**Staff Supervision and Guidance including Caseload Management**

**May 2023  
Contents**

1. [A Framework for Staff Supervision – Introduction](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#framework)
2. [Partnership in Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#partnership)
3. [Roles and Responsibilities](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#roles)
4. [Standards in Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#standards)
5. [Personal Development](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#development)
6. [Reflective Practice and Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#reflective)
7. [Group Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#group)
8. [Frequency of Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#frequency) & Social Work Case Supervision
9. [Contract](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#contract)
10. [Supervision File](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#sup_file)
11. [Recording](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#recording)
12. [Dispute Resolution](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#dispute)
13. [Quality Assurance](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#quality)
14. [Caseload Management](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#caseload)  
    [Appendix 1: Quality Standards for Staff Supervision](https://newcastlechildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_staff_supervision.html?zoom_highlight=supervision#app_1)

**1.** **A Framework for Staff Supervision – Introduction**

‘Supervision is the cornerstone of all good social work practice’ (Lord Laming. Victoria Climbie Inquiry Report, 2003).

This framework provides an understanding about the requirements and processes of staff supervision.

There are different types of supervision, e.g. informal (ad-hoc) or formal; formal supervision can be individual or group supervision. This framework specifically addresses formal supervision. If there is a need for informal supervision this should NOT replace the formal supervision session, which should still take place. Significant issues discussed at an informal session should be recorded appropriately and be revisited at the formal session.

‘The importance of getting the supervision of staff right in social care, and of positive role modelling by managers, cannot be overstated. The quality of services to vulnerable users and the level of staff morale, skills and motivation are all inextricably bound up with supervision and the degree to which supervisors and managers model the attitudes and behaviours that the organisation wishes its frontline staff to adopt. Put starkly, it is not the existence of supervision per se that makes a difference; what is necessary is good supervision’ (Tony Morrison – Staff Supervision in Social Care 2001).

**2.** **Partnership in Supervision**

The framework for support and supervision is a partnership between you, your line manager and the service. It is your line manager’s responsibility to ensure that an effective framework exists. The purpose of this partnership is for supervision to:

* Ensure the quality of the service being delivered to our service users, is good;
* Ensure that you are working towards meeting the LA objectives;
* Ensure you are clear about your roles and responsibilities;
* Ensure the resources you require to carry out your role to the required standards are identified;
* To ensure staff have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and consider appropriate interventions and to reflect on their own learning and development/present needs and develop plan or opportunities to address those needs;
* To promote a continuous pathway of professional development;
* Recognise good performance and personal achievement.

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| **The Partnership will:** | **And Not:** |
| Be confidential, subject to the safety of service users or staff whistleblowing | Break confidentiality |
| Be a continuous process | Be a one off event |
| Encourage and involve you | Undermine you |
| Be structured and focused | Be small talk and cosy chat |
| Be planned and private | Be rushed or interrupted |
| Be a two way process | Be one sided |
| Be motivating | Feel negative or demoralising |
| Address professional development | Ignore the right and need for development |
| Deal with situations sensitively and clearly | Ignore or fail to support you |

**3.** **Roles and Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the different members of the supervision and development partnership need to be clearly understood by all parties.

The organisation is responsible for:

* Providing a clear policy that defines the aims of the framework of supervision;
* Ensuring that equality and diversity are an integral part of the policy, procedure and practice;
* Providing a flexible framework for support and supervision;
* Placing the responsibility for supervision and staff development within a line manager’s job description and work priorities;
* Developing and providing training and continual development of those who provide supervision;
* Providing the resources and support seen as necessary to achieve the objectives set.

