Early Help and Think Family Supervision Framework

March 2022

Together we can do GREAT THINGS

Durham County Council

Review date – October 2021

Supervision Framework for Practitioners and Managers

SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document describes the framework for the professional supervision of all One Point Service practitioners and managers working in Durham County Council's One Point and Think Family Service.

RELATED STANDARDS AND DOCUMENTS

Durham County Council: values and behaviours framework

Children and Young People's Services: principles of best practice

Durham County Council: HR policies

Recording of Supervision within Liquid Logic

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1. Purpose

Providing high quality reflective supervision is at the heart of our work to ensure quality and consistency of our practice. One Point is committed to ensuring every practitioner receives effective supervision which supports them to deliver high quality services to children, young people, their families and carers. Supervision should:

a) Support critical reflection and challenge, which is the best safeguard against over-optimism and the development of risk averse practice.
b) Encourage practitioners to think differently and creatively and explore bias.
c) Help practitioners to think, to explain and to understand, with the overriding priority being a focus on the lived experience of the child.
d) Help practitioners to manage the complex and emotionally challenging situations that arise in working with families.
e) Ensure the impact of particular cases, or work overall, on the practitioner is recognised, understood and addressed, reducing the likelihood of there being a harmful effect on the work and practitioner.
f) Encourage and support practitioners to reflect critically on their practice and to continue to develop their knowledge and skills with an ability to provide clear rationale for decision making.
g) Promote self-care, wellbeing and the emotional resilience of the worker.

The supervision framework is designed to support practitioners and their managers to achieve this.

2. The Framework

This framework is for the supervision of practitioners and their managers and is consistent with Signs of Safety/Wellbeing, Durham's chosen practice model, Children and Young People's Services principles for best practice and Durham County Council's values and behaviours framework.
There are 5 elements to the framework:

- **Personal Supervision** and **Case Management Supervision** – These meeting will take place together but there will be distinctly separate parts of the meeting and ensure that staff welfare is discussed as well as individual children and families. This 2 part meeting should take place for all staff on a monthly basis.

This where possible should be monthly but should be held at a minimum of 9 times per year for full time staff. For part time (18.5 hours) practitioners will require a minimum of 5 one to one supervisions annually.

Personal supervisions are regular private meetings between supervisee and supervisor which support open discussion about the work, the emotional demands of the work and the supervisee's learning and development needs.

Practitioners will be provided with monthly case management supervision at the same time as personal supervision. Case Management Supervisions are private meetings between supervisee and supervisor to consider and review current cases and to identify good practice as well as concerns and next steps.

It is noted that in between these formal supervisions, informal discussions may occur where guidance may be offered, or decisions are taken about children - these must also be recorded on the child's record as they provide rationale for decisions taken)

- **Signs of Safety/Wellbeing Group Learning** - Available for staff at least once per month.

  Regular opportunities for groups of practitioners to focus on a case using the Signs of Safety/Wellbeing group learning model. One Point Service practitioners will be expected to attend on a monthly basis and part time staff on a bi-monthly basis.

- **Direct observation** – Once per year

  Observations of the practice of the supervisee, normally by the supervisor. Observations should highlight good practice and support learning.

- **Performance and development review** – Annual

  An annual review of progress, and an opportunity to agree objectives for the coming year carried out by supervisee and supervisor.

The framework is supported by a **quality assurance process** to ensure that the support provided to each supervisee is of high quality and is delivered with sufficient frequency.

3. Who is covered by the framework?

The framework covers all practitioners and managers working for Durham County Council's One Point and Think Family Service.

It covers those employed on a permanent, temporary, regardless of working hours or working pattern.

4. Personal supervision

4.1 Supervision Agreement

When a supervisee starts a new role a **Supervision Agreement** should be developed, agreed and signed by the supervisee and supervisor.

