

# Surrey Children's Services Supervision Policy

December 2024



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL



## 1. Purpose and Objectives of the Supervision Policy

The goal of this supervision policy is to support staff in delivering high-quality, reflective, and safe practice to children and families by:

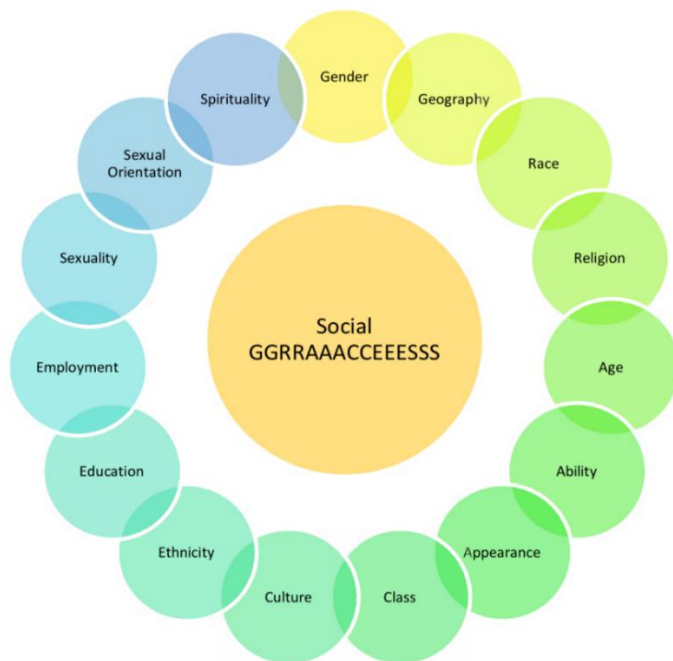
- Promoting children’s wellbeing and safeguarding through professional and accountable practice.
- Ensuring professional development by providing structured, supportive supervision that addresses the individual needs of each role.
- To recognise the impact on the supervisee of what can be stressful work with children and families, to agree ways to manage stress, and to support the supervisee to manage their own wellbeing.
- Aligning with statutory guidance and best practice contained in the Children Act 1989 & 2004, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

**Reflective social work practice** is an inclusive approach that involves practitioners actively examining their own thoughts, feelings, biases, and assumptions to understand how this impacts their interactions with children, young people and their families and decision-making processes. It encourages social workers to critically assess their actions, experiences, and responses within diverse social and cultural contexts, fostering professional curiosity, greater empathy, cultural awareness, and responsiveness. Central to reflective social work is supervision, which serves as a supportive space where practitioners can explore their reflections, guided by a skilled supervisor. This supervision is a collaborative process that involves open dialogue, questioning, and guidance, allowing social workers to identify personal blind spots, challenge biases, and deepen their understanding of complex situations. Reflective supervision encourages accountability and continuous professional growth, helping social workers provide respectful, equitable, and effective support tailored to the unique needs and strengths of each individual. Through this structured reflection, practitioners are better equipped to foster positive and inclusive outcomes, reinforcing the values of inclusivity, fairness, and respect in all aspects of their work.

**Cultural competence** is the capacity to understand, appreciate, and engage effectively with people from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds. This encompasses, but is not limited to, diversity in ethnicity, nationality, language, gender, age, faith, socioeconomic background, physical abilities, sexual orientation, and life experiences. It involves recognising and respecting these differences, being mindful of one’s own cultural perspectives, and adapting behaviour and practices to respond sensitively to the needs of individuals from varied backgrounds. Cultural competence is vital for building inclusive relationships and ensuring fair, respectful interactions across all professional and personal settings.



## The Social GRRRAACCEESS



The social graces are an acronym to represent aspects of difference in beliefs, power and lifestyle, visible and invisible, voiced and unvoiced, to which we might pay attention to in our practice and supervision. Using the Social Grrraaccess model in supervision can help to develop the supervisor/supervisee relationship, breaking down individual characteristics to build understanding and encourage reflection.

Top tips:

- 1 Prioritise supervision. One of the clearest themes from this research was the negative impact of consistently missed, interrupted or rushed supervision sessions.
- 2 Understand individual needs and preferred approaches. Some social workers loved having a pre-prepared agenda to work to while others found it burdensome. However, all commented on the importance of supervision feeling valuable and helpful rather than a 'tick-boxing' exercise or tailored to an organisation's requirements. Many social workers felt deeply frustrated when organisational requirements were prioritised over their needs.
- 3 Focus on positives as well as negatives. This was a strong theme among social workers who regarded their supervision as effective. It applied to both individual and group supervision.
- 4 Include time to check on the health, wellbeing and the professional development of the social worker. Social workers who said their supervision was about more than just the progress of cases were more likely to judge it as effective.
- 5 Provide both ad-hoc and formal supervision. Many social workers felt the availability of immediate, informal chats or sessions with their manager helped overcome the negative impact of any cancelled or postponed sessions.

