



**NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

# **SUPERVISION POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

**Vision for the children of North East Lincolnshire**

**"Our ambition in NELC is that all of our Children  
and Young People are healthy, resilient, & safe  
and are supported to achieve in school & reach  
their full potential"**

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# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

North East Lincolnshire Council's ASYE and Career Progression Framework

ASYE Policy and Procedure

North East Lincolnshire Council's Appraisal and Supervision Framework

North East Lincolnshire Council's Probationary Period Guidance

North East Lincolnshire Council's Children's Services Workforce Plan 2021-23



# INTRODUCTION

**Working with children, young people, their families and carers is one of the most important jobs we can do. As Social Workers, we have the opportunity (and responsibility) to improve, positively influence and make a big difference to the lives of those we work with (NELC's Children's Services Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2019-2021).**

Good social work/practice involves the ability to develop and maintain relationships, to manage the emotional demands of the work and to make judgements and decisions, often in the light of conflicting information (Wonnacott 2012).

The Social Work Reform Board (2010) advises us that supervision should provide a safe environment for critical reflection, challenge and professional support which ensures competent, accountable practice. It should include time for reflection on practice issues that arise during the course of everyday work and should help workers and managers to do their jobs more effectively.

Good supervision enables workers to develop their capacity to use their experiences to review practice, receive feedback on their performance, build emotional resilience and think reflectively about the relationships they have formed with children, young people and families. Most importantly it enables social workers to achieve the best possible outcomes for the child they are working with.

## OUTCOMES OF SUPERVISION

We understand that high quality, regular supervision is critical and has many positive outcomes, such as: -

- It enables effective management oversight and gives assurance that risks are being effectively managed.
- It provides the support and guidance to staff that they need to provide high quality services to our children, young people and their families.
- It increases job satisfaction and our worker's ability to manage and prioritise their workload.
- It values the contributions of our workers and looks after their wellbeing.
- It empowers practitioners to work with increasing levels of autonomy and confidence which develops practice and decision making.
- It helps us to retain staff.
- It safeguards the service user, the worker and the organisation.

We believe that good quality, reflective supervision is one of the most important support mechanisms we can provide for our staff. We also believe that our staff are responsible for the quality of their own work and are not passive recipients of the supervision process. Therefore, we expect them to prepare for, and make a positive contribution to, **their** supervision process.



## PART ONE

# SCOPE OF FRAMEWORK

This document applies to all staff (permanent, temporary, full or part time), working with children, young people and their families in North East Lincolnshire Council's (NELC) Children's Services department. It should be read in conjunction with NELC's Tri-X policies and procedures for supervision of employees. All definitions and general principles for supervision of staff in NELC still apply.

The framework references the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Practice Leaders and Practice Supervisors.

## PURPOSE OF FRAMEWORK

We recognise that delivering social care services is a complex and demanding task and that our staff are the key asset in delivering services that make a real difference the lives of the children we work with. Our staff can only be effective if they are encouraged and supported to reflect critically on their practice and continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Supervision is critical to the way in which this can be achieved.

This framework, in conjunction with the general principles already set out in NELC policies and procedures and seeks to further set out how staff can expect to be supervised when undertaking direct work with children, young people and their families. It also seeks to provide managers and supervisors with the key elements needed to supervise others effectively.

### Definition of Supervision

“A process in which one worker is given professional responsibility to work with another in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support.”

*(Morrison 1993, adapted from Harries 1987)*

The **Local Government Association** describes supervision as the provision of a “safe environment for critical reflection, challenge and professional support” and lists four key elements: -

1. Quality of decision making and interventions.
2. Line Management and organisational accountability
3. Caseload and workload management
4. Identification of further personal learning, career and development opportunities

## **Our Commitment to Supervision**

NELC's Children's Services are committed to: -

1. Ensuring that every member of the social care workforce receives good quality, constructive and effective supervision on a regular basis.
2. Ensuring that supervision is provided to a consistent standard across Children's Services.
3. Encouraging practitioners to develop their skills and practice, access training and make best use of development opportunities.
4. Ensuring an appropriate balance between supervision focussed on case management and the time for practitioners to engage in critical reflection for their own professional and personal development.
5. Providing good quality training on Supervision for both supervisors and supervisees
6. Undertaking regular audits and observations to ensure good standards of supervision are being maintained and that any required improvements (to the framework, the training, or the process) are undertaken.