This should be a helpful conversation and the agreement should set out:

a) Arrangements for both personal and case management supervision (frequency, dates, provisions if supervision needs to be rescheduled or cancelled, length and location, how the agenda will be set);
b) What both supervisee and supervisor need to get the most out of supervision;
c) Arrangements to review how supervision is working, and how the supervisee will provide feedback to the supervisor;
d) How disagreements will be handled;
e) How supervision will be recorded, confidentiality and the constraints on confidentiality;
f) Any others responsible for parts of the supervision process (for coaching or mentoring), and arrangements for regular review and communication.

The supervision agreement should be regarded as a “living” document to set out clear expectations that is updated according to the changing needs of the supervisee and supervisor. As a minimum it should be reviewed annually, or when there is a change of supervisor.

Copies of the signed supervision agreement should be stored securely by both supervisee and supervisor.

4.2 Frequency

The frequency for individuals should be agreed between the supervisee and supervisor when putting the **Supervision Agreement** in place. Personal supervision and case supervision should take place at the same time and be monthly where possible. This frequency may be reconsidered in light of absence from work for example annual leave, sickness leave or maternity leave. but should take place 9 times each year as a minimum for full time staff (Plus PDR). For part time staff this should be to a minimum of 5 times per year (plus PDR).

Opportunities to be involved in Signs of Safety / Wellbeing group learning sessions should be made available to all practitioners within the service at least once per month. These are regular opportunities for groups of practitioners to focus on a case using the

Signs of Safety/Wellbeing group learning model. One Point Service practitioners will be expected to attend on a monthly basis and part time staff on a bi-monthly basis.

Additional personal and case management supervision sessions may be requested by either supervisee or supervisor to meet a specific need or respond to an event (for example the emotional impact or the complexities of a particular case).

The supervision should ensure that the supervisee has clear expectations about the availability of the supervisor outside of formal supervision arrangements. The supervisor should discuss his/her style of management and be clear about who the practitioner can go to for support or advice in his/her absence, or in between supervision sessions.

4.3 Length and location

For personal supervision and case management supervision the supervisor and supervisee should set aside a minimum of 90 minutes. This amount of time may not be needed but staff should have that time allocated in case of particularly complex cases which need to be discussed in depth.

All supervision should take place in private where personal and case details can be discussed without being overheard and where interruptions can be kept to a minimum. The physical environment in which supervision takes place is important and worth managers giving thought to comfort, visual prompts and promoting a calm learning space. Access to LiquidLogic should be available for information and recording purposes but should not be a distraction from the relationship between supervisor and supervisee.

4.4 Cancellation/rescheduling

Supervision should **only** be cancelled or rescheduled in an exceptional circumstance.

In instances where supervision needs to be rescheduled a further date should be agreed at the point the supervisee and supervisor agree to reschedule.

If the cause of the cancellation is the sickness/absence of supervisee then another supervision session should be scheduled within 5 working days of the supervisee's return to work.

4.5 Arrangements in the absence of a manager

If a team manager is not at work for more than 4 weeks the relevant Operations Manager should ensure arrangements for supervision of the practitioners in the team are put in place.

Each practitioner has a responsibility to ensure the relevant Operations Manager/Strategic Manager is made aware if arrangements have not been put in place. Where practitioners need to rearrange a planned supervision due to annual leave, for example, it is their responsibility to reschedule.

4.6 Content

There are 2 different types of one-to-one supervision which should take place in the same 90 minute window to ensure that staff can explore how their work and anything outside of work is impacting upon them personally as well as exploring their work with children and families they are currently working.

Aspects to supervision, which should be covered during these meetings:

Personal supervision

Personal supervision is an opportunity for the supervisee and supervisor to have an open discussion which supports the practitioner to manage the work and the emotional demands of the work effectively, as well as development needs, leading to good outcomes for children and young people. It is an opportunity for the worker and manager to bring agenda items for discussion. This should normally follow the headlines of the **Supervision Record** and include:

a) Progress towards actions from last supervision;
b) Wellbeing
c) What is working well (Reflection);
d) Any worries;
e) Management of work (including caseload and priorities);
f) Learning needs and opportunities (regularly including discussion of the OPEN Standards, the supervisee's Performance and Development Review)
g) Work that staff are proud of
h) Time management (including flexitime, leave and absence);
i) Job satisfaction
j) Disagreements / difference of opinion
k) Agree future actions.

