

Devon Children's Services: Supervision Policy and Procedure

July 2023



1. Introduction

At Devon Children’s Services we recognise that our staff are our most valued asset. This policy sets out our commitment to provide high quality, effective supervision to all our employees, to ensure that we are delivering excellent services which promote positive outcomes for children and families.

Our [core principles and behaviours](#) and [restorative practice framework](#) underpin our approach to supervision and it is essential that all staff familiarise themselves with these, and that they are used to aid the delivery of supervision and appraisal conversations.

Children’s Services



Effective supervision is a key cornerstone of Restorative Practice. It is the mechanism by which we can ensure we are practicing in line with the 5R’s (Relational practice, that shows Respect to families, promotes Responsibility and Resilience, and is Reflective in nature to support good decision making and a learning culture).

Supervision of practitioners and managers in Devon will:

- Be child centred
- Be restorative
- Be anti-racist
- Be based on an open and trusting relationship between practitioner and supervisor.
- Identify the individual practitioner’s strength and the opportunities to use these in their work with families.
- Engender a sense of co-production and self-efficacy by ensuring decisions are taken in partnership.
- Be an environment in which practitioners and managers can give and receive honest and constructive feedback about each other’s practice.

This policy and procedure sets out how staff are expected to take part in supervision and provides managers, practice leaders and supervisors with the key standards and tools required to supervise staff effectively. Managers, supervisors and supervisees are jointly responsible for ensuring that supervision meets the standards as outlined in this policy and procedure and underpins our supervision framework.

2. Anti-racist supervision

Developing a focus on anti-racist supervision is fundamental to Devon becoming an anti-racist organisation. This is important for ensuring practitioners remain aware of the need to be sensitive, respectful and culturally aware during their work with children and families but also to be supporting practitioners from Black, Asian or minoritised ethnic groups.

Equality, diversity and inclusion should be discussed in every personal supervision session, and clearly considered and explored in child specific supervision.

3. Supervision Policy and Framework

There are five elements to our supervision framework:

- 1) Personal Supervision
- 2) Child specific supervision
- 3) Management oversight
- 4) Group supervision
- 5) Appraisal

4. Personal Supervision

The capacity of professionals to remain resilient within their role depends on effective supportive systems being in place to enhance the emotional wellbeing of the practitioner.

Personal supervision should be person centred, an opportunity for supervisee and supervisor to spend time together in a safe space to build a trusting relationship to discuss how things are going in relation to their personal wellbeing (both at work and home), personal development and role and responsibilities. The relationship should focus on good communication, openness, transparency and flexibility between supervisor and supervisee.

This form of supervision should provide supportive opportunities to address the emotional demands on staff and support them to build resilience levels, reducing stress and burnout.

A [supervision agreement](#) must be completed at the start of every supervisory relationship and renewed every 12 months.

4.1. Frequency of Personal Supervision

Personal supervision should take place at planned monthly meetings. In the first six weeks of employment, supervision is to take place weekly and then reviewed to decide future levels of supervision during an induction period.

Supervision for newly qualified Social Workers is provided two-weekly for the first three months reducing thereafter to the recommended monthly supervision.

Part time staff should receive supervision monthly, allowing discretion to reduce the time to reflect the staff members workload.

Agency and temporary staff should receive the same frequency of supervision as permanent staff.

Informal supervision should not replace the planned monthly formal supervision session.

4.2. Recording of Personal Supervision

Our [Supervision form for Personal Supervision in Children's Services](#) provides a useful prompt for conducting personal supervision. This form should be used for all staff to ensure a consistent approach across Children's Services.

Managers must use iTrent to record supervision – the above form can be attached to a supervision record in iTrent.

Managers must use iTrent to record appraisals using the new process :

[Appraisals and one-to-ones \(iTrent HR Self-Service\) - tasks and guides \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Supervision should be booked in as detailed below using electronic booking arrangements wherever possible, and should be planned so that both parties are aware of the dates for the year ahead.

There are circumstances where it may be necessary for supervisors to discuss information gained from supervision with Senior Managers. Supervision records may be released for the purpose of monitoring the quality of supervision, for Ofsted inspections or used as documentation in disciplinary or legal proceedings.

Supervision records are the property of Devon County Council. Where issues of a personal nature, to the member of staff, are contained within a supervision record, the confidentiality of such material should be protected in line with the GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018. For further information please refer to the County Council's Information and Data

Policy and Guidance and the County Council's Employee Privacy Policy [Update to employee privacy notice - news \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/2022/05/11/update-to-employee-privacy-notice).

The principle of confidentiality within supervision does not exclude the supervisor or supervisee from their responsibilities under Devon County Council Corporate Code of Conduct. Should evidence of misconduct, unsafe or illegal practice arise, the supervisee is encouraged to report them, but if this does not occur, the supervisor should do so.

Any child specific supervision that takes place within personal supervision should not be recorded on ITrent and the process outlined below should be followed.

5. Child Specific Supervision

This is formal supervision between a supervisor and supervisee, where the supervisee is an allocated worker for a child. Personal supervision and Child Specific supervision could take place during the same session.

This supervision provides the supervisor, and through them the organisation, with oversight of direct work with families. Where one or more members of staff are jointly working with a family, joint supervision may be beneficial.

5.1. Frequency of Child Specific Supervision

Upon allocation of a new child or family to a practitioner, a discussion must be had between supervisor and supervisee about the work required and actions agreed. This should be added as a "manager case note" on the child's electronic record.

Thereafter, every child open to Children's Social Care or Early Help teams (regardless of legal status) should be discussed at least once per month and a record of the discussion recorded on the child's electronic record.

