

# North Somerset Council Supervision Policy

## November 2022 – November 2024



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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the policy is to articulate the importance placed on effective professional supervision by North Somerset Council. The Council recognises that effective supervision is vital in supporting and directing the work of all our employees in the children directorate. Supervision should ensure that staff are supported in carrying out their work and that all their activities are directed towards the delivery of high-quality services for the people who need them. Supervision is a key component of the Council's practice framework and workforce development strategy, providing clarity of accountability and support for the development of a confident, dedicated, and skilled workforce, as envisaged by our improvement plan 2021 – 2024.

### **1.1 Our mission:**

To improve the lived experiences of children, young people and families that are in need. The ability to reflect on our work, our decision making, and the child or young person's lived experience is acknowledged as vital in promoting and securing positive change for children, young people, and their families.

### **1.2 Our vision:**

North Somerset is a place where children, young people and their families are valued, respected, and invested in by North Somerset Council, an organisation where practitioners are proud to work and gain satisfaction from their valued work.

### **1.3 Our goals:**

- Ensure practitioners build relationships to enable and promote change for children and their families, so we can secure positive wellbeing, stability, and safety.
- Ensure we understand and plan for services to meet the current and future needs of children, young people, and families.
- To build partnerships that help us deliver effective support for children, young people and their families
- To support, develop and nurture our workforce to improve services for children, young people and their families
- To be ambitious for children, meaning we will always strive for high standards for our children and young people and their families.
- To be ambitious for ourselves, meaning we will promote continuous development as we continue to define and grow our identity as a learning organisation

Supervision plays an important role in the wider functioning of our children's services. Our work can be complex, highly pressure and, at times, extremely stressful. Whether you're a frontline practitioner, team manager or working with and for children in another setting e.g. non case holding, effective supervision helps us do our job well.

Supervision involves talking through the impact the work has on you personally, as well as exploring decision-making. It is vital for practitioners' well-being, professional development,

and management oversight. Most importantly, supervision helps us to achieve the best possible outcomes for children.

#### **1.4 Thinking about supervision – what does good supervision look like?**

As with many aspects of practice, there is no single model that works best. When supervision is done well, we see many components coming together to make sure that it works, especially when we embody the learning that informs our practitioner knowledge and skills base. While no one size fits all, common themes will be visible, such as the benefit to creating a particular solution or the benefit to a person's professional development.

When it is done best, supervision takes place in an environment and in a relationship that is safe for both parties. It is both emotionally supportive and challenges practitioners to truly reflect on their practice and on the needs of the children and families they are supporting. When it's done well, supervision happens in a dedicated space and time. This is helpful for practitioners because they know when to expect it and can rely on it. It forms a regular outlet to reflect on what has gone well and what has gone less well, and to learn from both.

Effective supervision relationships allow practitioners to develop professionally and personally through trust, honesty and empathy. When done well, supervision contributes to how staff performance is managed, it includes practice development, teaching and coaching.

Individual supervision can also be enhanced by (but not substituted for) group support and challenge. The right balance must be struck between recording group and individual supervision.

The following questions are a good guide:

- Does the way I am supervised contribute to my job satisfaction and make me want to continue to work for this organisation?
- Does it make me feel that my employer cares about me and my practice?
- Does it increase my confidence, competence and critical thinking? Does it make me a more effective advocate for children?
- Does it help me make better decisions for children? Am I able to change my direction of thinking when that is the right thing to do?

If the answer to these questions is yes, supervision is probably both effective and satisfying to supervisor and supervisee alike. Even more than that, it is likely to have a direct, positive impact on children and families.

Engaging families is often about responding to need, supporting, and making good-quality decisions. To do this successfully, information about risks and how they are being managed needs to be shared between social workers and their managers at all levels.

We do not expect every child's experience to be explored at every supervision session. Supervision should always be proportionate to need/risk and presenting issues. Our actions, judgement and decisions must be informed, they will be defensible not defensive decisions.



For some practitioners, supervision records will include getting the basics right or compliance with practice standards. For all, it should be an ambitious expectation for the best possible interventions and a place for professional dialogue and debate.

Well-recorded practitioner files will evidence how that person's professional development has evolved through training, skills development, and knowledge, and how they have applied this in their practice with children and families. It will explore responses to stress, personal issues and how these impact on the person's ability to do their job.

