

# **Telford and Wrekin**

## **Children's Safeguarding**

### **Supervision Policy**

# Supervision Policy Children's Safeguarding Policy Governance

<b>Title</b>	<b>Supervision Policy</b>
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## 1. Introduction

Telford and Wrekin is committed to providing high quality professional support and casework supervision for all frontline staff. Effective supervision is a key process in the delivery of high quality services to children, their families and carers. Reflective and challenging supervision which encourages staff to think differently and creatively and pays attention to the impact of the case and the work on the practitioner is essential to safeguarding and should operate at all levels. It needs to help practitioners to think, to explain and to understand, with the overriding priority being a focus on the lived experience of the child. Supervision is also an integral part of our commitment to learning and development for all staff. It is the method by which the human impact of the work is recognised, understood and addressed. Quality supervision, held at least four weekly for staff in frontline posts, ensures all staff members have access to safe and supported case management, personal and professional development.

Providing high quality supervision is at the heart of our efforts to improve the quality and consistency of professional practice.

Casework supervision should provide an opportunity for challenge and critical reflection, which is the best safeguard against over-optimism and the development of risk adverse practice.

Professional Support supervision should focus on helping staff manage the complex and emotionally challenging situations that arise in working with families. This both reduces the likelihood of there being a harmful effect on the work and worker and ensures that information gained using reflective discussions is integrated into their understanding of the child's experience. Professional Support supervision should also identify and address any issues in relation to the supervisee's health and wellbeing; identify and address any performance issues at an early stage and identify and support professional development needs.

The principles underpinning the Professional Support supervision record are applicable to all staff, although it is recognised that many are not involved in direct work with families, and the relevance of some aspects should be discussed as part of the supervision agreement. The tool for recording Casework supervision is applicable to social workers and other social care staff working directly with children, young people and carers. This format is available on Protocol, and is part of the case record. Other teams and services may amend the tools but should abide by the underlying principles.

Supervision is a complex process, and while this document can offer guidance, professional judgement will have to be exercised in different roles in different parts of the service.

## 2. Professional Support

Professional Support supervision has four functions:

- Competent, accountable performance/practice (management function)
- Continuing professional development (development function)
- Personal support (support function)
- Engaging the individual with the organisation (mediation function)

The process of supervision is based on the development of a relationship between supervisors and supervisees which provides a safe environment to support the worker and facilitate reflection, challenge and critical thinking.

It is important that the record is a live, working document, and is referred to in subsequent supervision sessions to ensure that agreed actions are carried out.

### Wellbeing and Support:

This section acknowledges the human and emotional aspects of the social care task and should not be limited to just asking the supervisee how they are at the beginning of the meeting, as such a question will largely illicit a response of 'fine'. The supervisor should ask the supervisee what aspects of the work have been most rewarding, and which aspects of the work have caused them the most difficulty or distress. With each, the focus should be on helping the worker to understand their emotional experience so they can learn from them and use that understanding to develop their self-awareness and professional practice. They may also wish to acknowledge any personal matters and determine whether there is anything else that needs to be taken into consideration. Any actions arising from this should be recorded and reviewed at the next professional support supervision.

### Development

In line with the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), everyone is encouraged to become involved in challenging and developmental activities, practice-led developments, workshops and other contributions to learning, including attendance at training. These should be recognised, reflected on and recorded with a focus on what support the worker needs to embed their learning into practice.

Similarly, areas of underperformance or gaps in development should be quickly identified and addressed as part of the agenda within regular supervision.

### Practice and Quality Standards

Each part of the service has practice standards and practice quality standards that relate to their core business. This section is where discussions in relation to performance/practice should be recorded. Excellent practice should be recognised, and practice concerns should be recorded, with agreed actions and review. Any actions from the previous professional support supervision should be reviewed in subsequent supervision sessions.

### Additional Duties/Responsibilities/Activities

This section recognises the additional work that individuals undertake from time to time, and provides an opportunity for this contribution to be recorded and reflected on, with a focus on whether the worker needs any support to embed their learning into practice.

## **3. Casework**

Supervision for practitioners with case responsibilities should be held monthly. The only exception to this is in respect of Children in Care (CIC) in long term matched stable placements, supervision of these cases should be held 3 monthly following a Care Planning Meeting and the CIC review. Supervision should be a space to stop and critically reflect on and analyse the quality of the work, including the worker's experience of working with a child and family and their understanding of each child's experience. It is not appropriate to use supervision for management activity that can be achieved outside the supervision process.

