



Leeds Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Supervision: Minimum Standards for the Supervision of Staff and Volunteers Working with Children, Young People and Families

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Contents

1. Introduction
 2. What is supervision
 3. The key functions of supervision
 4. Minimum standards
 - Contract between a supervise and supervisor
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of supervisor and supervise, for example:
 - Agreed frequency of supervision
 - Recording of supervision sessions
 - Capacity
 5. Quality assurance
 6. Group supervision
-
- Appendix 1. Sample Supervision Contract
 - Appendix 2. Sample Supervision Record
 - Appendix 3. Sample Caseload Supervision record
 - Appendix 4. Sample Supervision Decision Record; individual child, young person or family

1. Introduction

What is this document? This document provides minimum standards for the supervision of staff and volunteers working with, or whose work brings them into close contact with, children, young people and families. It also clearly defines the responsibilities of supervisors in relation to their role.

Why do we need these standards? Supervision is a fundamental role that managers will undertake to support the development of their staff's skills and practices in work with children, young people and families and the safeguarding of those in their care. Following the inquiry of Victoria Climbié Lord Laming stated

“All staff working directly with children must be regularly supervised”

Lord Laming Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report 2003

What is the purpose of these standards? These minimum standards have been produced to help line managers identify the minimum standards required 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.

Who is this policy aimed at? This policy is aimed at all agencies and organisations working with children and young people. Agencies should ensure that their staff and / or volunteers receive good quality, supervision which offers high support, exploration, reflection and respectful challenge. All managers undertaking supervision should ensure they follow their own agency supervision policy and procedures and use the associated paperwork, which should include the identified minimum standards in this document.

The key contact for comments about this policy is: lscp.info@leeds.gov.uk

2. What is supervision

Supervision is a partnership between the supervisee, the supervisor and the setting to support accountable decision making and safer outcomes for children, young people and families, and can be defined as

“A process in which one worker is given professional responsibility to work with another in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support.”

Morrison 1993, (adapted from, Harries 1987)

Supervision should be outcome focused, as advocated by the [Leeds Practice Model](#), whereby the supervisor holds the supervisee to account for plans put forward for any given family, reflects and builds on good practice, and thoroughly explores and checks the supervisee's rationale and thinking behind each plan, and the fundamental question of whether the plan is likely to achieve the desired outcome. And if not, why not, and how does this affect the overall understanding of the case.

There are different types of supervision. This document specifically addresses planned and structured supervision rather than unplanned supervision which is often on-going in most effective teams, as staff members seek advice and help in situations that they deal with on an on-going basis. Ad hoc supervision is good practice but should NOT replace a planned and structured supervision session.

Significant issues discussed through ad hoc supervision should be clearly recorded in a timely manner ideally as soon as possible and revisited at the next planned and structured session where needed.

Each agency should identify the appropriate supervisor for a practitioner, who may or may not be the line manager.

3. The key functions of supervision

1. Personal Support / Encourage Reflection

- To provide reflective space for the supervisee to discuss and work through the personal impact of their role and responsibilities. This should include support to address the emotional impact of the work where required.

2. Quality Assurance

- Ensure that practitioner performance and practice, including safeguarding, is competent, accountable and soundly based in research and practice knowledge.
- Ensures that safeguarding children practice is consistent with the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership, West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures and organisational procedures.
- Ensures that practitioners fully understand their roles, and responsibilities and the scope of their professional discretion and authority.
- To provide reflective space to analyse ongoing work and specific incidents, to identify good practice and how this can be used within other situations, to assess risk and need and to provide an important check and balance on decision making and planning .

3. Professional Development

- Ensure that professional development needs, including safeguarding practice are considered and supported.

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

4. Minimum standards

1. Contract between a supervisee and supervisor

This should clearly outline the responsibilities and expectations of both parties. The contract should be discussed, agreed and signed off at the beginning of the supervisory arrangement and reflect the minimum standards within this document. The contract should form part of the supervision records and should be reviewed annually (*see Appendix 1 for sample Supervision Contract*).

2. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of supervisor and supervisee, for example:

The Supervisor is responsible for:

- Sharing the responsibility for making the supervisory relationship work however seeking alternative arrangements if needed.
- Ensuring confidentiality, subject to service user and staff safety
- Creating an effective, sensitive, supportive supervision and maintains trust.

- Adopt attentive listening skills, using appropriate service tools if available.
- Providing suitable time and location
- Agree the timescales within which supervision takes place.
- Eliminating interruptions
- Maintaining accurate and clear records in relation to comments about or actions for the supervisee as well as changes or actions in relation to particular cases.
- Ensuring that the supervision contract has been agreed and reviewed annually.
- Ensuring the organisation's professional standards are met.
- Ensuring that where a change in line management occurs, a handover process is arranged between all parties concerned.
- Ensuring that issues relating to diversity are addressed constructively and positively and provide opportunity for staff to raise issues about their experience and diversity.
- Ensuring the shared responsibility for case oversight and maintenance, including safeguarding, accountability and workload.

The supervisee is responsible for:

- Sharing the responsibility for making the supervisory relationship work
- Attending regularly and on time, participating actively and bringing their agenda.
- Understanding and engaging with the rationale for supervision, and being accountable for any actions.
- Preparing appropriately for supervision sessions.
- Ensuring the recording of supervision is reflective of the particular meeting.
- Ensure any identified changes or actions regarding individual caseloads are recorded on the case files
- Ensure that the contract has been agreed and reviewed annually.
- Actively participating in an effective sensitive and supportive supervision.
- Aiming to meet the organisation's professional standards

3. Agreed frequency of supervision

The agreed frequency of supervision will be dependent on practitioner's role within the organisation, their skills, experiences, team requirements and Government guidance. 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 more than every three months, 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 work. It will be appropriate to arrange for more frequent supervision for staff who are newly qualified or new to post but also if there are particular pieces of work which need more time in supervision.