## **Aims of Supervision**

Our aim in providing supervision is to: -

- continually improve the quality of services to, and outcomes for, children, young people and their families
- ensure case management and/or other tasks are carried out within set timescales and to pre-determined standards.
- enable practitioner to discuss issues of risk assessment, risk taking and risk management in their practice.
- provide practical and emotional support, direction, advice and guidance to individual practitioners.
- debrief and offer support following significant or traumatic events which may impact on the supervisee.
- highlight good practice and practice which needs improving.
- enable practitioners to raise areas of concern relating to practice or workplace.
- provide a safe arena for reflective learning and development of practitioner which may include professional challenge.
- provide a forum for staff to receive support, encouragement, praise and constructive feedback, including any areas for improvement or development.
- Manage social work practitioners' caseloads to ensure that they can deliver high quality services to children, families and carers who provide a home for our children.

- help practitioners to gain an oversight of their work and fresh insights into their practice.
- assist staff with the organisation and management of their work and to ensure the appropriate balance between professional autonomy with the responsibility to service users and NELC.
- ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to allow the practitioner to carry out their job safely, (e.g., involvement and/or support of other or more senior professionals)
- provide a place to discuss a practitioner's role and responsibilities and their readiness for more complex work / a more senior role.
- satisfy supervisors that a practitioner's practice is being undertaken in accordance with the Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England and the Supervision Framework developed by the Social Work Reform Board and held by the Local Government Association (LGA)
- provide a mechanism by which supervisors can endorse a practitioner's readiness for their assessment and accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation system (NAAS)
- provide NELC with a mechanism to ensure that individual practitioners are accountable for their practice.
- ensure that all staff practice in a manner which takes account of the diversity of the population we serve and in accordance with all local and national guidance, policies and procedures.

## Principles Underpinning Supervision

The principles underpinning supervision are clearly set out in legislation and policy documents, all of which place duties on organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote welfare of children and young people.

In addition, we have seven **Principles of Supervision**: -

1. Supervision should focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and families we work with.
2. Supervision is a **vital** tool which enables the supervisee to undertake their work safely and to the required standards and timescales.
3. Supervision is **organised** and **evidenced** through good, timely recording.
4. Supervision is given a **high** priority by both supervisor and supervisee.
5. Supervision facilitates critical **reflection** and analysis and effective social and emotional **support**.
6. Supervision supports and enables continuing **professional development**.
7. All employees are treated **equally** and with **respect** during the supervision process.

## PART TWO

# OUR APPROACH TO SUPERVISION

### Reflective Supervision

We acknowledge that the increasing volume and complexity of our work in Children's social care has led to an over-processing of our approach to supervision. Whilst our procedures and processes are an important part of our safeguarding checklists, we acknowledge the importance placed on a "culture of focused thinking to aid analysis and decision making" and that "supervisors have a role to play in developing and promoting that culture" as defined by the **Knowledge and Skills Statements for Practice Leaders and Practice Supervisors** (DfE 2015).

This is driving us to develop and return to a more effective, reflective model of supervision. To support this, we aim to provide: -

- Space in which practitioners can build their capacity to think about and analyse complex situations.
- Containment for practitioner's emotional responses to direct work
- A means for practitioners to make use of their own experiences and develop awareness of how their experience informs their practice.

*(Morrison 2001; Sheppard 1998)*

### Signs of Safety

We have adopted and embedded the Signs of Safety approach to child protection and reflective practice. It uses strengths based 'solution focussed' techniques to increase co-operation and promote partnership working with parents, young people, children, and families. Supervision should guide practitioners through the SOS framework and offer support to develop skills in terms of implementing this in practice.

### Restorative practice

The Restorative Practice model creates a universal way of communicating with each other rooted in restorative principles and values. These principals should be central to our approach to supervision and practice, with our first line managers modelling restorative principals in their approach to management and supervision and in the practice with the children and families we work with. This will be evidenced through observations of practice and quality assurance measures.



## PART THREE

# THE PRACTICALITIES

### Supervision agreement

All Social Work practitioners will have a written **Supervision Agreement** which will be reviewed at least annually, (see Appendix 1) The purpose of a Supervision Agreement between the individual and their named supervisor is to establish a basis for which the supervisor and supervisee will work together during the one-to-one supervision sessions. The establishment of 'ground rules' should be through negotiation and should clarify the rights and expectations on both sides to create a safe, secure and effective supervisory setting.