Managers should routinely use management information to update themselves on the work being carried out by their supervisees. Where they are supervising staff working directly with children and families this should include reading case records, scrutinising the quality of assessments, case planning and help being provided. This management oversight should be recorded on the case record and inform both ad hoc and formal supervision discussions. This should result in

supervision discussions focusing on those situations which can most benefit from reflective discussion.

Different parts of the service have different case holding demands and capacities, and professional judgement will be required. Casework discussion and agreed decisions need to be recorded on Protocol by the supervisor/line manager.

The record of casework supervision in respect of an individual child/young person receiving a service should be held on the child's electronic file. The record of casework supervision in respect of carer's receiving a service should be held on the carer's electronic file.

The decision about which child/carer is to be discussed is a joint one, and the professional judgement of the supervisor and supervisee should be used. It is not possible for every child to have an in-depth supervisory discussion at every session. In making this decision, the following might be considered:

1. High profile cases, where there might be high risk, increased activity, multi-agency concerns.
2. Cases that are at a significant point such as Proceedings or approaching LAC Review or CP conference.
3. Step Up/Step Down decisions being made where there is risk of care, escalation of concern, or a CP plan ending.
4. Cases that appear to be dormant and have not been discussed for a period of time.
5. Cases where the worker feels that work is progressing well; so that understanding can be questioned and if found to be accurate for the source of success to be understood and transferred to other situations.

Preparation for supervision should involve identifying cases to be discussed. Supervisees may complete the case synopsis or update section prior to supervision as a way of preparing, but no other section should be completed as it is the discussion between supervisor and supervisee that engenders critical reflection and challenge.

#### **4. Reflective Group Supervision**

Reflective Group supervision promotes a learning culture in teams and organisations as well as a shared knowledge of cases. It is important that the group meets regularly, has a clear agenda, is well facilitated and follows the agreed structure of a brief case presentation followed by reflective questioning from the group. The aim of group supervision is to help practitioners, through a brief case presentation and an appreciative inquiry approach, to develop their reflective and analytic thinking. Social workers benefit through the sharing of their practice, reflecting on and through the work of peers, feedback and discussion. Reflective Groups records are retained on the Child's file or the Carer's file if a carer is being discussed as a systemic consultation case note.

## **5. Observation of Practice**

Observation of practice is a fundamental aspect of professional training, and an integral part of continuous learning and development. Within supervision, observation of practice adds a further dimension; giving depth to the reflection of the child's lived experience, and contributing to the professional development of the practitioner.

For frontline practitioners, and those directly involved with families, there is an expectation that there will be two formal observations a year.

### Preparation for the Direct Observation of Practice

The supervisee and the observer should plan the direct observation and agree objectives and learning criteria for the observation - what do they want to achieve in the intervention and are there any specific capabilities identified as areas for development or concern that they would like the observer to focus and provide feedback on.

Wherever possible the service user(s)/carer involved should be asked if they are willing to be part of the process. If they agree, it is the responsibility of the observer and the supervisee to ensure that the service user/carers is given the opportunity to comment on the supervisee's capabilities. Not all service users will be able to or want to be involved in the process; others will be willing to take part and contribute. Supervisee and observer should agree and clarify the role of the observer during the intervention: how will they be introduced and under what circumstances, if any, will they intervene.

Supervisee and observer should agree what happens after the observation—how and when will feedback be given and in what format. The supervisee should have the opportunity to reflect and comment on the observer's report.

The record/feedback from practice observations will not be recorded on the electronic case file as it pertains to the social worker and their performance, not the family in question, and therefore should be treated as confidential.

## 6. Supervision Framework, Frequency & Recording Guide

This framework covers the supervision of all staff within Children's Services, including all social work staff - social workers, senior social workers, consultant social workers, support workers, team leaders, senior managers and includes staff from all disciplines. The guidance covers permanent, fixed term and temporary/agency staff.

All staff in Children's Services will be supervised regularly by their line manager. All staff, irrespective of their level, must have regular, planned supervision with their line manager.

A supervision contract must be signed by both supervisor and supervisee and uploaded to the supervisee record through. One to One supervision for workers will be held at least monthly and must be recorded on the supervision record template found. The Supervision contract and personal supervision discussion templates are found on **SharePoint - CPFS Staff Reporting – Staff One to One**.

For staff who have no case responsibility such as support workers or Team Leaders this could be six weekly.

**NB\*** no casework discussion should be recorded as part of personal supervision.

### Supervision Contract (See Appendix 1)

All staff will sign a supervisory contract in line with these guidelines. The contract will be drawn up jointly by supervisor and supervisee. The contract should be jointly reviewed every 12 months.