(Community Care 2021)

## 2. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all social care staff in contact with children, including:

- Social Work Students
- Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)
- Family Support Workers
- Adolescent Practitioners
- Adult Practitioners
- Practitioners working in Early Help
- Personal Assistants (PA's)
- Residential Home staff
- Qualified Social Workers
- Managerial Staff

A tailored supervision approach ensures effective support and accountability across different responsibilities and levels of experience.

Supervision is also embedded in the Quality Assurance Framework and children's audits consider the effectiveness of supervision.

## 3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

### Key Legislation and Standards:

1. [Children Act 1989](#) and [Children Act 2004](#) - Mandates the local authority's responsibility to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
2. [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) - Establishes Social Work England and promotes professional standards within social work.
3. [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#) - Emphasizes inter-agency cooperation and requires that all professionals working with children have regular supervision.
4. [The Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) - Specific guidance on supervision in residential settings, with a focus on the safety and well-being of children.
5. [The Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) - Provides guidance on the supervision and support of foster carers.
6. [Professional standards - Social Work England](#) - Outlines the standards expected of social workers in England, emphasizing supervision as part of continuous professional development.
7. [Practice Standards](#)
8. [Scheme of Delegation](#) – provides the minimum management level at which decisions can be made.

## 4. Policy Principles and Supervision Structure

Supervision can have different forms and functions:

- **Personal supervision** which is focused on the individual, performance, professional development, learning, CPD and consider the impact of work on the supervisee's welfare. Personal supervision should be held every month and recorded 'Staff Supervision Record' – Appendix 3.
- **Individual child/carer supervision** considers the work that is taking place with the child and family. Supervision could be between the supervisor and supervisee, or it could be a group session involving a family support worker, or adult practitioner for example.

### 4.1 Supervision Frequency:

#### Personal supervision

Social work students	Weekly
ASYE	Weekly for the first 3 months, bi-weekly for the next six months and 4 weekly thereafter
Managerial staff	4 – 8 weekly, with a focus on both individual child/allocation oversight and staff management responsibilities
Qualified Social Workers	4 weekly, with flexibility and additional supervision based on workload complexity and personal needs
Residential Home Staff	
Family Support Workers	
Adult Practitioners	
Adolescent Practitioners	
Youth Justice Practitioners	

## Individual Child/Carer Supervision

Early Help (Including Intensive Family Support Service, Youth Justice)	At least every 4 weeks.
Adolescent Service	At least every 4 weeks
Assessment Service	Once the child has been open for 20 working days  Management oversights are required during the Child and Family Assessment process- please see Page 7 and Appendix 1 for full details.
Family Safeguarding	At least every 4 weeks  (Children subject to child in need, child protection, within care proceedings and looked after until permanence decided)
Looked after children	At least every 8 weeks
Child with a disability (CWD)	At least every 3 months, or 6 monthly if assessed as appropriate. If there is a child in need plan, child protection plan or are looked after, revert to timescales above.
Care leavers	At least every 12 weeks
Fostering service	Management oversight / supervision at least every 3 months, except;  Private Fostering Assessments; Assessment of a Kinship Fostering Arrangement; SGO Assessment; Form F of prospective foster carers which would be at least 4 weekly/monthly
Independent Chairs and LADOs	Every 4 weeks
Managers	Every 4-6 weeks

## Management Oversight

### (Appendix 1 outlines timescales by service)

- To be recorded on the child's record within a 'case note'. (*Important to note the use of the word case is not Surrey's preferred language but required when referring to titles in recording system.*)

The following drop-down management oversight options can be chosen.