When it comes to a child's record, this will often serve many audiences. This could include a manager's scrutiny or a colleague following transfer to aid their ability to understand and engage to mitigate the family having to repeat their story. If case management supervision is under review would the reader understand how decisions were arrived at and the rationale for interventions? The decision-making resulting from supervision is relevant not only by way of actions but also understanding the debates, competing issues and workings out.

Critically, that same record could be used in future years, when the child, now an adult, seeks to understand their childhood, why and how the decisions made were to their benefit.

Finally, let's never lose sight of the context of children's social work. Children and families have a right to receive help and care from properly qualified and experienced practitioners who are continually developing their practice. Effective supervision is a cornerstone of this development, the way it is recorded is a means of evidencing that professionalism and expertise.

This policy applies to all staff at all levels of line management. This policy recognises the following:

- Supervision is a planned, accountable, two-way process, which should support, motivate and ensure all practitioners deliver good practice in respect of clear outcomes for children's safety and wellbeing. It should also ensure that practitioners receive appropriate tools and support to achieve this.
- Effective supervision is essential to ensure the safety and effective outcomes for all children. Our aspirations for children and young people can only be achieved by recognising the value of each individual worker, being clear about the standards of practice required and by investing in their development and wellbeing.

## **2. Types of supervision**

Supervision of cases can happen in a number of ways, and it is important that all case work decisions are captured on the child's electronic file. There are three types of supervision; formal; unplanned; and decision case notes, as described below.

### **2.1 Formal supervision**

Individual supervision takes the form of planned meetings between supervisor and supervisee. These meetings should have an agreed agenda and be recorded. A clear distinction should be made between formal supervision and day-to-day informal consultation/

ad hoc supervision. The latter is not a substitute for the former. Significant events that take place as part of informal consultation may also be recorded and discussed subsequently in a formal supervision meeting.

All case discussions must be added to the child's electronic file under the relevant section e.g. supervision record, management oversight, appropriately named case note or the central repository for personal supervision.

The meeting must be free from interruptions, be in accordance with the supervision timelines and conducted in an environment conducive to the supervisory function, i.e., a private, quiet area.

## **2.2 Unplanned supervision**

On many occasions, social workers and their managers will have detailed discussions about a particular case outside of formal supervision meetings. It is important to capture these detailed discussions. When decisions have been made in between formal supervision sessions (ad hoc supervision), the worker and the supervisor must ensure that any decision made regarding a child is clearly recorded on the child's record. By their very nature, these discussions may not include the audit of key activities related to the child at that time, but this element can be dealt with in the next formal supervision along with any other issues that require any further discussion.

## **2.3 Group supervision**

"There can be no learning without action, and no action without learning" (Revan, 1998:83).

This format encourages open and professional attitudes to learning. It uses the various abilities within the group.

- It offers a range of perspectives and skills to individuals
- It supports the concept of collective practice and service delivery
- It reflects the group approach of residential and day care services; and it focuses on direct work with service users and carers

Group supervision generally does not perform the management function of decision making, it is complimentary to individual supervision.

Much like individual supervision, there are multiple models that can be applied to assist in understanding, solutioning and planning around a particular issue. Models of group supervision can be accessed via Research in Practice or via the Signs of Safety Knowledge bank. In addition to group supervision terminology for group problem solving can also include action learning sets.

Action Learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done. In other words, individuals work on real work issues and openly reflect on their experiences with a view to taking subsequent action.

One of the fundamental aims of action learning is to help participants develop the skills and make time for active reflection to solve their own problems. There are many parallels

between models of group supervision and action learning, such as Learning from others: because the focus of action learning is work-based issues, shared with others, one of the most important benefits is being able to learn from others' experiences of dealing with similar issues. This enables you to gain insights and offers opportunities to broaden your awareness through hearing others' views.

Extending your leadership repertoire: giving advice is something we have learned from childhood (being told by our parents), in schooling and in further education and training (by educators). As busy practitioners and managers with little time to deliver, we can be asked questions and given problems to be solved all day long, and we do so by giving advice. However, evidence shows that little sustained learning takes place when given advice, and often those in leadership roles end up 'taking on the problem'. Action learning focuses on changing this way of interacting with others, by facilitating solution focused thinking, by asking questions; open, probing, and challenging questions – all of which help to draw out curiosity and insight which in turn leads to taking action.

See appendices for further information.