Case Management Supervision

Case supervision should take place at the same time as personal supervision, as agreed in the member of staffs' supervision agreement.

Good practice is promoted by ensuring that all children are considered regularly and at a frequency which ensures that work remains appropriate, focused and purposeful and that drift is avoided. Records should reflect the uniqueness of each child and family we work with and provide clarity about what good outcomes would look like for them. These discussions and their outcome will be recorded on a Case Supervision Form within LiquidLogic.

Supervision should be a space to stop and critically reflect on and analyse the quality of the work, including the practitioner's experience of working with a child and family and their understanding of each child's experience. Consideration of the child's perspective and their journey should be integral to the discussion. This should include the child's experience, their wishes and feelings, progress against the Child and Family Plan and an evaluation of how the outcomes are improving for the child. All plans for children and young people should have be focused on outcomes, and supervision is the point at which a practitioner and their manager review progress.

Staff will be expected to have good knowledge of their case to be able to discuss them in the case management supervision and managers should had access to LiquidLogic at this meeting to allow them to complete the relevant section of the system while the practitioner is talking and reflecting.

Managers should begin the case supervision by discussion the case which they and the practitioner are most concerned about and the criteria for specific cases being discussed at case supervision are:

- Every month for children/young people of most concern to be reviewed and case supervision form completed.
- Every month the long-standing neglect of children/young people to be reviewed, and case supervision form completed
- Every month all unborn babies and children under 1year be reviewed and a case supervision form completed
- Children open over 6 months be reviewed and a case supervision form completed
- All children to be reviewed and a case supervision form completed a minimum of every 8 weeks.

***All children are required to have an up to date case summary on record and this will be reviewed and updated when a change of circumstances occurs for the child and/or during supervision and at a minimum of 3 monthly.**

Additional Management Oversight

a) Each case held by a practitioner will not be discussed at every case management supervision. At the point of allocation management oversight and direction will be provided with suggested timescales for case discussion.

b) Where a case is allocated, and an assessment is undertaken management oversight and feedback will be provided during single assessment checkpoints.

c) If a case has had management presence at a TAF this will be recorded as management oversight on Liquid Logic and therefore will not routinely require another monthly case discussion within the month.

d) Where a case is discussed in detail in another setting during the month such as group Signs of Safety / Wellbeing group learning session there may not be a need to discuss the case again within a case management supervision within that monthly period although this is a professional decision based on the knowledge of the practitioner and their manager. All Group Learning discussions about a child must be recorded as a note on the children record as agreed by the Signs of Safety Board.