The Supervision Agreement should also clarify constraints upon confidentiality.

Supervision Agreements should also be completed where peer or group supervision is taking place. All attendees should sign the agreement, (regardless of how often they attend).

Supervision agreements should be reviewed and re-signed: -

- Annually (on the date of issue)
- If a supervisee changes supervisor
- If there is any change to the supervision delivery, (e.g., frequency), for whatever reason.

### Frequency of Supervision

- Staff Not in a Probationary Period – Frequency of supervision is dependent on individual case needs and is set out in the Part four: “Types of Supervision” section of this document. Personal Supervision should take place on a monthly basis for all staff.
- Newly Qualified Social Workers – during the ASYE workers should receive formal supervision weekly for the first six weeks and then fortnightly for the remainder of the first six months.
- Staff in a Probationary Period (not ASYE) – fortnightly supervision during first six weeks and then monthly, (unless the supervisor considers that more frequent supervision is required).
- Part Time Staff – may receive supervision on a pro rata basis, e.g., an employee working half time could receive supervision every two months. However, this is not considered practicable for qualified Social Workers managing a caseload.
- Short Term / Agency Staff – should receive supervision in the same way as permanent employees.
- Additional Supervision – there may be times or particular circumstances when an employee requires more frequent supervision, the frequency and duration of the additional supervision arrangements should be agreed between supervisor and supervisee.

## **Who will your supervisor be?**

All qualified front line social workers will be supervised by an experienced social worker, who will be a Team Manager or an Assistant Team Manager. The scheme of delegation updated in 2020 highlights the level of accountability of the Service at all levels.

In line with the recommendations of the Children's Workforce Development Council and the LGA/Social Work Reform Board, the least experienced social workers will be supervised by the most experienced supervisors.

To achieve this, we take a team approach to the development of the NQSW, direct supervision is undertaken by their direct line manager whatever their experience and additional practice development support will be available to their assigned PiP who will support them from the academy and be linked to their team. This will provide additional quality assurance and support mechanism within the team from an experienced practitioner.

We recognise that our less experienced supervisors will need additional support to aid developing their own supervisory skills and this will be addressed through the management support programme in the WFD plan.

## **Cancellation of supervision**

Supervision is one of the most critical and valuable processes we can offer to our staff. Therefore, it should be given priority over most other activities and should not be cancelled unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If it does have to be cancelled, it should be rearranged at the earliest convenience of both supervisor and worker (and should not, if at all possible, wait until the following month).

## **Supervisor's absence**

If a Supervisor is absent from work for more than one month, their own line manager should ensure that appropriate, alternative arrangements are made for the effective supervision of that supervisor's staff group.

In an urgent situation, a practitioner can approach any Supervisor or Manager for direction, advice or support.

## **Serious Incidents Including The Unexpected Death Of A Child**

Such traumatic incidents are, thankfully, rare but their impact if they do happen remains significant and serious. We have an agreed protocol for dealing with such instances, (Appendix 2) which aims to support our workers, their supervisors and colleagues. There is a clear "Need to Know" policy where matters must be escalated to the appropriate Senior Manager and Assistant Director.

## Debriefing and support

In addition, we recognise that our practitioners can face difficult or challenging situations during their routine work; an opportunity for a timely debrief and an offer of support may prevent such situations becoming more significant issues. Therefore, we train and encourage all our senior staff to recognise when such interventions may be needed and to be able to offer the necessary support as and when needed. In doing this we aim to develop a cultural of wrap around support to our workforce which will aid retention.

## Confidentiality and Access

Supervision is a private, but not a confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the Council and not the individual. From time-to-time supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others, e.g., their own supervisor, and this will be done with the knowledge of the supervisee.

Access to personal supervision records is controlled and secure so that those who do not have a legitimate right to see the records cannot access them. Workers should be aware however that other than themselves and their supervisors, others may, from time to time, access those records, for example: senior managers (for audit and/or quality assurance purposes), investigating officers (for complaint investigation or disciplinary purposes), Inspectors (e.g., Ofsted, Ombudsman) and that this can be done without informing the worker. Individual personal supervision records should be kept in a secure folder that is confidential.

