**Supervision Policy**

**Introduction**

This guidance provides a framework for the supervision of all employees working within Bradford Children and Families Trust. The guidance is supported by supervision tools relevant to the process.

Bradford Children and Families Trust is committed to providing excellent services for children and their families/carers and recognises that regular, reflective, high quality, organised supervision helps create a workforce that:

* + Understands their role and responsibilities.
  + Is accountable for work undertaken.
  + Has the skills, knowledge, behaviour and values to carry these out.
  + Is fully supported in their role by operational and senior management.

**The Purpose of Supervision**

Supervision fulfils four, interdependent functions (Morrison 2005):

* Motivation and Support – those working with the most vulnerable children deal with complex and demanding human problems. It is essential that supervision provides a forum where practitioners can be supported and where their personal welfare, workload and working relationships can be discussed in a safe and secure environment. This may include support with personal issues that may impact on practice.
* Management – the Directorate’s vision, aims and objectives form the basis for supervision discussion ensuring that work is planned, integrated and monitored in line with these key objectives. Supervision is a way of checking that identified duties and obligations are being met. Discussion may also generate ideas about how to improve service provision and practice, with both parties contributing to this. It provides an opportunity to brief staff on changes in service, and senior management on operational issues within teams.
* Performance and Development – supervision should look at performance, help to identify development opportunities, both formal and informal, and give the chance to reflect and discuss the impact these have on practice. This continuous professional development of staff is key to providing excellent services.
* Mediation – the supervisor acts as an intermediary between the supervisee, the organisation and other stakeholders.

To ensure that each supervision session achieves its potential, the supervisors should adopt a holistic approach – one which recognises the integral relationship between the function of supervision, the stakeholders (those with an interest in, or affected by, the process), and the cyclical nature of a good, reflective supervision style.

This is known as the 4x4x4 model (Morrison, T, 2005). Each aspect has four elements:

* Four functions – management, performance and development, support and mediation (as outlined above)
* Four stakeholders – service users, supervisee, organisation (supervisor) and partners
* Four stages of the supervision process – Experience (‘the story’), Reflection (feelings about the story), Analysis (what does the story mean?) and Plans and action (What’s next in the story?)

Supervision is complimentary to the Annual Appraisal which has its own recording and review process. It is anticipated that ongoing progress and development against the Appraisal will be part of supervision. The Learning and Development Plan from the Appraisal should be regularly discussed and updated in supervision in preparation for the mid-year and full year Appraisal Review.

**The Importance of Supervision**

All members of the Children and Families workforce have a right to receive supervision irrespective of their position or experience. This applies to those staff in permanent or locum posts, and full or part-time employment.

Supervision is an integral part of the management role and should be viewed by both supervisor and supervisee as a priority.

Supervision should be held in a quiet space away from distractions and interruptions. Mobile phones should be turned off unless a prior agreement is mutually reached for a specific reason.

On the rare occasions when it is necessary to cancel arranged sessions these should be rearranged, keeping within agreed timescales as far as possible. A record should be made of why sessions have been cancelled. This process is critical to effective individual and team working and the benefits from effective supervision are wide-ranging, as are the consequences of poor or lack of supervision.

Supervision will be provided by a named person and within the bounds of an agreed contract with a framework detailing frequency, duration, venue and content. The Individual Supervision Contract (Appendix 1) details standard responsibilities for both parties but includes space for additions as it should be viewed as a unique document that is subject to change as required, thereby reflecting the specific requirements of that role, the organisational requirements and the individual needs of the supervisee. For Qualified Social Workers the supervision process can assist in identifying opportunities for post qualifying development which link in to post registration training and learning requirements of Scoial Work England.

The supervision contract should be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and updated according to individual needs. The quality of supervision should be reviewed and audited at least once a year. (Typically this will mean each senior supervisor will complete one supervision audit per worker per month). This would include an audit of the supervision file and at least one direct observation of the supervisor supervising. The audit document should be completed by the senior manager on carrying out the audit.

**Frequency**

A structured supervision session should be provided to a minimum of once a month in line with Trust procedures, with increased frequency for ASYE as set out in their contract. There should be an agreed schedule drawn up annually, with 12 x 1.5-hour supervisions booked into the supervisors and supervisees electronic diary.

There are some situations which may require the frequency to be increased. For instance, this may result from the supervisee being new to post performance issues or during stressful periods.

In addition to formal sessions, informal or responsive supervision are likely to be required. This may result from the need for staff to ‘check something out’ or gain direction and/or permission for a course of action (Management oversight). While the same level of preparation will obviously not be necessary, it is important to remember that any decision made should be recorded appropriately on the child’s file. These sessions should not be regarded as a substitute for time-tabled supervision.

If a supervisor is absent from work for more than one month, they should ensure, in conjunction with their line Manager, that arrangements are made for the effective supervision of the staff for whom they are responsible.

Supervision is a two-way process. While every session will be unique, it may be expected that formal supervision will follow the standard agenda (see Appendix 2,4 and 5)). Both supervisor and supervisee should be contributing to the agenda.

**Dealing with areas of disagreement**

It is recognised within a supervision arrangement there can be power differentials between a supervisor and supervisee which could be ascribed to issues of diversity as well as position. If issues arise from these power dynamics, where it is reasonable and appropriate, they should be raised, and efforts made to reach a resolution within the supervision setting. However, in the event that a resolution cannot be reached, an agreed 3rd party with managerial responsibilities will act as an intermediary. In most cases this will be the line manager of the manager undertaking the supervision. The name of the intermediary and the process by which disagreements will be resolved should be recorded in the Individual Supervision Contract.

**Recording**

It is important that all supervision sessions should be recorded accurately, including sufficient detail around the discussion and actions to be taken.

* Where the discussion is in relation to the worker and their performance this should be recorded within the worker’s individual supervision notes.
* Reflective case discussions should be recorded on both the system and within the individual supervision notes as appropriate.

Both parties should sign and date the electronic record of every supervision session. An electronic copy should be held on file, and another provided to the supervisee (within 3 working days). Supervision records should be action-based, with a clear note of responsibility and timescale for completion of any actions agreed.

With regard to informal or responsive supervision and the subsequent decisions which relate to the Trust’s involvement/action with a child and their family; these decisions should be recorded in the carers electronic case record by the relevant manager.

**Supervision File**

To ensure that the frequency and quality of supervision within the organisation is improved and sustained, Bradford has the following in place: -

* + Frequency – Supervision Monthly Return – produces monthly reports which are reported to all levels within the organisation and performance discussed at the Service performance meetings.
  + Quality of Supervision –monthly file audits will consider the quality of supervision provided.

The PSW will facilitate an annual survey (annual health check) of all staff of their experience of being supervised. These will allow:

* + Discussion within the supervisor’s own supervision to discuss quality of supervision performance.
  + Collation across the service with trends and themes identified and disseminated.
  + The identification of trends and themes which can be used to inform future service learning, development commissioning and delivery.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.