Links:

- [Using group supervision in children's social care](#)
- [Signs of safety knowledge bank](#) – this is available to nominated practitioners in each team

## **2.4 Manager's decision oversight case note**

This is where a supervisor or manager reviews a child via brief discussion or by reading case files and actions that are noted on the child's record. These decisions must be added to the child's case file. The record should include the following headings:

- Key issues discussed
- Actions agreed, by whom and when
- Outcomes sought

## **2.5 Effective supervision – Key Requirements**

Supervision is relationship based and a partnership between the supervisee, the supervisor and the organisation. Professional supervision is a process in which the supervisor enables, guides and facilitates the practitioner's development and need for support, in meeting certain organisational, professional and personal objectives.

Supervisors must promote a reflective approach that includes active questioning and challenge alongside support and development. This section sets out four core elements:

- Case work
  - Line management and organisational accountability
  - Workload/caseload management
  - Professional development to generate debate
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## 2.6 Case work – Decision-making and achieving positive outcomes

This aspect of supervision provides the opportunity to focus on the challenges faced by practitioners in carrying out their work. It includes reflection on what work has been done, what has worked and what difference this has made to increase positive outcomes, plans for future interventions and actions, and discussions on improvements in practice. All supervision records must be factual and link to any identified evidence which substantiates the comments recorded.

The supervisor is ultimately responsible to produce adequate, accessible supervision records. Every effort should be made to ensure that the record is a true reflection of the interaction between supervisor and supervisee.

If the supervisee does not agree with any part of the record and agreement cannot be reached on a re-wording, they should be able to add their own comments or amendments which then become part of the record of that session.

The discussion should consider:

- A primary focus on achieving positive outcomes for children and young people (safety, health, economic wellbeing, educational achievement, positive contribution):  
Key questions must include:
  - What difference has the intervention made to each child?
  - In what way is the child lived experience affected?
- The views, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- provision of resources/tools • plans for interventions, next steps, actions, and timescales
- relationships with service users
- assessing the quality of case work and assessments in preparation for submission for conference, review, meeting, or court barriers to effective working safeguarding issues
- the worker's reactions and builds on professional capability
- Linking theory and research to practice (evidence –based) wherever possible.

## 2.7 Line management and organisational accountability

This provides mutual organisational accountability between the employer and the employee, to ensure they are following departmental policies and statutory guidance within their practice. It should consider:

- That policies, procedures and standards are understood and correctly applied
  - The provision of a safe environment in which to work
  - Professional discussion of performance against individual, team, service objectives, and national standards
  - Ensuring the supervisee contributes to the development of the organisation
  - Ensuring the supervisee implements, maintains and represents our practice standards
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- Mediating in any conflicts between the supervisee and the organisation
- Transferring relevant information between the supervisee, senior management, the team, and any outside agencies
- Dealing sensitively but clearly with any complaints
- The mental and physical health and wellbeing of the supervisee
- Reflecting on the impact of the work upon them and working to prevent issues adversely affecting them and their work
- Modelling and recognising best practice
- Training and Development

Each supervisor will keep a 'Supervision File' of records to be maintained throughout an employee's career.

Supervision records belong to the organisation. To ensure continuity of management accountability, support and development, the records should be transferred to the next supervisor if the supervisee is moving to another post within the organisation.

Access to files will be restricted to the Supervisor, Supervisee and their Senior Manager (and HR if appropriate), and to officers and other agencies involved in any auditing or personnel purposes.

## **2.8 Workload/caseload management**

Supervision should include an analysis of caseload and workload management and address any issues relating to the extent of the time available to work directly with children, adults and families as well as meeting other demands. This will include:

- Discussion about caseload/workload allocation
- Reviewing progress against previous actions/decisions
- Identifying priorities
- Intervention opening, closing, step-up/ step-down
- Quality Assurance
- Monitor Flexitime/TOIL and annual leave

## **2.9 Professional development**

At regular intervals formal supervision must consider the supervisee's level of practice, career goals and continuing professional development. For practitioners it must also ensure that the supervisee is maintaining professional registration requirements. This can include:

- Identifying individual strengths and building on these
- Identifying areas for development and agreeing training and other relevant activities
- Ensuring that induction training and/or other mandatory training is in place
- Discussing feedback from observations of the supervisee's practice

It is expected that all staff will keep a record of the training and learning undertaken and share this in supervision as well as for the purpose of continued Social Work England registration.