## Areas of Complaint and Disagreement

If disagreements within the supervision arrangements arise, every effort should be made to reach a resolution within the supervisory setting. If the disagreement cannot be resolved by discussion with the supervisor, then the supervisee should raise the issue with their supervisor's line manager.

## PART FOUR

# TYPES OF SUPERVISION

There are a number of different types of supervision, for example one to one, group, peer, ad hoc, case, etc.

In addition, informal supervision often takes place within teams as practitioners seek advice and guidance from more senior or experienced staff members. Whilst this is good practice, it does not replace a formal supervision session. Issues of significance, raised within an informal supervision setting, should be clearly recorded and revisited at formal sessions.

### One to One Supervision

One to one supervision between supervisor and supervisee takes place face to face (or by phone or video call if the alternative would be to cancel it) in private at a pre-arranged time with an agreed agenda and preparation by both parties.

One to one supervision both personal and case should be prioritised and should: -

- Provide consistency of approach across the workforce.
- Provide an opportunity to review cases, decisions, practice issues, workplace issues and developmental needs.
- Provide an opportunity to acknowledge good practice, to thank and praise staff, to motivate staff, to check how staff are feeling, to ensure staff feel confident in the work they are doing.

### Supervision within MASH

The nature of the work of a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub does not lend itself easily to the traditional model of one-to-one supervision for social workers (outlined previously), for a number of reasons. These include the fast turnaround of cases between supervision sessions, the high-risk nature of child protection investigations and the volume and pace of the work. As a result, additional supervision arrangements are required to support the MASH function as a first point of contact and referral management service.

In accordance with Lord Laming's recommendation number 11 only staff who have "sufficient training and expertise should take referrals" and as such, only experienced Senior Social Workers receive referrals within the MASH.

Staff seconded to the Integrated Front Door (IFD), i.e., police, health, education & early help services etc will continue to have their professional supervision by their agency supervisor. Their day-to-day supervision whilst in the IFD will be delivered in three ways:

- Oversight of the quality of work by the service manager on a daily basis
- Observation of practice which will be fed back to the agency supervisor.
- Decision making ratification or challenge which will be recorded on the child's case file.

Additionally, there is a re-referral clinic held monthly where re-referrals will be scrutinised, and decisions/actions made will be challenged.

Social workers employed within the front-line service i.e. the Assessment and Intervention team, CP and Court, Children in Care and New futures and Children's disability who are undertaking child protection investigations and initial assessments on their own should be able to demonstrate an agreed level of professional competence in accordance with the skills, knowledge and competency levels of a maturing practitioner, including an ability to work autonomously and undertake complex decision making.

## **Group Supervision**

Group supervision can complement, but should not replace, one to one supervision. It involves a group/team of staff (led by a Service or Team Manager or Assistant Team manager or senior practitioner), to map cases using Signs of Safety, learn from each other's practice and work together as a team. It can be particularly useful to discuss newly allocated cases to gauge the assessment timeframe and case direction or cases which are feeling stuck. It is an opportunity for reflection, analysis, planning and to explore themes and is seen as particularly useful for newly qualified or less experienced workers as it allows more experienced workers to coach less experienced workers in effective and timely case management in a way that promotes learning and development.

Ideally, group supervision should take place on a weekly basis for approximately 1.5 hours. This should be recorded as case supervision on a client's file. The personal or emotional issues of individual practitioners should not be discussed within a group supervision setting.

## **Joint supervision**

Joint supervision is an opportunity to bring a number of workers together who are working the case. For instance, family support workers and social workers. This provides clarity on the plan for progression and allow all practitioners to understand the case direction and their role within it.

## **Ad Hoc (or Unplanned) Supervision**

The pace and unpredictability of work will mean that practitioners need to discuss something with a supervisor, (whether it be their own supervisor or another supervisor or manager within the service) outside the scheduled supervision sessions. It is important, and appropriate, that such discussions take place. We aim to make sure that at any time, there are an appropriate number of managers/supervisors available on the floor for staff to approach with such issues.

It is important to bear in mind that any decisions made with regard to a child or family should be clearly recorded in the form of a management decision/discussion case note. If the conversation is with someone other than the worker's direct supervisor (e.g., another supervisor, Advanced Practitioner or Team or Service Manager), that conversation and decision still need to be recorded as a case note on the child's record.

All such discussions can be regarded as 'supervision conversations' regardless of how long they take and as such supervisors should ensure that appropriate recording takes place.

