**Dudley Supervision Policy**

**August 2023**

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**Supervision Policy**

[](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Children_holding_hands_together.png)**Dudley Children’s Services**

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# Scope

The purpose of this framework policy is to set out how supervision will be delivered for all staff at Dudley Children’s Services. The policy explains the requirements and processes for supervision, whether you are a supervisor or a supervisee. Although this framework is for all staff in Children and Families Services, there are some specific sections which may relate to specific role and staff, where this is the case, this will be clarified.

# Context

In Dudley we believe that good quality supervision should contribute to the delivery of high-quality services for children and families by:

* Ensuring that children and families receive the best support according to Children’s Services’ responsibilities and professional standards.
* Ensuring workers have the knowledge and skills they need, a clearly defined role and professional support.
* Ensuring a duty of care toward workers to support their well-being and job satisfaction.

Dudley’s supervision framework is premised on a relational perspective. Supervision is key to developing a culture of reflective and supportive practice. This forms a core element of our [Practice Framework](https://www.dudleycpp.org.uk/_files/ugd/19265b_2b471456ea53467aa959f29d4af66d86.pdf) as we recognise that supporting practitioners to critically analyse their practice and confidently exercise professional judgement is fundamental to achieving the best outcomes for children and their families.

Supervision should be focused on the supervisee’s practice and their development, including their welfare. This should be outcome focused and must offer both ‘challenge’ and ‘support’. Supervision that is done ‘to’ or does ‘for’ the supervisee(s), will not be effective in achieving sustainable positive outcomes.

This policy has been developed withing the context of the following standards and guidance.

* **Du**[**dley Children’s Services Practice Framework**](https://www.dudleycpp.org.uk/_files/ugd/19265b_2b471456ea53467aa959f29d4af66d86.pdf)
* **Requirements for Family Safeguarding Supervision**
* [**Standard**](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/standards-employers-social-workers-england-4) **5** of **The Standards for Employers of Social** [**Workers**](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/standards-employers-social-workers-england-2020) **in England 2020**
* [**Care Home Regulations 2015**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/463220/Guide_to_Children_s_Home_Standards_inc_quality_standards_Version__1.17_FINAL.pdf)
* [**Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf)
* [**Adoption: national minimum standards July 2014**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf)
* [**The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for child and family services**](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Regulated-professions/Social-work/ASYE/ASYE.aspx)
* [**Dudley’s ‘My Annual Review’**](https://connect.dudley.gov.uk/support/Pages/Human-Resources/My-Annual-Review.aspx)

# Functions, Purpose and Definitions of Supervision

In Dudley we recognise that supervision has different functions and purposes identified as;

# Supervision Definitions

Supervision is a regular and planned activity that takes place on a one-to-one basis. Supervision takes place in the context of a supervisory relationship that is built and based on trust and the creation of a safe space in which uncertainty, ambiguity, mistakes, assumptions, confusion, challenge, wellbeing, success and achievement can all be explored. This is not restricted to formal supervision processes and will often take place on an unplanned basis in response to individual needs.

Supervision also takes place in groups within teams and services and can be planned or unplanned.

For the purposes of this framework policy, Dudley Children’s Services provides the following definitions relating to supervision:

Formal Supervision

A monthly one-to-one meeting between a supervisee and supervisor addressing ‘development’ supervision, and some or all ‘practice’ supervision.

Development supervision focuses on supervisee wellbeing, performance and learning including training, professional development and learning from quality assurance activity. Development supervision should be recorded on PIMS, and future supervision dates planned at the end of each session. Guidance regarding development supervision and going beyond asking “how are you?” can be found in [Appendix 1](#Appendix1).

Practice supervision for qualified and non-qualified staff working directly with children and families aims to answer three broad questions to support an understanding of the child’s journey, the impact on them and others and solution focused outcome driven planning.

* What has happened?
* Who has been affected?
* What needs to happen next?

In teams practicing within the Family Safeguarding model, practice supervision will be held jointly with all the child and adult practitioners working with each family. In other teams, formal practice supervision may be included in individuals monthly one-to-one meeting. Practice supervision is recorded on a child’s LCS or EHM file, either as ‘Case Supervision’ in case recording, or within the workbook when the Family Safeguarding model is being used.