## 2.10 Supervision practice standards

- The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is strong and effective
- Supervision is organised and evidenced through good recording
- Supervision is a planned and purposeful activity and ensures that work/tasks are completed to the required standard
- Supervision facilitates effective social and emotional support
- Supervision facilitates critical reflection and analysis
- Supervision promotes a commitment to diversity in all aspects of work
- Supervision supports continuing professional development
- Supervision facilitates a continued improvement in the quality of services to, and outcomes for, young people and their families

## 2.11 Frequency of staff supervision

Staff group	Frequency
NQSW/ASYE staff	Weekly during the first six weeks for at least one hour. Fortnightly between week 7 and 6 months then moving to the standard level of every 4 weeks as a minimum
Personal advisors, family support workers, social workers	Minimum of every 4 weeks depending on need and complexity of work – minimum of 1.5 hours duration
Senior social workers and Team Managers	Minimum of every 4 weeks
Senior managers	Every 4 weeks
Social Work Students	Weekly

## 2.12 Frequency of supervision depending on child's status

Child's status	Frequency (minimum)
Child receiving early help (wellbeing)	8 weeks
Child in Need	8 weeks
Child with a Disability (CIN and stable care plans)	8 weeks
Child Protection Plan	4 weeks
Children in Care (less than 1 year/unstable/requiring permanency)	4 weeks
Children in Care (more than one year/stable)	12 weeks
Children Leaving Care	

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## Youth Justice, Offending and Inclusion Service

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When supervision sessions have been cancelled, rearranged, or are held less frequently than monthly, the reasons should be recorded and placed on the individual's file.

Over the course of the year, at least one formal supervision meeting must also be extended to allow for the mid-year review of the staff members' appraisal targets. While this is separate from supervision, it makes practical sense to add this to the end of one of these meetings.

All staff will have access to their supervisor on an unplanned basis for consultation and supervision on urgent matters, for decisions to be made and actions agreed.

### **2.13 Recording and Storage Expectations**

Case management decisions for children must not be recorded on the individual's supervision file; however specific actions agreed must be recorded on the child's case file.

Non-case holding practitioners such as IROs or CP chairs should use the same templates to record case work discussion within their own supervision sessions, with any specific notes regarding case work actions for them to be recorded on the case file.

When each child is discussed in line with the frequency timescales set out above, these must be recorded on the child's electronic file within 48 hours. A formal signed record of staff supervision must be kept by the supervisor for each supervisee in a hard file and electronically. The folder needs to be stored securely and include all key templates referred to in this policy. The records of supervision are owned by North Somerset Children's Social Care and may be subject to internal or external inspection and audit.

Supervisors will give a copy of the record to the supervisee for signature as soon as possible and at the latest within 48 hours.

In the case of a person leaving the Authority, records must be kept for 2 years. Records should be kept locally for longer if there is any possibility of litigation. Advice should be requested if needed from the Information Governance Officer.

### **2.14 Confidentiality**

During supervision, the supervisee may disclose information about themselves or their colleagues that is of a private or sensitive nature. The supervisor has a duty to respect the privacy of the Supervisee but may wish to discuss some of the issues raised with another person, with HR or with another agency. If this is the case the supervisor should try and agree the next steps with the Supervisee but should also be aware of their duties to safeguard clients and protect staff under Health and Safety legislation.

Senior managers have a right to access supervision records at any time.

## 2.15 Equalities and diversity in supervision

Addressing equalities and diversity must be an integral part of the supervisory relationship in terms of:

- The differences between the supervisor and the supervisee and the impact of this on the supervisory relationship
- The supervisee's practice and service delivery to children and families and or engagement with service users, partners and stakeholders
- Supervision must promote anti-discriminatory practice in line with the Equality Act 2010

This policy aims to meet the requirements of all practitioners and be accessible to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion/belief or any other factor that may result in unfair treatment or inequalities in health/employment.

Supervision provides an opportunity for the supervisor to model behaviours and attitudes that respect, promote and value equality and diversity by being non-judgmental. This will create an environment that reflects the organisational culture of respect, empathy and compassion for those who we deliver services to and those who we work alongside.

The relationship between supervisor and supervisee which (by definition) is characterised by an authority and power differential is acknowledged and therefore it is vital that practice supervisors work with the realities of inequality and difference to counter this.

## 2.16 Problem solving

Ordinarily most issues regarding practice can be resolved within the supervisory relationship. When difficulties arise which cannot be resolved between the supervisee and the supervisor, these should be referred to the supervisor's line manager.

If there are significant concerns regarding the work of an individual member of staff which cannot be addressed in normal supervision, then these are addressed using the formal HR performance management and capability procedures.

Where concerns about practice or capability arise in supervision, these may trigger HR processes. In these cases, the Local Authority's Capability or Disciplinary Policy & Procedures should be followed outside of the supervision process in line with the relevant policy and procedure.