## Case Supervision

The purpose of supervision in case work should support workers to reflect on case direction, this should explore the **strengths & risks** in the case and the potential barriers to success. Supporting staff to reflect on individual case work to safely manage risk and ensure safe and timely case progression, & help the worker to prioritise, and manage, tasks, cases, and workload.

***Supervision must take place every 31 days for every social worker with their manager (it is this indicator that will be reported in performance meetings, that every social worker has supervision not every case)***

It is an opportunity for managers and social workers to discuss a small number of cases in depth. This is dedicated, quiet time to support, challenge and reflect on what is happening together. This is where social workers have a real chance to discuss what is happening in this child's life, how the plan is progressing to help improve things for the child and any barriers to success. Managers can use this time to assure themselves that assessments are thorough and analytical, plans are SMART and that decisions are timely, clear and rationale.

**It is impossible to do in depth supervision on every case at every session.**

Ask the social worker to come to supervision, prepared with the cases they would most like to discuss, or which need direction or reflection time. Additionally, managers should also choose a number of cases they want to discuss. It is managers responsibility to make sure that cases are discussed in depth at least every 3 months.

## Case Supervision

- **ALL - Urgent and High-Risk children and young people will have at least monthly supervision.**
- **Assessment and Intervention** – cases in A & I should be supervised monthly but can be incorporated into management oversight points in the case.
- **Child Protection and Court Team** – Case supervision in line with the Risk assessment and Care Planning e.g. within the 1st month; and then at least every 3 months
- **Children in Care** – within the first month; and then at least every 3 months.
- **Care Leavers** – at least every 3 months
- **Homes** – Every 3 months or at transition points or High risk

## Management Oversight

Management oversight is different to case supervision, Management oversight ensures tasks are completed on time, home visits are undertaken, children are spoken to, and reports completed.

It checks that guidance and process is being followed and things such as case summaries and pen pictures are up to date. Oversight can happen informally through a discussion with a social worker or by looking at a case on the system. It can be more formal in case discussions, legal planning meetings etc.

- **On allocation of a child/young person** – this allows the social worker to have clear direction of travel in the early stages of allocation.
- **Opening of New Assessment** – post lateral checks, system checks to help with the analysis of this information in preparation for home visiting and assessment.
- **10 days into a new assessment** – reviewing progress of assessment and whether threshold has been met for social care. Considering closure at this point or step across to Early Help at this point.
- **At the end of the assessment** – Direction should be recorded considering the outcome of the assessment and the next steps for this case – considering closure, step across to early help and transfer.
- **Closing of Assessment** – ensuring the case is up to date and complete in terms of recording expectations.
- **Planning points** e.g., Strategy Discussions, Multi agencies meetings; ICPC; RCPC or LAC reviews – this list is not exhaustive.

#### **Decision making points:**

- Making decisions and providing direction to progress individual cases during incidents of change in circumstance, such as harm or family crisis.
- Opening closing Section 47 enquiries

#### **Closing or transferring a child / young person:**

- Maintaining an overview of the status of all cases in a worker's caseload
- Multi agency chronologies, cultural genograms, and ecomaps and all case recording requirements are complete.

## **Personal Supervision & Development**

Personal supervision is an important element of workforce support and should be considered a priority to support staff in managing the stress of the profession, this time should offer a reflective space to consider how they are progressing in their development, to identify and issues which could affect their ability to practice and allow time to plan professional development and areas of practice improvement. This element of supervision should be provided by the direct line manager who has the strongest relationship with the worker and who is able to have a wider overview of the practitioner.

On an annual basis you will have an in-depth discussion with your supervisor to look back and reflect on the previous 12 months and plan for the next 12 months. The purpose of this 'time' is to discuss your achievements and areas of development. It will also provide feedback on more than just your ability as a worker, but overall, on your contributions to our service, your value to us in your role and your potential future career aspirations and what development we can support you with in order for you to achieve this.



## **PART FIVE**

# **INFORMAL SUPPORT & SUPERVISION**

We understand the pressures on our workers and our supervisors, and we have been keen to develop complementary support frameworks which help with the development of individuals; keep workers up to date with contemporary thinking and changing legislation; provide additional support around practice, case management and challenging situations and, as importantly, give workers chance to meet, network and share experiences.