Group Supervision

Group supervision provides a valuable space to bring colleagues together to learn from each other, and support each other’s practice. Using a Solution Circle model for group supervision practitioners are enabled to adopt an appreciative inquiry approach, based on a strengths-based, solution-focused methodology to develop reflective and analytical thinking. Success Circles follow a similar format but facilitate reflection and learning from a piece of work that has gone well.

Group supervision records need to be recorded on a child, young person’s or carer’s file using the ‘Solution Circle’ form in LCS and EHM (the same form can be uses for success circles). Where group supervision related to more generic practice issues take place this should be recorded as part of development supervision.

Group supervision is not a replacement for development supervision.

Guidance and the process for undertaking solution and success circles is detailed in [Appendix 2](#Appendix2)

# Co-working

Where there are co-working arrangements for a child or young person, the responsibilities and actions for each worker should be clarified and recorded. In family/adolescent safeguarding teams this will be recorded in the workbook with each worker having a section for their case summaries.

Confirmation of co-working arrangements should be included in the personal supervision records for each worker. Supervision of co-working arrangements should be practice focused with each worker receiving development supervision with their supervisor.

The manager responsible for decision making in relation to the child or young person should provide practice supervision where there is co-working arrangement.

# Frequency of Supervision

Formal personal supervision for all social work practitioners takes place once per calendar month unless there is an agreed need to provide this more frequently. This will always include management and development supervision and may include practice supervision, eg for practitioners not working in the family safeguarding model.

For newly qualified Social Workers undertaking their ASYE formal development practice supervision will be undertaken weekly for the first six weeks of their employment then every two weeks for the first six months, and monthly thereafter if agreed. In family safeguarding/adolescent safeguarding teams this will be made up of a combination of family safeguarding supervision with the adult workers and additional personal supervision which will include reflection and guidance on work with families to support the social worker to carry out the plan agreed in supervision with the adult workers. It is important for the supervisor to ensure that any practice-oriented discussions that modify the plan are undertaken with the whole family safeguarding practitioner group, not in personal supervision.

Formal supervision for social work qualified staff who have had a major change of role or are returning to social work will be undertaken every two weeks for an agreed period, and monthly thereafter.

Formal supervision for students will be held weekly alternating between supervision with their on-site supervisor and practice educator. It is the responsibility of the Practice Educator to ensure that supervision arrangements for students are safe and appropriate. It is the responsibility of the line manager of the Practice Educator to monitor the supervisee’s supervision of a student in practice, and to audit student supervision files.

Supervision for non-social work staff takes place once per calendar month unless there is an agreed need to provide this more frequently.

# Supervision with Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs

It is acknowledged that for Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs it is not practical for every case to have a detailed discussion during supervision about every child they are allocated to.

This policy has been developed in the context of [IRO Practice Standards](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/17447/practice-standards-children-in-care-final-november-2022.docx) and [Child Protection Conference Chair Standards](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/17448/cp-practice-standards-updated-august-2022-final.docx) To that end, as a minimum supervision should cover;

* All children newly allocated.
* Children with complex needs and circumstances.
* Children placed within unregulated placements
* Situations where there are concerns that a Child Protection Plan is insufficient to protect the child or leaves the child in an unsafe situation e.g. a plan to retain the child at home, or return a child home maybe unsafe;
* Where a child has been made subject of a repeat Child Protection Plan or their Child Protection Plan has been in place for more than two years.
* Situations where there is a dispute about the plan for a child including its implementation or drift.
* Where there is a plan for a child to return to their parents care or to the care of someone in their network.
* Children who do not have a permanency plan by the second review;
* Where a young person is in secure, or otherwise having lost their liberty; Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) – this includes mental health wards etc.

# Residential, fostering and adoption services

Colleagues working in residential services must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the [Children’s Homes Regulations 2015](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/463220/Guide_to_Children_s_Home_Standards_inc_quality_standards_Version__1.17_FINAL.pdf).

Colleagues working in fostering must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the [Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf) as detailed in *Standard 21 - Supervision and support of foster carers*. These standards also specify the requirements for supervision of foster carers.