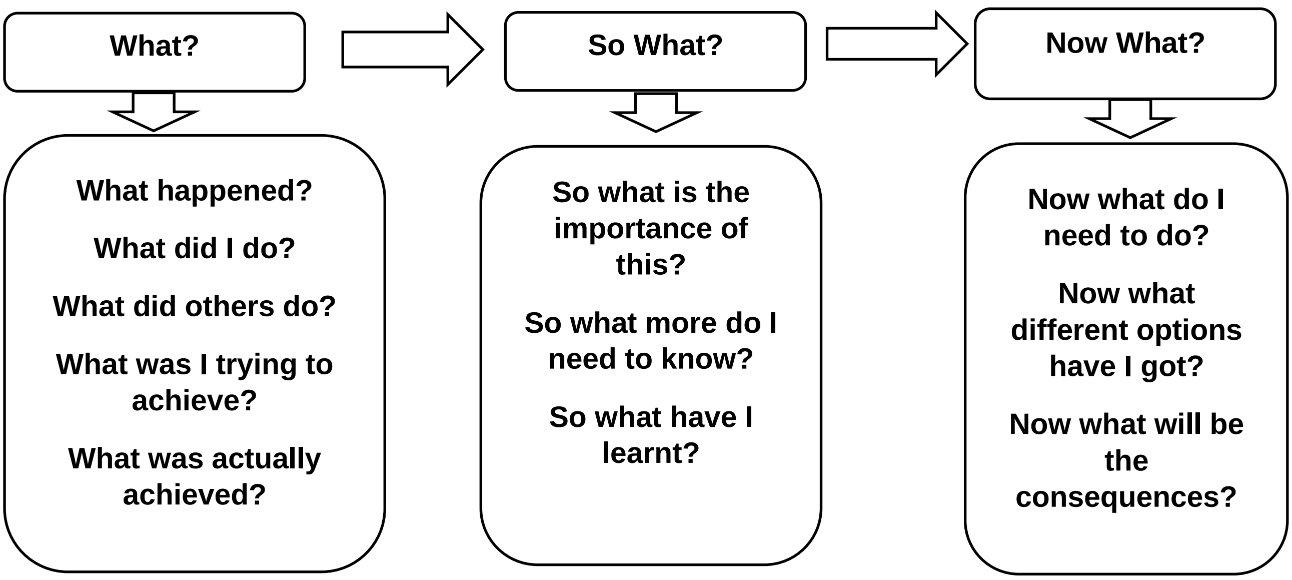
e) Every case on a practitioner's caseload need not be discussed at each case supervision but new cases, cases where the member of staff/manager feel that they need support or advice, challenging or complex cases and cases which are nearing or have exceeded timescales should be discussed. Signs of Wellbeing Tool will be used to support the discussion.

f) Every case requires management oversight and direction, and this is likely to be part of day to day business as usual and outside of the formal supervisory arrangements. Issues discussed are likely to be more 'task based' and include day to day problems which arise and clarity re process and procedure. Where cases are discussed outside of formal case supervision a case note should also be completed on LiquidLogic by the practitioner. Managers are expected to summarise key decisions and actions within case notes.

g) Other activities such as collaborative evaluations, joint visits and quality assurance of reports also play a role in management oversight of children and young people's cases and appropriate recording of this activity should be available on the child's record.

Reflective Discussions

There are a variety of models which may be helpful for managers within supervision relationship. One such model which may help practitioners and managers to think about the uniqueness of each child and family and record their thinking is illustrated below:



Further resources and tools for managers to use within supervision can be found at https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/

A range of information, support and training opportunities for managers in DCC can also be found using the following links:

Durham Leadership Way

Leadership and Management Development Programme

Strengthening Managers

Strengthening Supervision

A Wellbeing Portal is also available to support staff around their wellbeing and can also be used as a tool by managers within supervision to work with and refer staff to in relation to their personal and wellbeing needs. There is also a training session available to managers on the use of the Wellbeing Portal which can be accessed using the below link:

How to Thrive in Professional Practice - Wellbeing Portal (Managers)

Reflective discussions within case management supervision should include a review of the Family Plan and the progress they are making. Practitioners and managers should be clear about what 'good' looks like for each child and family they are discussing. These discussions are likely to be less focused on 'task' and more focused on reviewing whether the plan for the child/family remains the right one and ensuring that all options have been considered and that there is a clear rationale for decisions.

Supervision is an opportunity to use appreciative enquiry to explore the role of the practitioner. It is an opportunity to hypothesise, give feedback, challenge assumptions, introduce tools or new ways of working, ensure the voice of the child is strong.

Signs of safety tools and techniques may also be beneficial in these discussions. Exploring best questions, looking at the harm matrix or exploring who might be in a family network.

4.7 Recording

Personal supervision

- A record of the discussion should be made on the **Supervision Record** form by the supervisor and passed to the supervisee within 10 working days. The form will be signed by both parties once agreed or disagreements recorded as a true record. Signatures can be electronic.

- The date of the meeting should be recorded onto MyView by the supervisor within 10 working days.
- The supervision record should be uploaded onto MyView once completed, agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and signed by both the supervisee and supervisor. This should be within 15 working days of the meeting.
- Regular reports showing frequency of supervision will be produced from the data recorded on MyView.
- ID numbers can be used to refer to any case discussions that have occurred when referring to a child. Initials can be used if referring to a colleague.