Management oversight;

- General
  - Case allocation
  - Case discussion
  - C&F Completed
  - Child Seen- intervention needed
  - Following Child Seen
  - Intervention for Family
  - Intervention started
  - S47 Enquiries
  - TAF
  - Transfer to Intervention
  - Child Not Seen
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- At any point of allocation to a social worker or practitioner.
  - At point of significant event or referral being received.
  - Following conversations that take place outside of supervision so there is a clear audit trail of decision making (ad hoc supervision).
  - When information is received to advise a child is Electively Home Educated (EHE) or is considered a vulnerable learner or has low school attendance.
  - Child and Family Assessments;
    - At the point of allocation / decision to complete a C&F
    - At day 10 to discuss the findings from the initial visit and agree next steps.
    - C&F going beyond 20 working days require a management oversight (or supervision if due) with rationale for child's journey and progress of the assessment.
    - Management oversight to be recorded at completion of the assessment at day 35 or to record decision to extend the assessment to 45 working days.
  - When management oversight is required within an LCS form, for example Section 47 Enquiry, the management oversight does not need to be copied and pasted into a case note. If a meeting or panel has made key decisions relating to care planning, on-going intervention, or necessary safeguarding actions and there is not an LCS form or pathway to record the management oversight this must be done in the appropriate management oversight case note. This also includes a process where an Assistant Director has oversight. Please see the management oversight grid in Appendix 1.

## 4.2 Key Areas of Focus in Supervision:

### Personal Supervision

Personal supervision should be held separately to discussions about individual children/families and should cover.

- **Reflective Practice:** Encouraging staff to reflect on their practice, exploring challenges, personal biases, and emotional responses leading to improved analysis based decision-making and professional growth. Reflection of learning/strengths identified from audits should be included in supervision.
- **Professional Development:** Identify training and development needs and encourage skills relevant to the staff's roles, whether frontline support or managerial & leadership. To ensure the worker's and employer's practice accords with the professional standards issued by [Social Work England](#)
- **Managing Performance:** Provide feedback to the supervisee on their practice and performance. Any performance issues identified should be addressed through performance management processes. [Staff performance](#)
- **Well-being and Resilience:** Monitor and support staff well-being, addressing workload, stressors, and available resources to maintain a healthy and effective work environment.
- **Cultural Competence:** Ensure that supervision includes discussions on cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence. Supervisors should guide staff in understanding and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children and families they work with and how the lived experience of all parties can influence relationships. Social GRRACCEESS model should be considered and applied throughout supervision sessions.
- **Practice Observation:** is an opportunity to gain developmental feedback about professional practice. Observation of practice will include the briefing between observer and supervisor, the observation, the debriefing and completion of the report. Any learning or work that is specific to the child's plan should be taken forward in supervision.

### High challenge high support culture:

Staff will be coached and encouraged to challenge themselves and support each other. By working together managers will role model inclusive practice that is with support and challenge.





## Individual Child/Carer Supervision

- To consider progress on individual allocations of children/carers, including assessment, planning, intervention and review and to allow reflection on the effectiveness of the work.
- Capture the child's voice and develop a clear understanding of their lived experience.
- To consider working relationships with other professionals and partners and the effectiveness of joint working
- To improve the quality of services to children and families and outcomes for children preventing drift and delay and promoting good quality relationships with families.
- To ensure the supervisee is clear about what work has been allocated to them, what action is required and how that action will be monitored and reviewed.
- Ensure practice with the child and their family is approached in a way that explores their motivations and works with them to create positive changes together.
- Records clear analysis of the discussion in supervision which links to a SMART action plan.
- Supervision should always give a clear account of what is currently happening for the child, the child's views about their current situation, what work has been undertaken, and what that means for our next steps.
- It should have SMART actions reviewed regularly and removed from the supervision record when completed or no longer relevant. SMART actions can be developed from a variety of sources and should include audit improvements plans where applicable.

**Is updated in every session (minimal copy forward)**

**Responds to need and change**

**Drives forward the child's plan and progresses actions**

**Includes reflection and analysis**

**Looks at the needs of each child in the family**

**The child's voice, wishes and feelings are clearly recorded**

## Group Supervision (Appendix 9-11)

- Group supervision usually involves practitioners from a variety of different professionals who will come together to reflect, apply knowledge and skills, challenge individual perspectives, explore what is needed to support individual children and their families.
- Group supervision will be facilitated by the team manager, or senior worker who has knowledge of the family and what the plan is aiming to achieve.
- The supervision session will be written in the child's records, within the supervision form that is applicable to the service the child is receiving. For example, within Family Safeguarding the 'Workbook – Family Safeguarding Supervision' form will be used.
- Within the Family Safeguarding Model group supervision can either, be separated out into individual families with separate time slots, invites sent to adult practitioners/family support workers/youth practitioners or a combined supervision including all family and group supervision with specific time slots sent to adult practitioners/family support workers/youth practitioners.
- There should be group or joint supervision held where there are siblings allocated to practitioners across teams so that the holistic needs of all children in the family are considered. This could also apply when there is a young parent where there are allocated practitioners to the parent and child.