The Manager is responsible for:

* Ensuring confidentiality, subject to service user and staff safety;
* Providing a suitable time and location;
* Ensuring that supervision takes place at least every month;
* Eliminating interruptions;
* Arranging an agreed agenda and framework for the supervision session;
* Maintaining accurate and clear records;
* Developing an appropriate checklist for comprehensive and relevant coverage of issues in supervision;
* Ensuring a supervision contract has been negotiated and agreed;
* Ensuring that plans drawn up during the annual appraisal ‘My Conversation’ are tracked and progressed through supervision;
* Ensuring that supervision includes a ‘personal risk assessment’ in areas of work where this is appropriate, such as residential services;
* Providing effectively the four key elements of supervision;
* Ensuring the Council’s legal, ethical and professional standards are met;
* Ensuring that where a change in line manager occurs a handover process is arranged between all parties concerned;
* Undertaking appropriate training about supervision and the appraisal process which is relevant to their needs and development as managers;
* Ensuring that issues relating to diversity are addressed constructively and positively and provide an opportunity for staff to raise issues about their experience of diversity;
* Achieving a balance between service objectives and the needs of an individual for personal development.

You, the individual, are responsible for:

* Sharing the responsibility in making the partnership work;
* Attending regularly and on time, bringing your agenda and participating actively;
* Accepting the requirement to be supervised/supported in your development and being accountable for your own supervision and development;
* Ensuring a contract has been negotiated and agreed;
* Preparing appropriately for supervision and appraisal ‘My Conversation’;
* Ensuring the recording of supervision and the appraisal is reflective of the particular meeting;
* Meeting the organisation’s legal, ethical and professional standards;
* As required through the Health and Care Professions Council’s (HCPC) Code of Practice for Social Care Workers, bringing to the attention of your manager any issues that may affect your registration status.

**4.** **Standards in Supervision**

There are four key elements that support the supervision process. They give a balanced approach to the process through relying heavily on one another. You cannot perform one element effectively without the others. The four elements are:

* Management;
* Representation;
* Support;
* Development.

Within the management element your manager will address:

* That the work load allocated to you is appropriate, this will depend on a number of factors including: the stage of your professional development, the complexity of individual cases, any expertise you may have, your experience, size of individual sibling groups;
* Overall management of the quality of your work practice including the management of risk and discussion of issues arising from case file audit;
* Overall management of your workload and priorities;
* Provision of resources;
* Provision of a safe environment in which to work;
* Professional discussion of your performance against individual and team objectives;
* The role of supervision in ensuring that Council policies are communicated and made clear by both parties;
* Opportunity to reflect constructively on your performance in general and your practice in specific cases.

Within the representative element your manager will:

* Provide ‘bottom up’ feedback to senior management, the team and any outside agencies;
* Transfer relevant information between you, senior management, the team and any outside agencies.

Within the support element your manager will:

* Support you both as a professional and as an individual person in your own right, including acknowledgement of issues of diversity;
* Support your wellbeing at work.

Within the development element your manager will:

* Identify your individual strengths;
* Identify areas for development in order for you to carry out your job to the required standard and objectives;
* Identify development opportunities;
* Plan how your development needs could be met;
* Ensure that you have induction training;
* Evaluate the development opportunities you have received.

**5.** **Personal Development**

Understanding how you learn and being able to apply this in your practice is fundamental to effective supervision. It is your responsibility to reflect on your experience of learning and establish ways in which the learning can be transferred back into your daily working practice. Your supervisor will be able to help you identify which particular style of learning best suits you and the opportunities available.

Your learning and development needs should be related both to the objectives that you need to achieve and to your future roles within the Directorate. These will be identified and agreed through the My Conversation process. The objectives that you set with your supervisor and review every 6 months should include developmental objectives that will enable you to perform your current tasks effectively, training which supports this and these lead to personal and professional growth.

Personal development plans should be continuous and link to career pathways and core training where these are clear and identified for particular jobs.

**6.** **Reflective Practice and Supervision**

There is a critical link between reflective supervision and good outcomes for service users. There should be a parallel process between supervisor and supervisee and between practitioner and service user.

