional wellbeing work life balance Health and safety 	
Leave & Sickness	
 Annual leave Dependency leave Any other leave Sickness leave (discuss if support is required) 	
Review of agreed actions.	
Case related actionsNon case related actions	
High risk/complex work (including safeguarding).	
 Discuss using strength based approaches. Use reflective practice (tools can be found on the ASC practice guide). Discuss coping strategies to deal with stress/workload if necessary. Provide clear advice, direction and support. Use collaborative decision making techniques. 	

Reflective discussions –	
 Values and ethics Anti-oppressive practice Strengths-based values Positive risk taking. 	
Recording and legal literacy	
 Include self-review of practice, strengths and areas for development. Discuss support requirements. Discuss case law, case examples. 	
Team or organisation discussion	
Positive initiativesFeedback to take up to senior management	
Learning and professional development	
 Discussion of impact of learning How to implement learning cross the team/organization Forthcoming training Discussion about resources/articles supervisor/supervisee may have accessed/read. Career progression etc. Practice Observation (1 per year) date and details 	
Professional Requirements	
 Discussion about maintaining registration and professional standards. CPD overview – how to upload on registration body. Protected Time for SWE CPD/registration, details when taken (4 days/28.8 hrs over year pro-rata'd). 	
Any other business.	

Date of next Supervision:	
Venue or Virtual:	
Time:	
Signed:	
(Staff Member)	
Signed:	
(Line Manager)	

Appendix 3- The 4x4x4 supervision model



Supervision Model

The recommended model of supervision in Croydon is the *4x4x4* model (Morrison, 2005). This model aligns well with a strengths-based approach and provides a useful framework for approaching supervision for both the supervisor and supervisee.

Four stakeholders in supervision	Four functions of supervision	Four elements of the supervisory cycle
People who use services	Management	Experience
Staff	Support	Reflection
The organisation	Development	Analysis
Partner organisations	Mediation	Action planning

Four functions of supervision:

- 1. Competent, accountable performance/practice (management function)
- 2. Continuing Professional Development (development function)
- 3. Personal Support (support function)

4. Engaging the individual with the organisation and developing the professional relationship (mediation function)

Four stakeholders in supervision:

If supervision is carried out effectively there should be benefits for stakeholders. Examples of benefits as follows:

- 1. People we are working with, carers and families a clear and focused approach from workers who are able to undertake a comprehensive assessment which takes account of needs, risks and involves service users in the process.
- 2. Supervisees have clear role accountability and are able to demonstrate a confident, reflective approach to case management, engaging with a range of partners
- 3. Organisation supervisors disseminate agency goals, values and policies. They guide and monitor work leading to the development of consistent practice. They value workers which in turn lead to lower rates of turnover, sickness or complaints.
- 4. Partners workers understand the role of partners, are able to effectively negotiate with them and have accurate expectations when involved in multi-agency assessments and planning.

Four elements of the supervisory cycle (based on Kolb's Learning Cycle):

- 1. Experience 'the story'
- 2. Reflection think about the experience e.g. what worked well, what didn't work as well, what could have been done differently?
- 3. Analysis what does the experience mean?
- 4. Plans/Action what is the next 'chapter' in the story?

The integrated 4x4x4 model provides a coherent, practical, and well-tested framework to integrate these different but connected elements of supervision.

Recognising the different functions of supervision and the needs of different stakeholders is essential. Sometimes the needs of the supervisee, service user, supervisor and agency may be aligned; at other times, they will conflict and the different functions will pull in opposite directions.

REMOTE SUPERVISION FACTSHEET

Checklist: things to consider when doing remote supervision

- Take time to renegotiate ground rules and acknowledge what might be different. For example:
 - * Supervision by phone or video? This will affect your rapport and interaction: 'face-to-face' video interaction is preferable if possible.
 - * IT issues familiarity with technology, connection, appropriate 'kit'
 - * Environment (physical and emotional) is the space to holds this conversation appropriate/comfortable/confidential for both of you?
 - Boundaries between personal and professional self may have shifted / loosened and this may impact on your supervisory relationship
 - * Any adjustments needed when taking these things into account
 - Think about frequency and length of supervision you may want to have shorter but more frequent sessions
- Prepare for supervision: set aside 5-10 minutes before supervision to clear your mind and be present
- Specific questions to ask at the start might be:
 - * Is it a safe/appropriate space to conduct the call? Do both parties feel comfortable? Are you likely to be interrupted?
 - * Do both parties feel comfortable with the technology e.g. sharing screens if want to share information etc.
 - * What is on the agenda?
 - * How will we take notes of the session?
- Pay particular attention to checking in at the start. Using a tool or resource may help with focus and be more effective than simply saying 'how are you?' There are lots of tools to start the conversation; here is an example, which you can share or discuss:

Blob tree Feelings wheel

- Focus on well-being: this could include adjustments to working at home, specific issues including caring/childcare responsibilities, issues affecting household, illness, worries
- Agree an agenda of what you will discuss / prioritise for this session. Use the 4 functions of supervision and maintain a balance of well-being support as well as a space to discuss and reflect on work and evidence decision-making. People are struggling with huge amounts of new information acknowledge this and prioritise what to share and discuss. Try to keep a strength-based approach and maintain balance: what is working well as well as what is not working so well or causing difficulties
- Be clear about expectations and any agreed actions from supervision. Notes of supervision should be kept, evidencing key points of discussion and any decisions
- People will be coping in different ways so a flexible, personalised approach and a space to acknowledge this is key.

Support for supervisors

Remember sometimes as a supervisor, you need support and supervision. When flying on a plane, remember the safety advice to put on your oxygen mask first before you try to help someone else.

"Secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others"

Self Care Cards

Some models we could consider using as needed;

Wellbeing Teams "How We Work" learning and development in a self-managed teams.

Buddy and Confirmation Practices.

The Buddies role is to support and challenge each other. One of the ways they do this is through a peer review session every two weeks called Confirmation Practices. In Confirmation Practices Wellbeing Workers are asked to self-evaluate their practice, give themselves a score from 1 to 5, and explain why they gave themselves that score and what they want to do to improve it over the next two weeks. Confirmation Practices give Wellbeing Workers a systematic and structured way to reflect on their practice and set themselves actions to improve.

The actions from the last session are reviewed together. Confirmation Practices take place in team meetings and the Wellbeing Leader coaches the team in doing Confirmation Practices. If people have any concerns about their work, they can then raise them at the Team Meeting. The Wellbeing Leaders also complete Confirmation Practices every two weeks. Buddy meetings happen fortnightly at a time and place to suit the Wellbeing Workers. Confirmation practices are reviewed at the team meeting.

Conducting Team Meetings that have an explicit function of raising and addressing tensions.

The members of a Wellbeing Team meet weekly for two hours. These meetings provide a protected space for the team to self-manage its work, learn collectively, address issues and concerns and develop ideas for improvement. Attendance is mandatory and team members are paid for their time. At team meetings, Wellbeing Workers can identify concerns; these are addressed immediately. The agendasetting for the meeting is open to all team members, any of whom can raise a tension. This approach puts into practice our culture of openness, transparency and respect for our colleagues.

Person-Centred Team Review. Every six months the team review how well they have been working together, and highlight what is working and not working from both individual and team perspectives. Team outcomes and goals are recorded as a product of the Team Agreement.

Annual reflection shared with the team, where team members write a 'Colleague letter of understanding' to the team reflecting what they have achieved over the last year, what they are proud of, what they want to achieve over the next year, and how they would like the team to support them. This may be done as part of the personcentred team review.

Team Agreements and the Person-Centred Team Plan

The Person-Centred Team Plan is a document co-created by the team. People share information that enables colleagues to understand what matters to each other,

including their one-page profiles. The Team Agreements are co-produced rules and ways of working together and colleagues hold each other to account on these.

Other methods include;

- A. Peer supervision This is where colleagues supervise each other and is usually a discussion on specific cases/issues. Record any decisions made on the case notes as informal supervision.
- B. Group supervision This can occur, for example, in a home care team, where a supervisor will supervise a number of staff in a group and this will cover discussion of specific cases and how the group work together as a team. Group supervision complements, rather than replaces, one-to-one supervision. It can provide a valuable means of sharing practices, prompting debate and promoting learning.
- C. Informal/Ad Hoc supervision This occurs in between planned supervision meetings when guidance/advice is required. Record any decisions reached on the individual client's case notes. This cannot replace other forms of supervision.