These frameworks not only provide an additional resource for our team members but also provide additional capacity for our supervisory team and opportunities to share learning using a variety of methods to a wider audience.

### **Time to think sessions.**

Offers reflective time with a trained supervisor (not necessarily one's own) or Practice Improvement Practitioner with the focus on sharing, exploring and reflecting on the emotional content of daily working relationships between parents and children, parents and practitioners, practitioners and other professionals. Up to six sessions are offered and are confidential and not recorded (unless a safeguarding issue is identified, or a case decision is made).

### **Learning Circles**

A learning circle is a highly interactive, participatory structure for organising group work. The goal is to build, share, and express knowledge through a process of open dialogue and deep reflection around issues or problems with a focus on a shared outcome. Learning Circles will be facilitated by a Practice Improvement Practitioner, Case Supervisor or other experienced facilitator and will focus on an issue presented by a worker or the facilitator will lead the group through an anonymised 'real' or hypothetical complex situation to facilitate shared learning and group support.

It is an opportunity for a worker to present a case to their peers to receive feedback and challenge and for peers to learn, develop and practice the skill of giving constructive feedback. Interactive, participatory, fun and safe – a great opportunity for learning.

If discussions or decisions are being made on cases, these would need to be recorded.

### **'Talk to Me'.**

An open-door culture across management which allows practitioners time to reflect and to discuss a variety of issues which may be giving them pause for thought in their everyday working life.

## **Lunch and Learn Sessions**

Regular lunch time briefing sessions, presented by senior managers, on a range of topical and pertinent issues. Their aim is to continue the professional development of all workers, provide an opportunity for learning and to keep workers up to date.

Attendance will be counted as CPD and will support to build evidence either for a practitioner's Social Work England registration or NAAS accreditation.

## **Social Work Forums**

Quarterly whole staff forums lead by the Principal Social Worker and Practice Improvement Practitioners with a focus on shared learning and exchanging of positive practice. These include invited guest speakers bringing forward key policy, topical issues of the day, best practice and local issues which aim to inform, support, and guide our social work practitioners.

## **Coaching and Mentoring**

At times workers may benefit from being able to work with an independent Coach or Mentor. Mentoring opportunities can be offered by Children's Services utilising the wide range of experienced Practitioners we have working for us. The Council also has a network of qualified coaches which staff members can access to support with a variety of issues and developmental areas.



## **PART SIX**

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Principal Children & Families Social Worker (PSW)**

The PSW is responsible for quality assuring the supervision process across Children's Social Work (see Part Seven) and for identifying required changes to supervision practice, procedure, process and/or training.

### **Service Managers**

Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that the service is delivering regular, quality supervision which safeguards children, young people and their families as well as workers and the organisation. They are also responsible for ensuring that supervision is consistent across the whole of Children's Services. They will play a key role in the quality assurance processes co-ordinated by the PSW.

### **Team Managers**

Team Managers are responsible for ensuring staff within the teams they are responsible for are receiving regular, quality supervision which provides effective oversight of cases and ensures those cases are well managed, closed in a timely manner and that our service users and our staff are safe. They should assure themselves that supervision is being used to develop the thinking, practice and decision making of practitioners to create a competent and confident workforce. In NELC the facilitation of supervision is delegated to Assistant Team Managers, with team manager ensuring that this happens regularly and is of high quality.

The Team Manager role supervises the Assistant Team Manager or equivalent in all Service areas.

Where issues of poor practice or performance are identified, Assistant and Team Managers will be expected to provide challenge and support in order to achieve improvements.

Team Managers will audit supervision compliance against a number of quantitative and qualitative targets and will observe supervisions and provide constructive feedback to the supervisor if that is needed.

### **Supervisor (or Group Supervisor Lead)**

- Provides supervision as per the Supervision Agreement.
- Provides reflective supervision aimed at effective case management and practitioner development.
- Schedule's supervision in line with frequency guidelines and only changes in exceptional circumstances

- Provides well-structured supervision which allows both supervisor and supervisee to contribute to the agenda.
- Ensures supervision takes place in an appropriate venue and that it is free from interruptions and where case details can be discussed without being overheard.
- Ensures supervision is accurately and promptly recorded.
- Challenges poor practice and/or performance in a way which supports improvements.
- Provides regular personal supervision with a focus of support and CPD.