Case supervision

- For each child or young person discussed during case supervision a Case Supervision form should be completed on LiquidLogic. This should be a summary of the discussion showing options discussed and the decisions and action points arising, but most importantly should outline the rationale for the decisions that have been made (i.e. why has one decision been made rather than another?)
- Regular performance reports will be produced to demonstrate 'management oversight' from these records.

4.8 Confidentiality

Personal supervision

Supervision is a private but not a confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the organisation, not the individual. From time to time supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervision sessions with others, for example, their own line managers. This should always be with the knowledge of the supervisee.

Both the line manager and the practitioner will have copies of the supervision record. These will be held electronically on MyView and uploaded by the line manager.

Supervision records will be used to inform written references.

Other people may from time to time require access to personal supervision records. These might include:

a) Managers providing cover in the absence of the supervisor;
b) Senior managers (for quality assurance purposes);
c) Investigating officers (for example in the case of grievances or disciplinary purposes);
d) Inspectors reviewing the effectiveness of the Service.

In the event of a line manager changing posts the records of supervision will be made available to the new line manager with the employee's agreement. Where the content of supervision documents is thought by the manager of the supervisor to be potentially damaging to the relationship with a new supervisor, the offending comments may be removed. This can only be done by the manager of the original supervisor.

Case supervision

Case supervision records will be held on LiquidLogic, and linked to the child's file and available to:

a) All who have access to the file within the organisation;
b) Any successful applicant who has made application for access to personal information held about themselves or for a child for whom they hold Parental Responsibility;
c) Managers providing cover in the absence of the line manager;
d) Senior managers (for quality assurance purposes);
e) Investigating Officers carrying out investigations (for example Serious Case Reviews, complaints, grievances, disciplinary)
f) Inspectors reviewing the effectiveness of the Service.

4.9 Retention of records

Personal supervision

Personal supervision records should be retained for 6 years after the date of supervision. This also applies to practitioners and managers who have left the Service or changed post within the Service.

See **Retention and Destruction of Confidential Information**.

In the event of a supervisor changing posts the supervision records will be made available to the new supervisor with the supervisee's agreement. Where the content of supervision records is thought by the manager of the supervisor to be potentially damaging to the relationship with a new supervisor, the offending comments may be removed. This can only be done by the manager of the original supervisor.

Case supervision

Case supervision records will be retained in line with retention criteria for the child's record. See **Retention and Destruction of Confidential Information**.

4.10 Disagreements

Wherever possible the supervisee and supervisor should seek to resolve differences within supervision. Areas of disagreement between supervisee and supervisor should be recorded on the supervision record.

If disagreements cannot be resolved either supervisee or supervisor may refer these to the supervisor's line manager.

4.11 Review of the effectiveness of supervision

The supervisee and supervisor should review the content, length, frequency, format and style of supervision every 6 months to ensure that it is effective and make changes to the supervision agreement where required.

This review should include feedback on the quality of the supervision being given by the supervisee to the supervisor in a way agreed by both parties.

5 Signs of Safety/Wellbeing Group Learning

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of group learning is to build strong team habits of analysis and judgement in order to foster more agile, confident decision making and practice. It also promotes a learning culture within the Service.

A good group learning process for thinking through cases will lead to more energy and dynamism in practice because it builds a shared sense of carrying risk within the whole team which dissolves the isolation and sense that so many practitioners have: 'if this goes wrong, it is my fault'. Teams that use this process consistently report greater use in the Signs of Safety framework and their Signs of Safety/Wellbeing practice.

See **Group Learning Process** for the Signs of Safety Group Supervision Process for more information.

5.2 Frequency

Every practitioner should have the opportunity to participate in Signs of Safety/Wellbeing Group learning on a monthly basis within their team. For part time staff the frequency will be bi-monthly.

There may also be opportunities to participate in multi-agency Signs of Safety/Wellbeing group learning.