Colleagues working in adoption must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the [Adoption: National Minimum Standards 2013](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf).

# Business Support

Business support managers will be provided with monthly supervision. Other business support staff will be provided with supervision at a frequency not exceeding eight weekly.

Refer to table in [Appendix](#Appendix4) 3 for a breakdown of the frequency for supervision.

# Planning and Preparation for Supervision

Supervision dates should be agreed between Supervisor and Supervisee at least three months in advance with the next date for supervision being confirmed in the current supervision.

Arrangement for family safeguarding supervision will be supported by business support. The Team Manager should identify in good time which families will be discussed in the supervision meeting so that the relevant adult workers are available to participate. Planned formal supervision should be a priority and wherever possible (with the exception of annual leave, sickness or court), should not be cancelled unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Both the supervisor and each supervisee should plan and prepare for the supervision meeting. They should attend the supervision meeting with a written agenda of specific issues they need prioritised.

The supervisor and supervisee should also consider:

* What needs to happen prior to supervision to make it effective?
* What does each person need to do to turn up to supervision?

# Preparation for Practice supervision:

* The supervisor and supervisee/s should agree which families are to be discussed so that all parties can prepare, including preparing case summaries.
* Supervisee/s should be prepared to discuss how they have used motivational interviewing, theories and frameworks in practice and what impact they have made.

Preparation for personal supervision**:**

* Supervisors should review performance data including child specific data related to but not restricted to the key performance indicators specific to the supervisee’s role.
* Supervisors should review any audits completed in respect of children the supervisee is allocated to for discussion about their practice and personal learning.
* Supervisees should be prepared to discuss any feedback they have received.

# Supervision Agreements

The embedded supervision agreement should be completed and signed with all staff, within four weeks of starting a supervisory relationship. The completed supervision agreement should be uploaded on to PIMs.

Guidance regarding entering development supervision can be found in the embedded document below.



The Supervision Agreement should be updated according to the changing needs of the supervisee. An example of this may be where the frequency of the supervision has been initially set, and this subsequently changes as the member of staff develops professional competence, confidence, and authority in their role.

As a minimum, the Supervision Agreement should be reviewed together annually.



# Recording Development Supervision and PIMs

Welfare supervision should be recorded on the appropriate template.

* Practitioner Development Supervision template, see [Appendix 4](#_Appendix_4_–)
* Managers Development Supervision template, see [Appendix 4](#_Appendix_4_–)

The recording of formal supervision sessions is the responsibility of the supervisor. Development supervision should be recorded on the Development Supervision Record Template, signed and dated by both parties and held on the supervisee’s Supervision Folder on PIMS.

Guidance regarding entering Development supervision can be found in the embedded document below.



Records of supervision are owned by Dudley Children’s Services and may be subject to internal or external inspection and audit.

# Recording Practice Supervision

Children should be discussed in supervision at a minimum of every eight weeks with a supervision record being completed on their file within two working days. Children in agreed long term placements, children with disabilities where Direct Payments and Short Breaks are in place, should be discussed 12 weekly.

The way in which the questions are asked and the context of the restorative, relational context of supervisory relationship is key. Practice-focused supervision that provides high support for practice will have the following characteristics:

• Respectful curiosity-genuine desire to understand;

• Child and family focus-consideration of what life is like for children and families;

• Explicit clarity about need and risk.

Practice-focused supervision is completed on LCS/EHM using either the ‘Case Supervision’ form or the Supervision section in a Family Safeguarding Workbook. Information should not be copied forward and used verbatim as the record should be concise timely and relevant to the child’s current circumstances. Discussions should guide thinking, reflective discussion, critical analysis and outcome focused SMART planning by asking three broad questions.

*Story Telling - What Has Happened?*

*What has happened since last supervision? If this is the first supervision about the child/young person briefly outline the presenting issue.*

The supervisor and supervisee should discuss and record the child’s story, experiences and journey. This should focus on the presenting issue for the child if this is the first supervision and provide updates in subsequent supervisions. For children with a Family Safeguarding Workbook, updates will be in the form of a completed summary which the supervisor will look in preparation for supervision.

***Impact -*** *Who has been affected by this?*

*What is the impact the child/young Person, how have they been affected, what does this mean for them?  
   