It will not be possible for an in-depth reflective discussion to be had about every child a worker is allocated to each month. The supervisor and supervisee should decide together which children require a more in-depth discussion each month, the other children allocated to the worker should have a briefer discussion to ensure progression of the child's journey. In preparation for supervision, the worker should RAG rate the children allocated to them and ensure that those they are most concerned about receive an in-depth discussion.

5.2. Recording of Child Specific Supervision

The child specific supervision record is evidence that there has been supervisory oversight and endorsement of the practice, quality, decisions, and service. This is important for audits, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, management performance information, workload management, appraisals and service user access to records.

Child Specific supervision should be outcome focussed and include reflection, analysis and goal setting. Within Child Specific supervision the views of the child and/or observation of the child should be discussed and the supervisor should facilitate reflection with the supervisee. The supervisor should ensure that with the supervisee they consider the child's known history, current circumstances, the effectiveness of the plan for them and review previously set actions.

When analysing the information, the supervisor should support the supervisee to think about future planning and further actions that need to be undertaken to achieve the desired outcomes. This information should be built into the Practice Goals section of the Child Specific supervision form on the child's electronic record.

Supervision records should not be a description of the child's situation – rather, it needs to provide a succinct analysis of the key issues, the purpose of their plan and to support the practitioner with directions for purposeful practice. Where appropriate, good supervision records should also refer to the evidence base for working with the family, drawing on relevant theory and research as outlined in Devon's Restorative Practice Framework.

Child specific supervision must be recorded on the child's record using the "Child: Supervision Consultation" form. The expected standard is that the supervision is recorded on Eclipse at the time of the supervision meeting. If this is impossible the supervisor should record on child's file within 72 hours (three working days). At each subsequent supervision meeting the supervisor must track the previous actions agreed.

5.3. Supervision Training & Tools

All Children's Services practitioners must complete the Restorative Practice E-learning, Restorative Practice training and Motivational Interviewing training as core practice skills. Supervisors should also complete the range of corporate leadership training available. In addition to this, every supervisor across the service will have the opportunity to receive reflective supervision training and participate in supervision action learning sets.

There are a [number of tools](#) available to support supervisors to deliver restorative supervision. These include:

- Research in Practice: Reflective Supervision Resource Pack.
- 10 Questions to Explore the Kolb Reflective Learning Cycle
- The Discrepancy Matrix
- De Bono's Decision Making Hats
- Maclean's Head, Hearts, Hands and Feet
- Mastering Social Work Supervision, Jane Wonnacott, 2012

5.4. Confidentiality and Retention

All supervision and management oversight recordings are the child's record, and care should be taken to ensure that written records are clear and written with the knowledge that Children and their Families may wish to access records including subject children in adulthood. Jargon and abbreviations/acronyms should be avoided.

The Caldecott and General Data Protection Regulation principles must be adhered to in order to uphold the legal requirements regarding confidentiality of the service user, carer and other third parties.

6. Management oversight

Ad hoc child specific supervisions should be recorded on the child's record in a timely manner as a "Manager's Case note" but should NOT replace a planned and structured supervision session.

In addition to formal supervision sessions, there should be regular management oversight on the child's record. At key points a Manager's Oversight/ Review/ Decision form must be added to the child's record. These include:

- 1) Significant Incident
- 2) Change of Care Plan
- 3) A child coming into the care of the Local Authority
- 4) Direction from Court
- 5) Escalation from a professional eg. IRO / CP Chair
- 6) A child returning home after a period of care by the Local Authority
- 7) A case discussion taking place outside of supervision
- 8) A change in threshold within a child's journey
- 9) Reassessment of Cumulative Harm and identification of new risk factors
- 10) Use of Professional Opinion
- 11) Decision to close/ transfer/ or step across to Early Help

7. Group Supervision

Group Supervision is a forum that enables reflective thinking, collective problem solving, peer group learning and giving and receiving strong feedback within a supportive setting. When a group supervision process is undertaken the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisees should be the same with the added principles:

- Every team and service are expected to facilitate at least one Group Supervision a month
- The group should clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality
- The records should reflect that this was a group supervision

Group Supervision cannot replace 1:1 child specific supervision. If the group supervision is about a child, a record must be added to the child's electronic record.

There are [guidance and resources](#) available to support the facilitation of group supervision available.

Group Supervision should be recorded on the "Restorative Circle/Group Supervision/Consultation Form" in Eclipse if this activity relates specifically to a child or group of children. If it does not relate to a specific child or group of children then the facilitator should keep a record of the discussion and the Service Manager for that service should keep a record of all Group Supervisions that have taken place that do not relate to a specific child.

8. Appraisal

Managers and staff in Children's Services are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care. Devon County Council Performance and Development Appraisals give individuals and their manager an opportunity to review performance against what we do (our objectives) and how we do it (our behaviours).

Every staff member will have an annual appraisal completed with their line manager and the appraisal process has been developed using our core principles and behaviour, alongside our Restorative Practice approach.

The most important element of the appraisal is the conversation. It is not the completion of a form or the entering of information into a system that adds value to you as an individual, it is the chance to reflect and learn about yourself, your skills and recognise your achievements.

The approach will create a space to discuss:

- looking back – reflecting and learning about what you have been doing
- looking forward – creating clarity and focus for you moving forward

The [appraisal framework, documents and guides](#) will support staff in completing and recording annual appraisals.

All appraisal conversations will need to be recorded in iTrent and further information about how to do this can be found here: [Appraisals and one-to-ones \(iTrent HR Self-Service\) - tasks and guides \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)