### 4.3 Expectations

- The supervision agreement underpins the relationship between supervisor and practitioners and needs to be regularly reviewed. A template for the supervision agreement can be found in Appendix 2.
- Both supervisee and supervisor must be prepared for formal supervision session. The areas to be prepared should be discussed and agreed in the supervision agreement. For practitioners using the family workbook, this includes the child's summary being finalised prior to the supervision session.
- Supervision should be organised in advance, and for some services (eg. Family Safeguarding) sessions should be planned 6-12 months in advance.
- If the supervisor is absent from work for a period longer than four weeks alternative formal supervision arrangements should be put in place within the following week. In any urgent situation a staff member should approach a manager for directions or support.
- Any supervisee who is concerned about the quality or quantity of supervision received should discuss this with the supervisor and, if this does not resolve the matter, with the supervisor's line manager.
- Supervision should reflect understanding and commitment to diversity and equalities issues, [and the County Council's Vision, Values and Working Principles](#). To ensure equality of opportunity it is necessary to have an understanding, and to work sensitively and knowledgeably, with diversity to identify the issues for a child and his / her family, taking account of

experiences and family context. Surrey County Council's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) should be followed.

- The frequency of supervision may be increased if the worker is new in post or inexperienced or if the job they undertake requires it. For example, workers in an Assessment Team may require more frequent supervision because of the short timescales involved.
- Managers are responsible for completing the supervision form, whether it is personal, individual child or group. In some circumstances business support will assist in typing minutes. The overall responsibility of quality assuring the record before it is finalised remains with the manager.
- When the Family Safeguarding Model is applied and Workbook used Social Workers, Adult Practitioners/Family Support Workers/Youth Practitioners should complete/finalise their relevant workbook summary 2-4 days prior to supervision. The supervision summary must be closed monthly and a new one started.

#### **4.4 Supervisor Competency Requirements:**

- Minimum of two years of post-qualification experience.
- Regular supervisory training that includes reflective practice, risk assessment, safeguarding procedures, and cultural competence.
- Accountability for the quality of supervision provided and ensuring that any identified issues are escalated appropriately.

#### **4.5 Confidentiality and Recording:**

- Document each supervision session, with records kept confidentially in line with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and GDPR.
- Records should document key discussion points, actions agreed upon, and follow-up plans. Actions from previous supervision sessions should be reviewed.
- The supervisee should have a copy of the personal supervision record for their own use, which they will need to store responsibly. See Appendix 3 for the template.
- Where there is disagreement, the supervisor and supervisee may agree to amend the record. Where agreement cannot be reached, a note should be made on the record of different views and signed by both parties.
- Accessible only to authorised personnel and stored securely within the designated area within SharePoint.
- Regular review by supervisors to ensure ongoing accountability and quality assurance.
- Individual child/carer supervision should be recorded on the child's electronic records known as LCS or EHM/Core+ (if early help/youth justice). The LCS/EHM/Core+ form should be utilised according to service area in line with expectations outlined below;

Family Safeguarding, CWD (if there are safeguarding concerns), Adolescents (statutory work)	Workbook – Family Safeguarding Supervision (LCS)
Assessment, Child Looked After, Adolescents Service (statutory work), CWD (family support), Care Leavers, Private fostering, SGO support	SCS Child's Supervision Record (LCS)
Adolescents Service (early help), IFSS	Early Help Supervision (EHM)
Fostering Service	SFC Foster Carer Supervision Record for foster carers (LCS – recorded on the carers record).  Private Fostering or SGO post order support SCS Child's Supervision (Record on the child's record in LCS)
Youth Justice	'Supervision Form' on Core+, a template that is embedded within a 'contact'. The 'contact type' is Management Supervision

## 5. Specific Requirements by Staff

### 5.1 Social Work Students:

- **Objective:** Provide a supportive learning environment to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Focus on applying core social work skills such as assessment, intervention, and risk analysis.
  - Provide regular feedback on performance and guidance in managing emotions and ethical dilemmas.
  - Conduct formal assessments of progress, guided by the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).
  - Emphasise the importance of cultural competence in all aspects of social work practice.

### 5.2 Newly Qualified Social Workers (ASYE):

- **Objective:** Transition ASYE's from theoretical knowledge to independent practice while providing high levels of support.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Structured induction period with enhanced supervision focusing on practical skill development, risk management, and evidence-based practice.

- Involve child/family discussions, feedback on decision-making, and guidance on professional boundaries.
- Set, review, and sign off ASYE-specific objectives aligned with the PCF to ensure progression toward full qualification.
- Include training and discussions on cultural competence to ensure ASYE's are prepared to work effectively with diverse populations.

