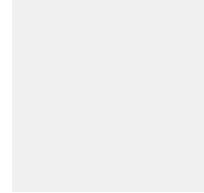


Competence Assessments Based Guidance



Contents

1. [Statutory Framework](#)
2. [Purpose of Supervision](#)
3. [A Competence Based Approach](#)
4. [Using the Supervision Record](#)
5. [Preparation](#)
6. [Setting the Agenda](#)
7. [Managing the Agenda](#)
8. [Safer Caring](#)
9. [Review Process](#)

1. Statutory Framework

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services lays down the requirements for supervising foster carers.

All approved carers should be supervised by a named worker.

2. Purpose of Supervision

Supervision is both a relationship between the supervising Social worker and carer and also a process. There are four main elements within supervision.

- To ensure that quality standards set by the service for its foster carer resource and the provision of care to children and young people are met;
- To identify and act upon carers needs in relation to development training and support;

- To ensure that the carer understands their role and works within the agencies policies and procedures;
- To support the carer and other family members, by representing their views, liaising with other professions, advising on placement issues, i.e. behaviour management and arrangements for placement, i.e. finance, equipment etc.

Supervision is an opportunity to agree action where it is needed and to set specific tasks for the carer.

Carers can also express any views, make comments or express concerns during supervision which should then be recorded.

Supervision records will inform the carer review report.

3. A Competence Based Approach

This provides a clear structure for supervision and the foster carer review. This should be seen as a framework for continuous assessment. All newly approved carers in Walsall have been assessed using a competence based Form F.

The original Form F competence matrix and the Carer Review should provide clear evidence of carers' competence and development. It offers the opportunity to validate carers' practice and skills. It also ensures any issues and concerns about practice can be highlighted and action plans agreed.

4. Using the Supervision Record

The supervision record falls into two distinct sections, one covering carer related issues, the second focusing specifically on the child or young person in placement.

The part relating to the child or children should be completed first. One form should be completed for every child. The forms should then be copied and sent onto the child's social worker for their information.

It is important that any issues discussed regarding the child, or any elements of their plan are then recorded on this form to ensure that they are passed on in writing. However, this should not be the only means of communicating with the child's Social Worker and should not replace telephone contact, for example.

A copy of all the supervision forms should be read and signed by the carer. A copy should be sent to the carer. The completed supervision form should be signed off by the relevant manager before filing.

The amount written on the supervision notes will vary from worker to worker but brief notes and/or bullet points are acceptable as long as the salient points are contained in the recording.

If the supervision is cancelled for any reason, this should be recorded together with reasons and a note made in the supervision section of the file.

5. Preparation

A supervision agreement should be in place in respect of all carers; a new agreement is required at any time when there is an agreed change to the frequency of supervision.

The point at which a carer changes to the competence based format is a good opportunity to review the supervision agreement using the new form.

In order to get the most out of supervision, time and space is needed.

Carers and workers need to share responsibility for ensuring sessions are uninterrupted as far as this is possible. Supervision sessions are expected to last for about an hour and half, but dependent on circumstances, sessions may take longer.

6. Setting the Agenda

The expectation is that the agenda is a shared responsibility so that carers feel part of the process of supervision. Carers need to be encouraged to help set the agenda as this is a new concept for most of them.

It will be helpful to read the child's records first as there may be information contained in those notes which will inform the agenda.

7. Managing the Session

Sections relating to the children need to be completed at every supervision meeting; however the requirement is that any children in the household are seen bi-monthly.

In relation to the carers form, some sections are for monitoring purposes i.e. change in circumstances. These need to be completed at every supervision session but other sections need not be completed every time as long as a full supervision is undertaken every third session.

If, when visiting, it becomes clear that an issue has arisen which is significant or the carer needs to talk about something which has arisen, this should take priority. The discussion should be recorded on the supervision record, and notes inserted as to why the full supervision document was not completed. Where the issue relates to a child, notes should be taken, and further immediate discussion should be sought with a responsible Team Manager in order to share the discussion and to decide if further action is necessary.

Each section in the supervision document contains guidance notes; these are prompts and reminders for the supervising link workers.

Supervision sessions should provide an environment of inspiration, challenge, encouragement and support. It is an opportunity to reflect on values, skills and knowledge. It should give a focus for learning and development.

It is therefore important for supervising link workers to ask open ended rather than closed questions in order to encourage reflection and discussion.

An important part of the supervision process is challenge. An important element of the supervision process is monitoring carers' practice. It is important that any areas of concerns are discussed and fully understood.

Any challenges should be constructive and be accompanied by explanation. The discussion should aim to identify alternative strategies and positive ways forward.

8. Safer Caring

The carers' Safer Caring Policy should be an integral part of carers' day to day practice.

This should be reviewed at the time of the review and in the light of any placement changes or significant developments, good practice would indicate that the policy should be referred to when discussing specific children and form part of the Foster Placement Agreements.

For guidance on the content of Safer Caring statements please see Chapter 7.1.29 'Safe Caring' in the child care procedure manual, available on Walsall's intranet site.

9. Review Process

Dates for existing foster carers' reviews will be set at the time of a review, 11 months in advance. Similar to the process for a child's review, it is expected that reviews will take place on these dates. For newly approved carers the date for their first review will be set 11 months from the date of approval at foster panel

The review process will oversee the supervision process and therefore there is a requirement that variation reports, exemption reports, unannounced visits, safer caring statements and the like will be provided for the chair of the review. For those situations where there are variations and exemptions to the usual fostering limit, please refer to guidance in the relevant chapters of the child care manual on Walsall's intranet.

Please note that Review and Skills Level Board will only receive Section One (which includes the Coordinators report) and Section 4 of the foster carer annual review document.

All review reports being considered by the foster panel must include the entire reports contained in the foster carer annual review document WSS 916 unless agreed differently by the Coordinator in consultation with the relevant Team Manager and panel advisor.

Where it has not been possible to obtain written feed-back comments from Social Workers, then verbal comments should be sought and recorded in the appropriate section. Reviews should not be delayed simply because it has not been possible to obtain a written report from the Social Worker.

Risk Assessments and Smoking

Where an adult in a foster care home is a smoker then this should be stated in the review report with a comment about their willingness to comply with the policy concerning foster carers who smoke.

Where children are sharing bedrooms and or where foster carers are sleeping on a different floor level, then these arrangements can only be agreed following consideration of a written risk assessment.