## **Supervisee**

- Ensures actions agreed at supervision are followed through and completed.
- Prepares appropriately for supervision sessions.
- Is prepared to be open and honest about what has gone well and what could have been better / has found difficult.
- Open to feedback and constructive challenge and prepared to learn from it.
- Is prepared to undertake training or other developmental activity.

## **RECORDING**

In North East Lincolnshire, case supervision is recorded using the Liquid Logic case management system. All discussions, of any type, which relate to a case, should be recorded on the individual child's electronic record within two working days of the discussion taking place.

### **Case Recording (formal)**

Recording of formal case supervision is the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor.

### **Ad Hoc Supervision**

Recording of informal or ad hoc discussions about cases, is the responsibility of the social worker.

### **Management Decisions**

Recording of decisions on cases agreed at Panels and/or in discussion with senior management is the responsibility of individual managers or panel members.

#### Recording Standards

The standards for recording of case and other supervision are set out in NELC's *Children's Services Practice Standards 2020/21*.

# STORAGE AND RETENTION OF SUPERVISION RECORDS

The individual Supervision Agreement and personal supervision records are kept on individual staff files. When a worker transfers to another supervisor, team or service their records will be passed to their new supervisor.

Personal supervision records should be kept by the supervisor whilst the worker remains under their supervision. Individuals may keep copies of their own supervision records for as long as they wish.

When a worker leaves the employment of North East Lincolnshire Council their supervision records will be retained for six years from the date of termination of employment, after which they will be disposed of in a secure and confidential manner.

## Case supervision

Case Supervision is recorded on the NELC children's services case management system Liquid Logic, on individual children's case files and retained as required under case records legislation for a period of 75 years after death.



## PART SEVEN

# QUALITY ASSURANCE, MONITORING AND REVIEW

NELC's Children's Services' Audit Framework sets out the audit requirements for case file and other supervision in terms of standards compliance and quality measures. Quality assurance is the responsibility of all supervisors and of senior management.

The quality assurance process aims to ensure that the standards of supervision are being followed and that: -

- All staff are being supervised professionally and effectively.
- All supervision sessions are being appropriately recorded in a timely manner.
- Supervision is improving practice, ensuring effective case management and closure and keeping service users safe.
- Supervision is being used develop the practice of practitioners with a balance of support and challenge.
- All staff have individual Supervision Agreements which are being kept up to date and reviewed.
- The supervision process promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

The quality assurance process seeks to ascertain, by a variety of methods, whether supervision practice is meeting our commitment to, and aims of, supervision (see part 2).

The Audit team undertake monthly audits of case files and there is a clear framework of practice in the QA framework. It is best practice to undertake direct observations of practice, and all managers from ATM to Heads of Service should involve themselves in the observation and quality assurance of practice. From this they select a number of cases to review in supervision. Supervisors and Team Managers should also randomly review cases within their supervision group. The reason for these audits and observations is not to find fault or lay blame but for supervisors to assure themselves that workers are practising in line with agreed policy and guidance, using good judgement and making best decisions. It is also an opportunity to pick up any areas for development and provide support and guidance to the worker to enable them to develop into the best practitioner they can be.

The Principal Children's and Family Social Worker (PSW) is responsible for establishing an audit framework which checks on the frequency and quality of supervision being provided to practitioners. The PSW will regularly observe supervision, audit case and supervision records and provide constructive feedback to individual supervisors to support development. Any themes identified during audits or from observations will be collated to inform future supervision guidance and/or training.

It is important to us that supervisees (at all levels) are able to provide feedback on their experience of the supervision process and annual surveys and/or focus/staff groups will be established to elicit such feedback. In addition, supervisees should be regularly asked to reflect on how supervision has impacted on their social work practice.

The PSW will produce an annual report on all quality assurance and audit activity in relation to supervision. The results are used to inform future guidance, process development and training.

There are a number of other things that we do to ensure we remain aware of issues and able to quality assure our work: -

## **Back to the floor days**

Our back to the floor days is an opportunity for senior managers to reconnect with front line social work and observe practice in real time. It enables a conversation about areas of individual personal development or service wide development.

We see these opportunities as a way to reconnect with 'on the ground' social work and to experience, at first hand, what social workers of today are facing in their day-to-day work. It allows us to identify the key issues and challenges and ensures that the support we offer is what they need to deliver the best job they can.