4. Recording of supervision sessions

Recording should follow the principle that:

- The contract is the initial record of agreement between both parties.

- All supervision sessions must be recorded. Recording may be completed by the supervisor depending on the agency (*see Appendix 2 for sample Supervision Record*).
- Records of supervision should be completed and where needed signed off and dated by supervisor and supervisee. All records of supervision are confidential and should be stored securely by the supervisor. They will be subject to inspection and audit.
- Records should ensure case management decisions of individual cases through supervision are also recorded on the individual children, young people and family records held by the organisation (*see Appendix 3 for sample Decision Record*). Hand written records must be legible.
- Supervise to receive a signed copy.

5. Capacity

Workers who are providing casework and child protection supervision and support need to be suitably trained in supervision and safeguarding in order to be able to provide this effectively. In addition they should also be provided with supervision relevant to their role.

Initially supervisors should access supervision training within their own organisation / agency, however if this is not available training is available through Children's Services Workforce Development (bookable via the online PALS system or via the Business Support Centre on 0113 247 5570).

5. Quality Assurance

It is essential that good quality supervision is provided. A practitioner who is not receiving supervision at the required frequency or standard should:

- In the first instance arrange a one to one with their supervisor to discuss and resolve, where possible.
- If they are unable to find a solution, the supervisee should request a three way meeting between themselves, their supervisor and appropriate line managers (potentially including theirs and the supervisors). The difficulties should be discussed and outcomes agreed.

There is a critical link between good quality regular supervision and good outcomes for children young people and families. Recording should be available during inspection and audits if required.

6. Group supervision

In some cases it may be necessary or appropriate to conduct a group supervision session, where there may be several staff involved in 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 strong 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:

- The group should clarify and agree the boundaries of confidentiality
- The records should reflect that this was a group supervision

Supervision Contract

Name of Organisation / Agency

Purpose of supervision

Supervision is a partnership between the supervisee, the supervisor and the setting to support accountable decision making and safer outcomes for children, young people and families, and can be defined as

“A process in which one worker is given professional responsibility to work with another in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competent, accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support.”

Morrison 1993, (adapted from, Harries 1987)

There are 3 key functions of supervision:

1. Performance Management
2. Professional Development
3. Personal Support

Responsibilities and expectations

The supervisor and supervisee will:

- Meet a minimum of every four weeks, and be scheduled to last at least an hour. These will commence on & will be located in a confidential space which is appropriate and free from distraction
- Undertake open and honest discussions in relation to cases loads
- Pose and respond to challenging questions with regard to action, progress and outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Focus discussions on any current identified families where there are needs, concerns or risk for children, young people and families
- Identify good practice which can be transferred or built upon when supporting other cases
- Work in an environment of high support and high challenge.
- Discuss team work & training as appropriate
- Ensure that supervision records include any actions required.
- Implement any agreed actions.
- Ensure all records are updated as required.

Quality Assurance

Recordings should be available during inspection and audits if required.

In the event that there is unresolved 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.

Agreement

Supervisee signed: date:

Supervisor signed: date:

This contract should be reviewed on an annual basis

Date of review of contract:

SAMPLE

Supervision Record

Name of Organisation / Agency

Name of Supervisee:

Name of Supervisor:

Date:

Agenda

1. General wellbeing (to include annual Leave, TOIL and sickness absence)
 - Annual Leave / TOIL agreed / requests:

 - Sickness Absence:
2. Review of agreed action points from last meeting / matters arising
3. Caseloads for consideration (list cases below and complete a Caseload Supervision Record for each family discussion, including reflection on any good practice which could be transferred - please indicate if the cases discussed represent ALL current cases or a sample)
4. Team / general issues impacting safeguarding practice: including training, development, wellbeing
5. Personal development and support including training
6. Any other business
7. Date of next meeting
8. Agreement (to be signed at next supervision session)

Supervisee's signature

Date

Supervisor's signature

Date

Appendix 3: Caseload Supervision Record *(This pro-forma can be altered to reflect individual and organisational needs and be adapted to the setting)*

Caseload Supervision Record

(complete one per family discussion)

Name of Organisation / Agency

Completed by:

Name of Supervisor:

Date of supervision where case will be discussed:

Family name:

Children's names and ages:

Role with this family:

Current Status *(e.g. Child in Need, Subject to a Child Protection Plan, Children Looked After, Early Help Assessment, Early Help Plan etc. – if different for different children please indicate):*

Details of any change in status and date of change:

Summary of events and actions since last supervision:

Any outstanding actions:

Identified risks / issues *(please indicate if these are ongoing or new):*

Safety / protective factors *(please indicate if these are ongoing or new):*

Strengths / positives *(please indicate if these are ongoing or new):*

Any agreed actions for this family?

Supervisee's signature

Date

Supervisor's signature

Date

Copy the record for each family in the appropriate child's records

Appendix 4: Supervision Decision Record; individual child, young person or family
(This pro-forma can be altered to reflect individual and organisational needs and be adapted to the setting)

Supervision Decision Record; individual child, young person or family
(complete one per family discussion)

Name of Organisation / Agency

Completed by:

Name of Supervisor:

Date of supervision where case will be discussed:

Name of child / young person / family:

Date of birth of child or young person:

Brief synopsis of safeguarding history if appropriate:

Concerns:

Strengths:

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

Supervisee's signature

Date

Supervisor's signature

Date

Copy the record for each family in the appropriate child's records