What does the child/young person say? What is their experience?  
   
Who else has been affected? How have they been affected? What does this mean for them?*

The supervisor and supervisee should discuss, reflect on, analyse and record what has been the impact on the child and others of the information recorded when answering the first ‘Story Telling’ question.

The impact on the child should give consideration to the child’s voice, perspective and experiences this should also include an analysis of their needs and whether the risks to them are reducing or increasing.

Consideration should also be given to other perspectives, experiences and views particularly those of the people in the child’s identified network.

***Solution Focus -*** *What Needs to Happen?*

*What needs to change to improve the outcomes for the child/young person? Why is this needed? Where are the parents/carers on the cycle of change?*   
  
*Who will do this? How will this be achieved?*  
*When will this be achieved?*  
  
*How will we know this has made a difference?*

The supervisor and supervisee/s should agree next steps updates and changes to the child’s plan. The discussion should include exploration of how to complete the next steps and how best to achieve them. It will be important that the supervisee understands why the actions are important and how they might be completed in the family’s best interests.

Actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely and give consideration to (but not restricted to);

* Which module of the family programme will be tackled next?
* What does the family need to do next? What is the worker going to do next?
* Why is the family and worker going to do ‘those things’?
* How is the family and worker going to do ‘those things’? What is needed?
* How will the worker share updates with the family?
* Being clear about the impact of this supervision on the child and their family? Asking and thinking about how will the child and family know supervision has taken place?

Where a child’s file has been subject to quality assurance activity a discussion regarding actions arising from audit should be recorded on the supervision record form.

This should include the date of the audit any actions arising from the audit should be captured in the responses to the *Story Telling – Impact – Solution Focus* questions.

Key dates and analysis are then included in the final section.

# Learning and Professional Development

A key component of development supervision is a reflective discussion about learning, training and developmental opportunities. The discussion in supervision should consider the completion and impact of core training activities a record of which can be found in the [Core Training Tracker](file:///\\dudley.gov.uk\filestore\Childrens%20Services\Shared\CPP%20Core%20Training) which can be filtered by service, team and worker.

Consideration should also be given to practitioner’s development including ensuring that plans for the completion of appropriate Continuing Professional Activities for professional registration are discussed and put in place.

Any feedback and learning from quality assurance, observation and audit should also be discussed and recorded as part of development supervision.

# My Annual Review

My Annual Review is a dedicated annual conversation with their employees about their performance and development. Details of [My Annual Review](https://connect.dudley.gov.uk/support/Pages/Human-Resources/My-Annual-Review.aspx) can be found by clicking on the link.

Supervision supplements and informs My Annual Review by;

1. Setting and reviewing objectives - The primary purpose for setting objectives is to ensure that the activity of the employee links to service wide objectives. Therefore, there needs to be a clear agreement and understanding between supervisor and supervisee about these objectives and how they will reviewed.
2. Feedback to Manager and/or Supervisor – My Annual Review provides the opportunity to discuss possible ideas for service improvement and to contribute to the continuous improvement agenda.
3. Training and Development - As part of the My Annual Review process the manager and/or supervisor and employee should agree on a development plan together which sets out how training and development needs will be addressed and reviewed during supervision.
4. My Annual Review should be an opportunity to explore employees aspirations and whether there is scope to broaden their experiences. This is a critical part of succession planning and should be reviewed as part of supervision to ensure that the service has the skills to meet the future demands of the organisation.

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# Quality Assurance of Supervision

Planned quality assurance of practice supervision takes place annually as defined in [Dudley’s Quality Assurance Framework](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/14681/qaf-may-2022.pdf) and in the Learning, Development and Assurance calendar available to managers.

This includes an annual observation of Managers facilitating supervision by their own Line Manager and quality assurance of completed supervision documents

If the supervision record of a member of staff is to be audited, they will be informed of this by the auditor and/or their supervisor prior to the audit taking place. All supervision records are available to inspectors who may wish to review them as part of the inspection process.