Feedback takes a variety of forms; instant 'on the ground' supportive feedback discussions with social workers being shadowed; feedback to supervisory groups on key themes identified; recognition and praise for a job well done and larger group discussions around common themes and areas of development. It is best practice to gain consent from the family to allow case observations to take place, to support improvement of practice.

Observational feedback will be provided to individual workers for their own record keeping and discussions, e.g., with their direct supervisor or for their ASYE, NAAS endorsement or Career Progression portfolios.

In addition, observational analysis will be used to inform supervision practice and / or training.

## **Observation by Managers**

From time to time, as part of the Quality Assurance Framework, Team Managers, Service Managers, Senior Managers and the PSW will observe supervisions in action in order to give constructive feedback to supervisors, influence training being delivered for supervisors or identify key themes which require a wider response.



## PART EIGHT

# TRAINING OF STAFF FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

If we want our supervisory staff to provide good quality and meaningful supervision for our workforce, then we need to provide the training necessary to equip them to do so.

As part of this the workforce development programme for first line managers aims of support for staff in NELC we provide to staff with supervisory responsibility, an extensive development package which focuses on every aspect of the managerial role including accessing the DfE funded Practice Supervisor Development Programme (PSDP).

In addition to this we will provide:

- Quality Assurance and Audit Training
- Module Training provided by senior management, around understanding their role.
- Performance Management
- Complaint's awareness
- Liquid Logic, management elements
- Intensive SOS training for supervisors

All Social Workers with a supervisory responsibility will be required to attend the training before they commence supervisory responsibility and will be part of their career progression pathway.



# FORMS AND ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

## FORMS

The forms discussed throughout this supervision framework are available via the following links: -

- Supervision Agreement
- Personal Supervision Form
- Knowledge and Skills Statement DfE 2015

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- The Munro Review of Child Protection
- Signs of Safety website (link)
- Social Work Task Force – Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England Supervision Framework (Local Government Association)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- Providing Effective Supervision (Skills for Care)
- Early Professional Development: Guide for Supervisors (CWDC)
- Reflective Supervision Resource Pack (Research in Practice 2017)



# APPENDICES

1. Supervision Agreement
2. Personal Supervision form
3. Management Oversight Checklist
4. Check list for Assessment.
5. Individual Child case supervision Fostering and Homes.
6. Staff Supervision – Homes and Fostering
7. Homes Managers Supervision

All appendices' templates are saved as work documents on Tri-X – SW practice Hub / Supervision.

2. Serious Incidents including the Unexpected Death of a Child

## APPENDIX 2

# THE SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC CIRCUM-STANCES SERIOUS INCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE UNEXPECTED DEATH OF A CHILD

1. Serious incidents, including the unexpected death of a child, are traumatic events that may require additional support being provided to the worker(s) involved and their supervisor(s).
2. When notified of a serious incident involving a child on a social worker's caseload, the Team Manager (or in their absence another Team Manager or Service Manager), should make contact immediately with the social worker to inform them of the incident and arrange to meet with them as soon as possible **on that day**. Workers must be treated with empathy and an acknowledgement given of the likely impact of the event on their feelings on both a professional and personal level.
3. The worker should be offered the opportunity to leave work for the remainder of that day with the appropriate support and following a face-to-face discussion with their Team Manager. This will be classed as compassionate leave and will not be taken from their annual leave entitlement or classed as sickness. If the social worker wishes to remain at work, and the Team Manager considers that they are able to do so, the social worker should be allowed to do so with the necessary support.
4. The Team Manager should agree with the social worker what level and type of support they might wish to receive following the serious incident. This might include peer support, counselling, Occupational Health etc. Any and all such support should be recorded in the social worker's personal supervision notes and its on-going appropriateness regularly reviewed.
5. Within reason, the social worker should be kept informed of the progression of any investigations relating to the case, including if a serious case review is initiated by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
6. If the social worker remains off work due to ill health following the serious incident, the Team Manager must ensure that regular contact is maintained with the worker. This should include any appropriate support provided through the identified peer support or named supervisor.
7. The return to work of the social worker should be carefully planned, perhaps with a visit by the worker to the offices before their planned day to return. Working reduced hours for the first few days may be helpful.
8. In such circumstances it is acknowledged that workers may be less productive or effective when they first return and supervisors and Team Managers should ensure this is sensitively and appropriately managed, (ensuring that the worker and others are not put at undue risk).