How differences are acknowledged and dealt with. We agree to:

- Acknowledge and value each other's perspective
- Remain focussed on prioritising the child/ren in question
- For any differences to be recorded
- Listen to each other's point of view and aim to reach a consensus
- Where consensus on casework decisions is not possible, the team manager will make final decision

- Try to resolve the differences ourselves, if this is not possible, we discuss this with the appropriate senior manager or other agreed third party

### **2.17 Links to other policies/frameworks**

Several other North Somerset policies support supervision, performance, and staff development. This policy should be delivered alongside all North Somerset policies and procedures, in particular the following:

- [Performance Appraisal \(Performance Review\) guidance](#)
- [ASYE Guidance](#)
- [Capability \(Performance and Absence Management\) Procedures](#)
- [Learning and Development Framework](#)
- [Workforce Development Strategy](#)
- [Equalities of Opportunity Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure](#)

## **3. Group Supervision Guidance**

### **3.1 Group Supervision**

Group supervision is facilitator-led via a formal, prearranged process that is agreed by the supervisor and supervisees. The makeup of the group depends on the goals of the supervision. Group supervision is a complement to, rather than substitute for, one-to-one supervision, though it may reduce the frequency with which one-to-one supervision is needed.

### **3.2 What are the main goals of group supervision?**

Group supervision involves the use of a group setting to enable members to reflect on their work. By pooling skills, experience and knowledge, the aim of the session is to improve the skills and capability of both individuals and the group. The goal of the session may be to solve problems, plan work and set priorities, learn or make decisions. The supervisor should discuss with the group, and agree, how the agenda and focus of supervision sessions will be centred on individuals who use services and their carers – ultimately, effective group supervision should result in better outcomes for people. This is the important distinction between group supervision and team meetings or other group sessions. Group supervision is always centred on developing people with a specific focus on achieving better outcomes.

### **3.3 What are the main benefits of effective group supervision?**

Effective group supervision can result in faster, more effective problem solving by drawing on the expertise of a group of people. It allows for learning from the diverse backgrounds and experiences of different social services workers and practitioners, who may provide different perspectives on situations.



Group supervision presents an opportunity to address the concerns and issues of individuals and an opportunity to develop teams.

Sharing in a group setting:

- Can give supervisees an increased sense of support by realising others have similar concerns
- Allows supervisees to find new and better ways of dealing with their own situations by listening to others
- Can allow supervisees to explore different ideas about how they will solve problems by obtaining a range of feedback from others about issues or concerns
- Provides a safe environment where individuals can discuss their limitations and problems without criticism – some individuals may find that they are more confident about opening up in a group situation than in a one-to-one situation.
- Tips for running a successful group supervision session
- Have a clear agenda and clarify with the group the purpose of the session – what it is for, and equally what it is not for
- Make sure everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities during the session, including confidentiality in the group
- Establish some ground rules, and ensure everyone commits to them
- Set a time for the session in a quiet and comfortable environment where people are likely to feel at ease about opening up and sharing
- Adopt good facilitation methodology, and allow others to take the facilitation lead as they develop their skills
- Always record and share the decisions or actions that are agreed in the session
- Periodically reflect on methodology. Explore what works well and not so well with a view to improving the process.

### **3.4 What longer term benefits can be achieved with a good approach to group supervision?**

- Increased job satisfaction
- Improved team communication
- Lower stress levels and better ability to cope in challenging circumstances
- Reduced self-doubt about ability to act in practice
- Increased self-awareness and sense of professional identity leading to reduced anxiety
- More positive relationships with people who use services.

### **3.5 What are the roles and responsibilities of the facilitator and the participants?**

The effectiveness of group supervision depends on the facilitation skills of the person leading the group, and the openness of the supervisees to share and reflect. The role of the facilitator is to guide the group towards openly sharing ideas, opinions, expertise and

experience with a view to achieving an agreed set of goals, and then to gain commitment to follow-up actions. Effective facilitators:

- Plan in advance
- Take a neutral position and focus purely on the group process and desired outcomes
- Listen actively and ask questions that encourage and direct participation relevant to the goals of the group
- Draw out quieter members of the group and allow everyone a chance to participate
- Are not afraid of silence – they recognise when the group needs space to think
- Check for mutual understanding keep the group focused on the agenda.

