

# Supervision: Safeguarding Policy and Guidance

*Minimum standards for the supervision of staff and volunteers working with children, young people and families*

Date of this document:

Date of Review:

## Improving Safeguarding Practice

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### Purpose

This policy and guidance has been produced to clarify the minimum standards for the supervision of staff and / or volunteers who work directly with children, young people and families and / or those whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and their families.

Although focusing on safeguarding supervision the principles and guidance within this document are useful for other types of supervision, for example, clinical and managerial.

All agencies and organisations working with children and young people should ensure that their staff and / or volunteers receive good quality supervision that offers quality support and high challenge. In the event that an organisation does not have a policy to support this, they may:

1. Adopt this policy and guidance in full

**or**

2. The use of this policy and guidance as a basis for their own supervision policy, which includes the identified minimum standards (or cross reference that own supervision policies include the identified minimum standards).

All managers undertaking supervision should ensure they follow their **own agency** supervision policy and use the associated paperwork.

## A Framework for Supervision

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### Introduction

For many practitioners involved in day-to-day work with children and families, effective supervision is important to promote good standards of practice and to supporting individual staff members.

Good quality supervision can help to:

- keep a focus on the child
- avoid drift
- maintain a degree of objectivity and challenge fixed views
- test and assess the evidence base for assessment and decision making
- address the emotional impact of the work

*Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government 2013*

This document provides an overview of the requirements and processes of supervision. This is relevant for all those who work with children, young people and families. The framework outlines the principles for effective supervision but is not intended to be prescriptive as services may already have established good practice and effective recording systems. The continued use of this is supported.

## Supervision

There are different types of supervision, for example, informal and formal. This framework specifically addresses formal supervision. Informal supervision is often on-going in most effective teams, as staff members seek advice and help in situations that they manage in their day to day work. This is good practice but should not replace a formal supervision session.

Significant issues discussed through informal supervision should be clearly recorded at the time and revisited at a formal session.

Supervision is a partnership between the supervisee, the supervisor and the setting. In schools, supervision should always be carried out by the named senior designated officer for child protection. In other agencies or services these duties will often lay with the line manager, the designated leader/officer for child protection or another appropriately skilled supervisor.

## The Key Functions of Supervision are the 3 Ps

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### 1. Performance Management

Ensures:

- Performance and practice, including safeguarding, is competent, accountable and soundly based in research and practice knowledge
- Safeguarding children practices are consistent with the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Children Board procedures
- Practitioners fully understand their roles, and responsibilities and the scope of their professional discretion and authority
- A reflective space to analyse ongoing work and specific incidents, where risk and need is reviewed and decision making and planning undertaken

### 2. Professional Development

- Professional development needs, including safeguarding practice are considered and supported

### 3. Personal Support

- A reflective space for the supervisee to discuss their work and explore the personal impact of their role and responsibilities

Good supervision involves a balance between all three elements, not always within one session, but certainly over the entire supervision process.

## A. Roles and Responsibility

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The Supervisor is responsible for:-

- Sharing the accountability for making the supervisory relationship work
- Preserving confidentiality, subject to service user and staff safety
- Creating an effective sensitive and supportive supervision space
- Providing a suitable time and location
- Agreeing the timescales within which supervision takes place
- Eliminating interruptions
- Maintaining accurate and clear records with actions clearly identified
- The agreement and review of the supervision contract
- Ensuring that the Organisation's professional standards are met
- Handing over any supervisory responsibilities in a managed way
- Respecting diversity, proactively providing opportunities for staff to raise any issues about their experience in this regard
- Caseload oversight and maintenance, including safeguarding

The supervisee is responsible for:-

- Sharing the responsibility for making the supervisory relationship work
- Attending supervision regularly and on time, actively participating and engaging in the process
- Accepting the mandate to be supervised, and being accountable for any actions
- Preparing appropriately for supervision sessions
- Ensuring the recording of supervision is reflective of the discussions had
- Undertaking actions as agreed in supervision
- Meeting the organisation's professional standards

### Group supervision

In some cases it may be necessary or appropriate to conduct a group supervision session. This is particularly helpful where there is several staff involved in the direct work with a specific child/ family. There are many benefits to be gained from group supervision including

problem solving, peer group learning and giving and receiving of feedback within a supportive setting.

When a group supervision process is undertaken the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisees should be the same with the added principles:-

- Group should clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality
- Records should reflect that the supervision session undertaken was done so within a group
- Where an immediate safeguarding concern is identified, a individual is identified to take this forward

## B Contract

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The contract between a supervisee and a supervisor should clearly outline the responsibilities and expectations of both parties. This should be discussed, agreed and signed off at the beginning of the supervisory arrangement and should be reviewed at regularly intervals, as a minimum, annually (*see Appendix 1 for sample Supervision Contract*).

## C Frequency of Supervision

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The frequency of supervision is highlighted on the contract form under the section “supervisor’s responsibilities”. The frequency of supervision will be dependent on the role you play within the organisation, your skills, experiences, team requirements and Government guidelines. Good practice indicates that the sessions should be regular (occurring at set intervals) and frequent enough to provide the support and oversight needed. It is recommended that this is monthly, but certainly no less than three monthly, for staff who are case holders or who manage complex cases.

The supervisor and supervisee should agree on the duration and frequency of supervision taking into account the experience of the supervisee and the complexity of their work. For newly qualified workers, more frequent supervision is advisable.