# Equalities Diversity and Inclusion in Supervision

Addressing equalities and diversity should be an integral part of the supervisory relation 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 children, their families, our partners and stakeholders;
* Supervisors have a responsibility to monitor the work of their supervisee to ensure all practice is compatible with Dudley’s Equality and Diversity Policy.
* Supervision must promote anti-discriminatory practice in line with the Equality Act 2010.

# Confidentiality

Confidential information is:

* Personal information of a private or sensitive nature;
* Information that is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source; and
* Information that has been shared in circumstances where the person giving the information could reasonably expect that it would not be shared with others.

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.

Managers should ensure that practitioners are aware of their responsibilities regarding confidential information and that they are sharing information effectively, ethnically and securely in compliance with Dudley’s Council Procedures.

# Managing Performance

The performance of staff can be affected by a range of factors, some of which are temporary in nature. If performance of a staff member is a concern then there should be an open acknowledgment of this at the earliest opportunity and an action plan developed and recorded in supervision. This should happen in the context of Dudley’s restorative culture with an open high challenge, high support conversation to explore and agree solutions to remedy the situation.

If there are concerns which cannot be addressed in supervision, then these should be addressed using the formal HR performance management and capability procedures.

# Resolving Difficulties

Supervisees are responsible for ensuring that they are receiving good quality supervision that also considers their development needs and how these will be met.

In the event that a supervisee is not receiving supervision to the standard required they should:

* In the first instance the supervisee and supervisor should have a conversation to explore the perspectives, difficulties and solutions.
* The supervisor and supervisee should review the supervision agreement.
* If difficulties still arise a restorative conversation should take place between the supervisee, their supervisor and the supervisor’s manager. Individual perspectives and difficulties should be discussed, and outcomes agreed. It is the responsibility of the supervisor’s line manager to ensure that these difficulties are satisfactorily resolved.

# Appendix 1 – Development Supervision Beyond Asking “How are you?

Beyond asking “how are you?”

Supervisors are encouraged to look beyond asking ‘how are you?’ in development supervision. Responses to asking “how are you” can be answered with a simple ‘I am fine’ or with a statement about difficulties and challenges being experienced.

Whilst there is some benefit in these conversations it does not necessarily build understanding or support the worker to access the support they may need.

In development supervision, questions related to welfare need to be more specific and individually tailored to the workers so that meaningful conversations high support, high challenge conversations can take place. For example.

“Tell me about how you are looking after yourself at this time?”

“I notice that you have not completed your last four assessments on time – can we try and understand why this has happened?”

“There is a lot going on for you right now- let’s think about what you need and how we can support you.”

Or for more specific examples of the impact of our work with families: ‘The X family you are working with have lots of challenges at the moment, some of these issues have been really difficult for you in previous situations – how do you feel your relationship is with them at the moment?’

# Appendix 2 – Group Supervision Solution Circles and Success Circles



# Appendix 3 - Frequency of Supervision

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| Which Staff? | Who Supervises and Frequency |
| Early Help staff | Monthly by the relevant line manager – however this may be more frequent in individual services |
| Foster Carers | At least monthly by qualified Social Worker. Consideration should also be given as to how the frequency of supervision is affected by the needs of the children placed with the foster carer.  The frequency of meetings for short break foster carers should be proportionate to the amount of care provided. |
| Business Support | Business Managers Monthly, Business support staff at intervals of no more than 8 weeks |
| Residential Staff including Registered Managers | Residential staff – monthly by Team Manager.  Registered manager – monthly by Service Manager. |
| Newly qualified social workers in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) | Weekly for the first 6 weeks; fortnightly up to the 6 month review and at least monthly thereafter by Team Manager |
| Social Workers and other family/ young person facing practitioners returning to work or who have had a major change of role | Every two weeks for an agreed period, then monthly by Team Manager. |
| Social Workers with more than 12 months experience and other practitioners in family/young person facing roles | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Supervising Fostering Social Workers | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Advanced Practitioners | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Independent Reviewing Officers or Child Protection Chairs | Monthly by Service Manager |
| Team Managers | Monthly by Service Manager |
| Service Managers | Monthly by Head of Service |
| Head of Service | Monthly by Service Director |
| Service Director | Monthly by Director of Children’s Services |

# Appendix 4 – Supervision Templates

* Practitioner Supervision template



* Managers Supervision template

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