### 3.6 Supervisees (and indeed the facilitator) should:

- Be prepared to listen actively and share openly
- Avoid taking the conversation off in directions that are not useful
- Show respect towards others
- Avoid dominating the discussion
- Be mindful of their duties regarding confidentiality

### 3.7 In practice

As stated, there are multiple models for solutions in group settings, below are broad principles and guidelines that translate across the different models. Nominated practitioners in each team will have access to the signs of safety knowledge bank, all practitioners have access to research in practice resources. The below is a guideline:

Steps	Actions	Time Allowance
Stage 1	The issue: The issue to be dealt with is clearly outlined by the person without any interruption from the group	1-4 mins
Stage 2	Clarification Questions: This is the only stage where there is dialogue between the group and the person with the issue. The group are allowed to ask clarification questions on the subject, typically, “when does this...?”, “how often will they ...?”, “who is involved?” etc. At this stage it is key that no solutions are offered, or any enquiries are made about things/interventions that may have been tried before. We do not want to establish a dialogue of “I’ve tried that, and it didn’t work!” only clarification questions may be asked	1-4 mins
Stage 3	Solutions: This phase of the process requires the person with the issue to sit with paper and a pen to list the solution/ways forward offered by their colleagues. They must take care not to respond to any of the suggestions, even if they have been tried before, they must just listen and note the suggestions.	1-4 mins

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**Stage 4** Selection: The subject of the process will sit, reflect and select the two (or so) suggestions that they will action and use in the future. They then share these with the group so that the group can check in with them at a future date to ensure they have been actioned.

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When reporting back to the next meeting with the results of action taken from the previous learning to the other team members, it is imperative to be concise with the information. Following this order can help with conveying all the information needed:

**What did you do?**

The speaker will narrate to the other set members how they went about implementing the solution.

**Define the lesson learned from the action**

Was the practitioner able to implement all solutions from the previous meeting? If not, what, and how that implementation could have been handled better.

**What happened?**

The speaker will state the reaction of their colleagues when they brought their colleagues into the picture of how they wanted to change the approach to doing some of the duties.

**Was it any different from expectations?**

State expectations and whether the results were negative or positive according to those expectations.

## **4. Practice expectations for supervision**

### **4.1 The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is strong and effective (quality of relationship).**

Supervision provides a safe environment in which to examine and review practice. It is a 'safe space' where trust is fostered between the supervisor and supervisee and in which interactions are authentic. A restorative approach to supervision is demonstrated (high expectations, high support, high challenge):

- The supervisor and supervisee are working towards agreed aspirations/ expectations.
- Where required, the right support is put in place to enable the supervisee to achieve their aspirations/ expectations.
- The right, positive challenge is in place to push to the objective, holding the supervisor or supervisee to account in a meaningful and constructive way to the agreed aspirations/expectations, and working through the obstacles.

The Supervisor will give consideration to capacity to change through the observation, assessment and review of practice. Where progress towards agreed expectations is limited, there is evidence that the supervisor has first reflected on their role in fostering change and considered what changes they might need to make in their supervision of the supervisee. Thereafter, the supervisor and supervisee will consider any barriers to progress and how these might be overcome.

Supervision motivates and assists the supervisee in building and maintaining purposeful relationships by understanding 'through the eyes and ears' of others and applying the restorative questions. This approach is actively applied where there are differences in the working relationship between supervisor and supervisee.

If the supervisee is concerned about the quality or quantity of supervision received this is discussed with the supervisor and, if this does not resolve the matter, with the supervisor's line manager.

### **4.2 Supervision is organised and evidenced through good recording (organisation and recording)**

A supervision contract is in place and is signed by both supervisor and supervisee. It is reviewed annually and at each change of supervisor.

The supervision record is comprehensive and up to date (Supervision Log or People Space), demonstrating that regular formal supervision has taken place. The frequency of supervision is a minimum of once per month (with the exception of newly qualified social workers, who will receive fortnightly supervision for a period not to exceed 6 months.) Supervision will take place within the supervisor's and supervisee's paid hours of employment. Supervision is not subject to cancellation and only postponed in exceptional circumstances. Any postponed session is reconvened at the earliest opportunity. Where the supervisor is absent long-term from work (4 weeks or more) alternative arrangements are made to provide the supervisee with supervision.

The recording of supervision is clear, up to date and stored properly.

The annual Appraisal process is undertaken effectively and to timescales.

#### **4.3 Supervision is a planned and purposeful activity and ensures that work/tasks are completed to the required standard (task assistance and access to services)**

The supervisor and supervisee prepare for supervision by identifying what they would like to address on the agenda.