## D Recording

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Recording should follow the principle that:-

- The supervision contract is the initial record of agreement between both the supervisor and supervisee
- Supervision sessions must be recorded by the supervisor (*see Appendix 2 for sample Supervision Record*)

- Records of supervision should be signed off and dated by both parties. All records are confidential and therefore should be stored securely by the supervisor. They should be subject to inspection and audit
- Case management decisions are recorded on a service user file (*see Appendix 3 for sample Decision Record*), with any hand written records legible
- A standard template is used to record discussions

## E Quality Assurance

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There is a critical link between good quality regular supervision and good outcomes for service users

- Supervision files will be subject to inspection and audit which may include checking files to ensure that supervision is taking place

## F Entitlement

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It is essential that supervision is provided. A member of staff who is not receiving supervision at the required frequency during the year should:-

- Arrange a one to one meeting with their supervisor to discuss and resolve the issue where possible
- Where unable to find a solution, the supervisee should request a three way meeting between themselves, their supervisor and their supervisor's line manager. The difficulties should be discussed and outcomes agreed

Note: the supervision entitlement should be clearly agreed and defined in the supervision contract which both parties sign prior to the first supervision session being undertaken (*see Appendix 1 sample Supervision Contract*).

## G Capacity to deliver supervision

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Workers who are providing casework and child protection supervision need to be suitably trained in order to deliver this effectively and safely. They too should also be provided with supervision relevant to their role. If available, staff should access supervision training within their own organisation / agency. If this is not available, there are several national organisations who offer this.

***A note of thanks is given to the Leeds Local Safeguarding Children Board for their support in developing this guidance.***

## Name of Organisation /Agency

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### Supervision Contract

***NB: This pro-forma can be altered to reflect individual and organisational needs and can be adapted to the given setting.***

#### Purpose of supervision

##### **1. Supervisors statement**

Supervision is a way of ensuring accountable decision making and safer outcomes for children.

The supervisor's role is to ensure that staff and those directly involved in casework and safeguarding are coping both practically and emotionally with the demands of their role and are handling the work suitably and professionally. The supervisor will also provide the worker with a forum to reflect on the content, process and progress of their work. The supervision record will identify agreed action points which will be reviewed at subsequent supervision meetings.

Supervision should be undertaken on a regular basis, with safeguarding central to all discussions undertaken.

##### **2. Supervision for school/cluster and other Children's Services staff**

Should take place at a minimum interval of every four weeks, for full time staff. This may increase if there is a need. Supervision should last approximately an hour. The may be adjusted depending on role and contracted hours.

#### Supervisor's responsibilities and expectations

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- The Supervisor will meet with the supervisee a minimum of every four weeks. These supervision sessions will commence ..... & will be undertaken in a confidential space which is free from distraction
- Create an environment where an open, transparent and challenging discussion can be undertaken
- Review support plans in place for children/families by asking challenging and probing questions, with progress to agreed goals reviewed
- Discussion will take into account on the child protection, child in need or early help support required
- Offer space to discuss team work and dynamics as well as training and ongoing professional development

## Supervisee's responsibilities

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- Open and honest accounts of casework being undertaken
- Prioritise and immediately undertake actions to protect children believed to be at significant risk of harm
- Implement agreed supervision actions promptly within a timescale agreed
- Ensure all relevant information is recorded within the child/family case notes

**Please note that in the event of a review, for example a Serious Case Review, these records may be used as evidence.**

**In the event that there is unresolved conflict / dispute between supervisor and supervisee, both parties will agree to meet together with \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that any difficulties are satisfactorily resolved. Both parties will ensure that the other is aware in advance that a dispute resolution meeting has been arranged.**

Supervisee signed:

date:

Supervisor signed:

date:

This contract should be reviewed on an annual basis

Date of review of contract:

**Name of Organisation /Agency**

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**Supervision Record**

***NB: This pro-forma can be altered to reflect individual and organisational needs and be adapted to a given setting.***

Name of Supervisee:

Name of Supervisor:

Date:

Details of holidays, sickness absence and training undertaken since last supervision:

Please indicate if the cases discussed represent ALL current cases or a sample

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Agenda Items

1. Review of agreed action points from last meeting/matters arising
2. Supervision notes- Child record
3. Team/General issues impacting safeguarding practice: including training, development, wellbeing
4. Personal development and support
5. Any other business and date of next meeting

**PART A for completion by the worker (where appropriate)**

**Family name:**

**Children's names:**

**Ages:**

**Current Status (e.g.: Child in Need, Subject to a Child Protection Plan, Children Looked After, Early Help Assessment, Early Help Assessment (including CAF) etc.)**

**Details of any change in status and date:**

**Summary of events since last supervision:**

**Your Actions taken:**

**Identified Risks / Issues:**

**Safety / Protective Factors:**

**Strengths / Positives:**

**What is your role with this family?**

**PART B Supervision discussion: for completion by supervisor**

**Actions agreed: (including all agenda items)**

**Delivery plans discussed**

**Any outstanding actions?**

**Any other business**

Date of Next Meeting

Supervisee's signature

Supervisor's signature

SAMPLE

**Name of Organisation /Agency**

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**Supervision Decision Record**

**Individual Child, Young Person or Family record**

***NB: This pro-forma can be altered to reflect individual and organisational needs and be adapted to the setting.***

**Name of child / young person / family:**

**Date of birth of child or young person:**

**Supervision Date:**

**Supervisee:**

**Supervisor / Manager:**

**Brief synopsis of safeguarding history if appropriate:**

**Concerns:**

**Actions agreed with timescales: (to be completed post session).**

**Signature of Manager / Supervisor and date**