The supervision contract clarifies roles, responsibilities and expectations of both parties and will be used to initiate a discussion about making the supervision work and to assist in achieving objectives.

Supervision contracts also:

- Reflect the seriousness of the activity of supervision

- Represent a positive model of partnership
- Ensure that the supervisee is equally aware of their role and responsibilities
- Clarifies issues of authority and accountability
- Develops a forum for review and feedback
- Sets a benchmark for standard setting for supervision
- Ensures rights of supervisee and supervisor and their entitlement to give and receive supervision

### Recording of Supervision

The supervision contract will set out the expectations of recording in supervision.

Matters not directly related to a specific case which are discussed in supervision should be recorded in the session, by the supervisor, using the supervision template. The supervisor and the worker will read and agree as an accurate record of supervision and each will keep a copy or electronic copy. These records should also include notes of any disagreements. Managers will be expected to keep a record of dates and times of all supervision sessions, including any cancellations and reasons.

All supervision notes will be kept in a supervision file retained by the manager. The contents of this file remain confidential to the supervisor and supervisee unless a matter arises which requires a more senior manager to become involved. Such exceptions may also include sharing performance monitoring documents and supervision records with HR personnel (see confidentiality below).

### Recording Casework Supervision, Decisions and Agreed Actions (See Appendix 3)

Casework discussion and agreed actions for individual service users will be recorded on Protocol by the supervisor/line manager. Recording on Protocol will be clearly marked in 'case notes' or on the supervision form in 'forms' and there should be evidence of supervision on every open

case at least three monthly and for any very active cases where there are safeguarding issues, e.g. CP cases at a monthly interval. This is for the purposes of accountability and audit and to ensure that there is clear planning in progress for work with the child.

Supervisors are required to read through and audit case notes and electronic recordings on all service user files at least every 12 months and record this on protocol.

### Confidentiality

Supervision cannot always be wholly confidential because the supervisor is acting on behalf of the organisation as well as the supervisee and in certain situations the content may need to be shared with management and/or HR Personnel.

## **7. Supervision Sessions**

Supervision sessions are a key element in the supervisory relationship.

### Frequency, Duration and Physical Surroundings.

It is expected that all staff will receive regular and planned supervision. The frequency of sessions for workers directly intervening with families should be at least monthly but may vary depending on the experience of worker and whether they are full-time or part-time. It is expected that sessions will usually last up to 1.5 hours. Supervision should take place in a private room with only those relevant to the supervisory relationship present. Sessions should begin punctually and interruptions should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Frequent lateness, cancellations or interruptions caused by either party should be a matter for discussion from which written record should be kept.

The national standard for newly qualified social workers is for weekly supervision for the first six weeks of employment, then at least fortnightly for six months then a minimum period of monthly after that.

### Agenda

The agenda should be discussed and set jointly by supervisor and worker. Please refer to the Supervision Record Template. There should be an opportunity to reflect on intervention, case progression and to consider any impact of the case on the worker. The items are likely to include:

case discussions including risk assessments and review of previous supervision plan, management of overall workload and new work, time/priorities, any performance issues, professional development (including training, theory, research, new methods of intervention), preparation for next supervision, monitoring stress, sick leave, TOIL, annual leave, incorporating issues of anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice.

## Content

Supervisors must ensure that staffs have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and the standards expected by the department, including:

- Understand and adhere to the departments policies and procedures
- Ensure a high quality of practice is maintained to guarantee an effective service to users

Through supervision, supervisors should also oversee and monitor service delivery by:

- Allocating and prioritising work related to the individual's responsibilities
- Ensuring the person's workload is managed and weighted appropriately
- Setting objectives and evaluating the effectiveness of the work carried out
- Improving multi-disciplinary/multi-agency working through liaison with the professional network within and external to Telford and Wrekin
- Identifying gaps in service provision or shortfall in resources and bringing these to the attention of management

## Professional Development

- Assessing the supervisee's knowledge and skills and ensuring that their training and development needs are identified is a key element of supervision

- Motivating and supporting staff to continue to learn and develop professionally by attending in-house training and undertaking post-qualification training
- Ensuring that staff achieve mandatory training requirements – including internal standards for all staff. e.g. in accordance with registration requirements and, together with their managers, are responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to
- Reviewing learning and development needs at each supervision session according to the requirements of the post

### Individual Support

Managers should provide a supportive climate to help staff to cope with work related pressures, as well as ensuring the safety of staff when carrying out their duties.