Supervision records demonstrate the continued monitoring and review of agreed actions, ensuring that all agreed actions are fully completed and signed off.

The Supervisor ensures that the supervisee is clear about the work allocated to them, the actions that are required, how these should be prioritised and how they will be monitored and reviewed.

Supervision records demonstrate that cases are reviewed regularly and consideration is given to progress in relation to assessment, planning, intervention and review to enable reflection on the effectiveness of case work. Any risks arising from non-engagement are discussed and plans are amended accordingly. Any decision making about cases is clearly recorded. Key documents and reports include clear evidence of management sign off.

The Supervisor provides effective assistance for enabling the Identification and allocation of support/resources to accomplish tasks or in obtaining authorisation for proposed expenditure. Where there are difficulties/ barriers, the Supervisor will seek support from their line manager or apply the escalation policy where required.

The Supervisor ensures that the supervisee's practice is undertaken in accordance with the relevant regulatory bodies and the standards set out by the Youth Support Team.

#### **4.4 Supervision facilitates effective social and emotional support**

Supervision files demonstrate that the supervisor has a good understanding of the social and emotional issues for the supervisee, evidencing effective support being put in place for social and emotional wellbeing where required.

Supervision enables the supervisee to cope with the challenges and pressures arising from their work by helping the supervisee to explore the effect of work on them, both professionally and personally, as well as helping the supervisee explore any emotional blocks to their practice. Also, the supervisor explores with the supervisee the effect of their social and emotional position on their work with others.

There is evidence within supervision that the supervisee has developed sufficient trust to be open about their doubts, feelings and mistakes as well as to take risks, accept new challenges and use initiative.

For supervisees who lack experience in their role there is evidence that anxieties / concerns are being raised and resolved, with supervision providing a secure base from which they can practice effectively.

#### **4.5 Supervision facilitates critical reflection and analysis**

Supervision files demonstrate that the supervisor encourages and enables time and discussion for the critical reflection of the supervisees work and for fostering an inquisitive approach to their work.

The supervisee is encouraged to explore the thoughts and feelings evoked by practice experiences and to consider what these mean for the young people, family or themselves in terms of attitudes, assumptions and the interpretation of information.

The Supervisor supports the supervisee to develop a hypothesis or explanation of a situation by drawing on: the experience of the young person and family, the supervisee's understandings gained from practice and personal experience, theory and research. This enables the supervisee to identify what further information is required to test or deepen their analysis.

Through critical reflection the supervisee can develop the ability, confidence and security to identify and acknowledge when they have made mistakes or poor judgements, the ability to learn from these and improve their practice. The supervisee is also able to identify the strengths in their practice alongside the areas they need to develop further. Where available, feedback received from young people, families and other professionals/agencies is used to support this.

There is evidence within supervision that the supervisee is supported to make judgements and decisions based on their observations, evaluation of information, available evidence, wider experience, reflection and consideration to relevant theory and research.

There is evidence of positive challenge around casework practice, assessment, analysis and professional judgement/ decision making, and that this is undertaken in a respectful and young person focused manner.

#### **4.6 Supervision promotes a commitment to diversity in all aspects of work**

The supervisor enables the supervisee to recognise and take account of diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles to their practice.

Supervision files demonstrate that issues of diversity have been addressed both in the supervisory relationship and service delivery.

The supervisor enables the supervisee to recognise the power dynamics in relationships with young people and families and manage these dynamics appropriately.

#### **4.7 Supervision supports continuing professional development**

The supervisee is supported by the supervisor through supervision to develop their professional competence.

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There is evidence that the supervisor provides feedback on the supervisee's practice and performance. Any actions for improvement are identified and evidence of professional development and competence is acknowledged.

Where learning and development needs have been identified, the agreed resources/ support required to meet these needs have been put in place. Supervision shows evidence of the continuing review of progress on areas of learning.

There is evidence that the supervisee is supported to initiate new ways of working in response to changing needs and environments.

Supervision enables the supervisee, where required, to meet their post qualifying and professional registration requirements.

There is evidence that all staff are taking responsibility for their learning. Training and development activity is discussed, and supervisees are able to explain and evidence how they are applying their learning to practice. In line with the Empowerment principle of the Restorative Approach, the supervisor is not responsible for providing the solutions. Rather s/he should create the context and pointers for the supervisee to find the solutions for him/herself. The supervisor will then critically reflect on these solutions with the supervisee towards continued development.