5.3 Recording

Following a Signs of Safety/Wellbeing Group Learning session, the date of the meeting should be recorded onto the MyView record of all those who participated. This will normally be done by the team manager, or on request by the Development and Learning Team.

A record will be made of the Signs of Safety/Wellbeing supervision having taken place with the details of any actions or decisions which were made. This will be recorded under ‘Group Learning’ of the child’s record on Liquid Logic and will be monitored as part of management oversite on a case.

6 Direct observation of practice

6.1 Purpose

Observation of practice is an integral part of continuous learning and development. It provides the opportunity for developmental feedback directly linked to real life experience and supports reflective practice.

6.2 Frequency

The frequency of direct observation will be dependent on the experience of the supervisee:

- Direct observations of practice and feedback should be carried out by the supervisor at least once per year.
- Additional direct observations of practice may be carried out by senior managers during practice weeks.

6.3 Carrying out a direct observation

Direct observations should normally be carried out in a planned way. The process will differ slightly dependent on the experience of the supervisee:

- **Before the observation**
  - The observer and supervisee should have an informal discussion of the background/aim of the activity to be observed.

- **During/after the observation**
  - Where possible the child, young person or adult(s) involved should be asked if they are willing to provide feedback as part of the process.
  - The observer should use the **direct observation form** to record what went well, what could have been done differently, and any feedback from the child, young person or adult(s).
  - The observer should discuss the observation and feedback with the supervisee.
  - The supervisee should take the time to reflect on the comments made by the observer and record a summary of their reflections on the observation record.
  - Supervisee, observer, and the supervisee’s line manager (where they are not the same person) should sign and date the observation record.

- This discussion may identify future learning and development needs and form part of the professional development review.

6.4 Recording

Direct observations should be recorded on the **direct observation form.**

The date of any direct observations should be recorded onto MyView. This will normally be done by the team manager.

6.5 Confidentiality

Records of direct observation form part of a supervisee's personal observation record and should be treated as part of a private but not a confidential process. This means that the records are the property of the organisation, not the individual.

Both the line manager and the staff member will have copies of the observation record. These may be held electronically. Any hard copies will be retained in an appropriately confidential environment, i.e. locked drawers, cabinet, etc. and always on Durham County Council premises.

Other people may from time to time require access to records of direct observation. These might include:

e) Managers providing cover in the absence of the supervisor;
f) Senior managers (for quality assurance purposes);
g) Investigating officers (for example in the case of grievances or disciplinary purposes);
h) Inspectors reviewing the effectiveness of the Service.

6.6 Retention

Records of direct observation form part of the supervisee's personal supervision record and should be retained for 6 years after the date of the observation. This also applies to practitioners and managers who have left the Service or changed post within the Service. See **Retention and Destruction of Confidential Information**.

In the event of a supervisor changing posts records of direct observation will be made available to the new supervisor as part of the supervisee's personal supervision record with the supervisee's agreement.

6 Performance and Development Review (PDR)

Performance and Development Reviews should take place annually in line with **Durham County Council's procedure**.

7 Quality Assurance

A quality assurance process is in place to support the effectiveness of the supervision process. It ensures that the standards of supervision outlined in this document are being followed.

The quality assurance arrangements involve:

a) Performance information which demonstrates compliance with timescales for supervision, direct observation and performance and development review.

b) Discussion of supervision files and supervision practice during supervision (for example, an Operations Manager and Team Manager, would discuss the Team Manager's supervision practice).

c) Providing opportunities for supervisors to attend training and development sessions on supervision skills, observation skills and professional development reviews.

d) Seeking feedback annually from supervisees through the Organisational Health Check survey.

e) One Point Operations Managers to audit supervision records on each of their managers (Team Managers/Family Centre Leads) annually. See Appendix 4 for Supervision Audit Template

f) Team Managers to audit supervision records of each of their Senior Key Workers annually.

g) Strategic Manager to audit supervision records of each of their Operations Manager annually.

Appendix 1: Supervision Agreement form

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Appendix 2: Personal Supervision Record

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Appendix 3: Direct Observation Form

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Appendix 4: Supervision Audit Template

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