‘At the heart of reflective practice is the idea that our actions should be informed by a knowledge base that we engage with actively, as opposed to forms of practice that are based on unthinking habits or routines or knee jerk reactions to situations. A reflective practitioner is someone who acts on the basis of understanding and a careful consideration of the situation being dealt with. That understanding is, in turn, based on knowledge and values. The knowledge is based on a mixture of formal study and professional development and the practical lessons learned from previous experience, while the values act as a safeguard to make sure that we are acting appropriately and ethically’ (Developing Critically Reflective Practice – Neil and Sue Thompson 2009).

**7.** **Group Supervision**

Group supervision can take place in teams, professional meetings (regarding particular cases) or in site meetings.

In some cases it may be agreed with your Team Manager to consider a case as a Team activity using Signs of Safety analysis. There are many benefits to be gained from group supervision, including problem solving, peer group learning and giving and receiving strong feedback within a supportive setting. Where a group supervision process is used the following principles apply:

* The group should clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality;
* The supervision/review record should be completed as a group supervision and review record;
* The group should agree the agenda items;
* The group should give permission for feelings, doubts and opinions to be expressed;
* The group should agree how feedback will be given;
* The principles of supervision, as outlined in this framework, should still apply;
* Group supervision should not replace individual supervision and support completely;
* Group supervision would usually relate to specific issues and would be time limited.

Group supervision should be additional to and not replace individual Supervision.

**8.** **Frequency of Supervision & Case Supervision**

The frequency of supervision will be dependent on the role you play within the organisation, your skills, experiences, team requirements and Government guidelines. The required standard is for all staff to have supervision on at least a monthly basis. This will be more frequent if you are in your Assisted Year of Employment (ASYE). See ASYE in Learning Management System (LMS).

Your supervisor and you should agree on the frequency of supervision taking into account your experience and the complexity of work however this should no less than once a month.

Colleagues working in residential services must receive supervision to meet the requirements of the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the Quality Standards.

**Summary of frequency of Supervision of Staff**:

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| **Staff Member** | **Supervisor** |
| Non Social work qualified staff (not including YJS) /  None case holders | 6 weekly by Team Manager/Senior Practitioner |
| Non-social work qualified Youth Justice Officers (within Youth Justice Service) | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Leaving Care Support Officers | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Newly qualified social workers | As set out in the Learning Agreement. Once a week for 6 weeks, followed by once a fortnight for 6 months to reduce to once a month if agreed at 6 month review. |
| Social Workers returning to work or who have had a major change of role | Every 2 weeks for an agreed period, then monthly by Team Manager |
| Social Workers with more than 12 months experience | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Senior Practitioners | Monthly by Team Manager |
| Team Managers | Monthly by Service Manager |
| Service Managers | Monthly by Assistant Director of CSC |
| Residential Unit Managers | Monthly by Corporate Parenting Manager |
| Residential Staff | Monthly by Residential Manager |
| Assistant Directors | Director Children, Education & Skills |
| SCO | Monthly by TM or Senior Practitioner |

**Social Work Case Supervision Frequency Outline:**

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| **Case Status** | **Frequency** |
| Child Protection (including those children subject to a s47) | At each supervision (practitioner status dependent i.e., monthly for 12+ months experience, more frequently for ASYEs and those returning to work or subject to a major job role change) |
| Child in Need (including those children subject to a Child & Family Assessment) | At least once every 3 months (1 in every 3 supervisions) or more frequently dependent on the child’s circumstances |
| Child in Need (by virtue of Support & Commissioning) | At least once every 3 months (1 in every 3 supervisions) |
| Child in Care – prior to 28 Day CiC Review, subject to s.20/PPO, care proceedings, subject to a rehabilitation plan or those children who have been placed with their carers **for less** than 6 months | At each supervision (staff member status dependent) |
| Child in Care – in placement for over 6 months, long term matched with no presenting concerns or risks | At least once every 3 months (1 in every 3 supervisions) or more frequently dependent on the child’s circumstances |
| Care Leavers – over 18 | At least once every 3 months (1 in every 3 supervisions) -OR more frequently if the presenting issues and concerns warranted more regular supervision to be agreed and actioned by the Leaving Care Support Officer and Team Manager |
| **YJS**  For children and young people assessed as HIGH Risk of reoffending | Within each supervision |
| For children and young people assessed as MEDIUM Risk or below | At least once every 3 months (1 in every 3 supervisions) -OR more frequently if the presenting issues/ circumstances and risks warrant more regular supervision to be agreed and actioned by the Youth Justice Worker and relevant Team Manager. |