Managers have a responsibility for health and safety issues, including work-related stress and should refer to corporate policies on stress management and working hours.

### **8. Contact between Formal Supervision Sessions – Informal Supervision**

The expectations of both supervisor and worker about the availability of the supervisor should be made clear. The supervisor should discuss his/her style of management and be clear about who the worker can go to for support/advice etc. in his/her absence or in between supervision sessions, e.g. duty managers, other team managers, senior social worker. All decisions and recommendations related to casework made through informal supervision must be recorded on Protocol under Managers Decision in case notes by the supervisor.

### **9. Case Consultation or Practice Guidance**

Sometimes advice and consultation on a particular case may be needed from persons other than the supervisor. Both supervisor and worker need to be in agreement about involving a third party and issues of confidentiality need to be considered. Accountability for work discussed outside the supervisory sessions should always remain with the line manager and this will need to be negotiated clearly and recorded should any consultation take place.

### **10. Monitoring**

Senior Managers are required to review a sample of 4-8 supervision files in their service area at least annually, using the agreed audit tool.

## **11. Appraisal**

Refer to the Annual Personal Performance & Development (APPD) process found on SharePoint.

## **12. Resolving Difficulties**

When difficulties arise which cannot be resolved between the supervisee and the supervisor, these should be referred to the supervisor's line manager. Where concerns about practice or capability arise in supervision, these may trigger HR processes.

## **13. Supervision of Social Work Students**

It is the duty of the employer providing student placements to ensure that supervision arrangements for students are safe and appropriate. The service will provide the level of supervision agreed in the Learning Agreement between the employer, student and university.

The responsibility for ensuring that the student's learning needs are met lies with the Practice Educator and the student. However, it is also expected that the Practice Supervisor will provide suitable learning opportunities for the student and effective line management.

## **14. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)**

Supervisor's should be experienced and have had training on supervising staff. They must be qualified social workers and familiar with Telford and Wrekin's ASYE guidance handbook and portfolio. It is desirable that supervisors will be working towards Stage 1 and 2 outcomes in line with the Practice Educator Professional Standards. All ASYE's will receive regular supervision in line with ASYE programme and Assessment Panel Policy and Procedure.

**This document should be read in conjunction with Telford & Wrekin Council Children's Safeguarding Supervision Policy and has been created specifically for Supervising Social Workers in the Fostering Services who case manage short term, long term, emergency, respite, connected carers and private foster carers.**

## **Introduction**

Supervision should be a space to stop and critically reflect on and analyse the quality of work. It is not appropriate to use supervision for management activity that can be achieved outside the supervision process.

Managers should routinely use management information to update themselves on the work being carried out by their supervisees, this should include reading case records, scrutinising the quality of assessments and ensuring all relevant legislation, regulations and National Minimum Standards are being met. This management oversight should be recorded on the carer's record and inform both ad hoc and formal supervision discussions.

The decision of which carer is to be discussed is a joint one, and the professional judgement of the supervisor and supervisee should be used. It may not be possible for every carer to have an in-depth supervisory discussion at every session and in making this decision, the following might be considered: -

1. Placement Stability
2. Assessments in progress and issues have been highlighted
3. Assessments about to be concluded
4. LADO concerns
5. Allegations and Section 47 enquires
6. High profile cases, where there might be high risk, increased activity, multi-agency concerns in respect of the child in placement.
7. Complaints
8. Restraints

Preparation for supervision should involve identifying cases to be discussed. Supervisees must update the summary page or complete a synopsis of intervention since the last supervision.

## **Supervision Framework, Frequency & Recording Guide**

Supervising Social Workers will be supervised on a 4 to 6 weekly basis by their line manager. The recording of supervision / observation of practice is set out in the **Supervision Policy**.

**Timescales** for discussion is as follows: -

**New Carers** will be discussed 4 to 6 weekly for the first 12 months following approval. After 12 months a review will be undertaken to determine whether this needs to continue.

**Post 12 months** – following review where it is considered a monthly discussion is no longer required, carers will be discussed bi-monthly (unless points 1 to 8 above apply).

**Additional to above:**

**Carers with no children in placement** will be discussed bi-monthly. At the point a child is placed the discussion will revert to monthly for the first 3 months at which point a review will be undertaken to determine whether a monthly discussion is still required or revert to bi-monthly.

**Emergency and Respite Carers** will be discussed as above.

Children who are subject to private fostering arrangements will be discussed on a monthly basis for the first 12 months. After 12 months, the discussion will be bi-monthly unless any concerns arise.