#### **4.8 Supervision facilitates a continued improvement in the quality of services to, and outcomes for, young people and their families (impact on practice)**

There is evidence that supervision has a good, sustained and positive impact on improving practice and building purposeful relationships with others.

The supervisor and supervisee feel valued, prepared, supported and committed in their work, and there is evidence of professional growth through the development of skills, knowledge and experience.

Supervision records evidence changes in practice in light of lessons learned, and through research and case reviews.

Supervision records demonstrate that supervisees have been enabled to make sound judgements around risk and safeguarding and are able to clearly understand the nature of risk being faced, what needs to happen to deal with risk/ safeguarding concerns as they arise, when and how to involve other professionals or agencies, how to make the most effective use of evidence-based practice.

There is evidence that the supervisee has built authentic relationships with young people and their families and engaged/ empowered them in working towards making changes to achieve their aspirations/expectations.

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## Template 1 – The Individual Supervision Agreement

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Supervisee:

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Supervisor/Line Manager:

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Team:

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Frequency:

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Location:

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Our supervision relationship will be based upon mutual respect for each other's skills, knowledge and experience. We understand the requirements of the Supervision Policy and Performance and Development Reviews. Any performance management issues will be highlighted, and action taken in a timely and fair way according to organisational policies and procedures in keeping with training.

### **Location and environment**

The venue for our supervision sessions will be mutually agreed. Interruptions will be kept to a minimum and ideally be avoided completely. We shall not usually make or accept telephone calls during our supervision sessions unless previously agreed by both of us and for operational reasons. The session will last 1 hour.

### **Agenda and structure**

Formal supervision sessions should be structured with preparation work having been carried out by both the supervisor and the supervisee and where possible an agenda set a few days before the supervision session. Both parties should prioritise the agenda items at the beginning of the session to make the most effective use of time.

### **Record keeping**

All supervision sessions should be recorded including areas covered, discussion points, agreed action points, timescales. The record should be available to both the supervisor and the supervisee and can be accessed by the supervisor's manager or more senior managers HR for audit purposes. Where recording relates to a management decision on a case or a casework discussion this will be recorded as a discussion/decision on the electronic file by either the manager or supervisee. Records will be stored confidentially.

### **Review of supervision**

This is an agreement we have entered to ensure effective and supportive supervision. It demonstrates a joint commitment to the supervision process and serves as a reminder of the professional responsibilities we have towards each other and the organisation we work in. Either one of us may seek to re-negotiate the agreement if we feel it is necessary. The supervision agreement should be reviewed by the supervisor and the supervisee as required as necessary, e.g., if there is a change of supervisor, a change in job role or team.

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### **Disagreements**

Areas of disagreement between supervisor and supervisee will be recorded on the supervision records. Areas of disagreement that cannot be resolved will be referred to the Line Manager.

### **Absence of supervision**

It is the policy of the People and Communities Directorate that supervision is provided to all staff. In the absence of supervision, either due to absence of the supervisor or the supervisor failing to adhere to the supervision timetable, the supervisee can refer this to the Line Manager.

The supervisee will approach the Line Manager if he/she has received no formal supervision in line with expected standards and frequency.

### **Signed**

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Supervisee	Date:
Supervisee:	Date:

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This policy should be read with the accompanying guidance and procedures of the Council:

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Policy on Health and Safety](#)

[Disciplinary Policy](#)

[Capability Procedure](#)

[Managing Stress in the Workplace](#)

## Template 2 Personal Supervision Record for Staff File (hard copy and electronic)

Name of Supervisee:	
Name of Line Manager/Supervisor:	
Team/Area:	
<b>Support</b> (Wellbeing, sickness absence and leave)	
<b>What could help? –</b> <b>Priorities? –</b> <b>The Team –</b>	
<b>Things that have gone well since the last supervision session</b> (Positive feedback, good examples of practice and practice developments, workplace relationships that are supportive etc)	
<b>Reflection</b> (Dilemmas, workload, practice issues and priorities and children we are worried about)	
<b>Learning and development</b> (What are the priorities to further develop skills and knowledge? What progress has been made on the actions agreed at appraisal. What feedback has been obtained from service users or viadirect observation recently?)	

Review of actions from previous session	
Action	Progress made

Actions to take forward		
Action	Person responsible	Timeframe
Signature of practitioner:		
Signature of Line Manager/Supervisor:		
Date supervision completed:		
Date of next supervision:		

### Template 3 Case Supervision for Child's Electronic Record

This is located within the LCS recording system for each child.