It is good practice to have a series of meetings planned in advance and ensure that the date of the next meeting is confirmed at the end of a supervision meeting.

**9.** **Contract**

The contract between yourself and your manager should clearly outline the responsibilities and expectations of both parties. This should be discussed, agreed and signed off at an early point in the supervisory arrangement. The contract should form part of the supervision records.

The contract should be reviewed annually.

**10.** **Supervision File**

Supervision sessions should be recorded and approved by Team Manager.

A copy will be kept in the supervision folder and excerpts on individual CYP in their case files.

Individual staff supervision files to include:

* A copy of the recording of each supervision session;
* Registration date with the Health and Care Professions Council;
* Disclosure Barring Service check being up to date;
* Car insurance appropriate and up to date for role;
* My Conversation record;
* Risk assessment re risk to staff pregnancy;
* OT assessment/advice/work station assessment.

**11.** **Recording**

Recording should follow the principles that:

* The contract is the initial record of agreement between both parties;
* There must be a record of the discussion completed for each child at a supervision session and placed within the child’s case records within 5 working days. Where non case holders (e.g. senior managers) discuss individual cases and make decisions this should be recorded on the child’s file;
* All records should give sufficient detail of the discussion to reflect the content of the meeting, identify actions as agreed and record any disagreements and concerns raised;
* The record from supervision sets out the purpose of allocation and the practitioner’s intervention including the purpose of home visits. Also guidance about contingency plans and the course of action if there is no access to visits attempted (Practice Standards manual – Section 1 re Scrutiny);
* Ensure that case management decisions through supervision are also recorded on service user records and clearly evident on the Framework system as part of management oversight;
* Record any potential risk to the practitioner and actions to address this;
* All records are confidential for both parties and should be stored securely;
* It is good practice to remember that the person being discussed may see the supervision record in the case recordings at some point in the future;
* The records are shared with you and you should keep these confidentially;
* Records of supervision should be signed off and dated by supervisor and supervisee;
* All records of supervision and appraisal are owned by Children’s Social Care and will be subject to inspection and audit;
* Records should be typed;
* The standard format as supplied in the appendices should be used as a framework for recording purposes.

**12.** **Dispute Resolution**

It is important that you take action to ensure you are receiving quality supervision and having your development needs identified and met.

If it becomes apparent at any point during the year that you are not receiving supervision to the standard required, you should:

* In the first instance arrange a one to one meeting with your line manager to discuss and resolve, where possible, the difficulties you feel have arisen.

If difficulties still arise or you are unable to find solutions in the first instance you should:

* Request that a meeting between your service manager. The difficulties should be discussed, and outcomes agreed. It is the responsibility of your service to ensure that these difficulties are satisfactorily resolved.

**13.** **Quality Assurance**

There are a number of ways in which the quality of supervision and appraisal is monitored, including:

* Your service manager will be required to inspect a sample of supervision files periodically and this may include checking your file to ensure that supervision is taking place to standard required;
* CSC Senior Management Team will monitor compliance with this policy;

**14.** **Caseload Management**

Within the management element of Supervision your manager will address that the workload allocated to you is appropriate. This will depend on a number of factors including: the stage of your professional development, the complexity of individual cases, any expertise you may have, your experience, and size of individual sibling groups.