### 5.3 Family Support Workers:

- **Objective:** Ensure family support workers are effective in their engagement with families and can safeguard children's welfare.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Focus on family dynamics, child safety, and strategies to promote positive family changes.
  - Review family intervention plans, identify challenges, and reinforce safeguarding practices.
  - Guide family support workers in managing emotional resilience, considering the challenging nature of family work.
  - Address cultural competence to ensure that family support workers can effectively engage with families from diverse backgrounds.

### 5.4 Residential Home Staff:

- **Objective:** Support staff to provide a safe, stable, and therapeutic environment within residential care settings.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Focus on children's behaviour management, safety procedures, and crisis response skills.
  - Ensure adherence to **Children's Homes Regulations**, including understanding the therapeutic approach and safe physical intervention practices.
  - Provide informal supervision and peer support in addition to monthly structured supervision.
  - Emphasise cultural competence to ensure that residential home staff can meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds.

### 5.5 Qualified Social Workers:

- **Objective:** Enable experienced social workers to handle complex situations and make decisions effectively.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Include reflective practice discussions, children's audits, and safeguarding reviews.
  - Encourage professional development, ethical decision-making, and adherence to Social Work England's standards.
  - Identify potential areas for professional growth or additional training.
  - Ensure that cultural competence is integrated into all aspects of practice and supervision. Fostering supervising social workers focus



on the support and development of foster carers, ensuring they have the skills and resources needed to meet the needs of children in their care, within the framework of ***Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011***

### 5.6 PA's / Youth Justice Workers / Youth Workers:

- **Objective:** Help to support practitioners to create a supportive environment where young people can thrive, receive the guidance they need and are safe.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Help practitioners to develop strategies to build trust and rapport with young people to encourage their engagement, promote autonomy and empowerment.
  - Ensure practitioners are aware and responsive to the development needs of young people, including their emotional, social and cognitive development.
  - Focus on safeguarding young people, identifying risks, and implementing appropriate interventions to ensure safety and wellbeing.
  - For youth justice workers, supervision aims to support young people from offending and promoting their rehabilitation.

### 5.9 Managerial Staff:

- **Objective:** Provide managerial staff with oversight tools and support for team supervision and strategic management of children who are allocated to the service.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Review managers' approach to team supervision, workload distribution, and risk management.
  - Support managers in developing leadership skills, promoting team resilience, and fostering a positive work environment.
  - Alert senior managers to risk
  - Review of financial position within the team/service
  - Discuss quality assurance responsibilities, including the importance of audit, feedback mechanisms, and escalation procedures.
  - Ensure that cultural competence is a key component of managerial oversight and team development.

### 5.10 Independent Chairs and LADOs

- **Objective:** Ensuring the safety and well-being of children whilst contributing to effective safeguarding practices.
- **Supervision Standards:**
  - Supports and develop the knowledge, skills, and values of independent chairs and LADO's.
  - Ensures accountability for decisions and actions, maintaining transparency and upholding values and standards.

- Discuss and resolve complex issues, ensuring that decisions are well informed and in the best interests of children.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of work, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are followed correctly and effectively.

## 6. Appendix and Templates

<b>Management Oversight Criteria</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> Sets out all the instances where a manager may record an oversight on a child's file.
<b>Supervision Agreement</b>	<b>Appendix 2</b> To be completed by manager and staff at the start of the supervisory relationship and reviewed when required.
<b>Staff Supervision Record</b>	<b>Appendix 3</b> To be used for personal supervision.
<b>Effective Supervision Audit Form</b>	<b>Appendix 4</b> To be used when reviewing, auditing and assessing the quality and impact of supervision.
<b>Supervision Effectiveness Audit – Views of Supervisee</b>	<b>Appendix 5</b> To be used by staff following an audit of their supervision records.
<b>Supervision Agenda: Managers and Senior Managers</b>	<b>Appendix 6</b> Template be used to support supervision for managers.
<b>Supervision Agenda: IROs and CP Chairs</b>	<b>Appendix 7</b> Template to be used to support supervision for IRO's and CP chairs
<b>Supervision Agenda: LADO's</b>	<b>Appendix 8</b> Template to be used to support supervision for LADO's
<b>Supervision Policy: Group Case Supervision Guidance</b>	<b>Appendix 9</b> Document to guide and support group supervision
<b>Group Case Supervision Agreement Template</b>	<b>Appendix 10</b> Template to be used when holding a group supervision session and making an agreement with all involved.
<b>Group Case Supervision Template</b>	<b>Appendix 11</b> Template to be used for group supervision session.

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