The service aims to keep caseloads manageable with average caseloads aimed at circa 20 children pro rata for 37 hours per week standard hours. This will be less for AYSEs where the average caseload is expected to be maintained at 15 cases maximum. Caseloads are regularly scrutinised by Senior Managers and ameliorative action will be taken by managers to mitigate caseloads including use of peripatetic staff.

**Appendix 1:** **Quality Standards for Staff Supervision**

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| **The Management Element:** | |
| **Standard** | **How to Achieve a Standard** |
| Create and secure a commitment to clear a vision. | Share the council and Directorate vision and service improvement and team plans with enthusiasm. |
| Enable staff to understand how they contribute to achieving the Social Services and Health aims and objectives. | Relate aims and objectives to CYP Plan, My Conversation and development should align with these aims and objectives. |
| Build and support a high performing service. | Invest time and energy in developing the team and building personal and professional relationships. |
| Explicitly set targets and standards for the service and individual performance. | Recognise and give regular face to face feedback for good and poor performance. |
| Deal with poor performance. | Help other people learn from mistakes. |
| Recognise individual contribution to the organisation. | Acknowledge and publicly own success. Give award ceremonies high profile. |
| Develop and maintain an appropriate infrastructure for management of staff. | Agree and ensure there is regular, appropriate supervision, support and appraisal with all staff. |
|  | Ensure that the process clearly defines the responsibility of the team and the individual members together with the limits of their authority. |
|  | Undertake individual performance appraisal with all staff. |
| Organise work processes to deliver on time and on budget, to agreed quality standards. | Ensure plans are implemented to meet the assessed requirement of people who receive/use services of the team. |
|  | Allocation of work is consistent with team objectives and in turn with Directorate objectives. |
|  | Service user needs identified through the care planning process are met to the required standards. |
| Contribute to implementing disciplinary and grievance procedures and other appropriate codes of conduct. | Make self aware of organisation’s code of conduct. |

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| **The Support Element:** | |
| **Standard** | **How to Achieve a Standard** |
| Manage interpersonal conflict. | Identify source of conflict and make a positive intervention. |
| Build trust, good morale and teamwork. | Encourage honesty and openness.  Encourage Managers to lead by example. Seek and respond to feedback. |
| Recognise and value diversity. | Recognise differences and take steps to maximise potential. |
|  | Ensure that equality of opportunity is part of good management practice. |
| Develop trust and support of colleagues and team to express members and is proactive in supporting staff who are subject to abuse from other people. | Provide a safe climate for individuals to express feelings. |
|  | Enable staff to record and report harassment and act appropriately on these. |
| Develop productive working relationships. | Establish a long term relationship that is concerned with agreed outcomes. |
| Clarify the boundaries of supervision, support and appraisal. | Clarify with individuals when they should seek external advice or counselling. |
| Monitor the overall health, safety and welfare of the team and individuals. | Undertake risk assessments and raise positively issues of stress management and care. |
| Assist and support staff to strike a healthy balance between work and other aspects of their life outside work. | Supervision and support to provide a safe environment for discussion. |

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| **The Development Element:** | |
| **Standard** | **How to Achieve a Standard** |
| Develop staff to meet challenging organisational needs. | Share a longer term view and understanding organisation and individual needs. |
|  | Enable staff to develop skills. |
| Have an understanding of how adults learn. | Assess individual’s learning styles and allow for application. |
| Delegate effectively. | Allow people to complete job without interference. |
| Make best use of skills and resources within the team. | Understand strengths and seek to address areas for development. |
| Is aware of personal and staff strengths, areas for development and the impact on others. | Will admit mistakes and take action to rectify the situation without attributing blame to individuals. |
| Show a commitment to own personal and staff’s professional development, including those who have patterns of working that are not standard. | Seek opportunities for self and staff’s development and have development plans. |
|  | Demonstrate flexibility and creativity. |
|  | Make best use of Personal Development Plans. |
| Is aware of personal management style and its impact on others. | Consider issues of style and process when working with staff. |