

Supervision Policy and Procedure

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INTRODUCTION

This policy sets the standard for good supervision practice across Children's Services. It is a core part of a range of competencies for leaders, managers and practitioners working with children and families.

Effective supervision can make a major contribution to the achievement of high quality services and best outcomes for those children and young people who use them. It is also vital in the support and motivation of staff who undertake demanding jobs both on behalf of this Council and for the benefit of our local communities.

All practitioners and their managers are expected to read this document, be familiar with its contents and use them to inform their day-to-day practice.

Effective case management and reflective supervision are essential tools in safeguarding children and young people and the delivery of children's services.

Managers, supervisors and practitioners are responsible for ensuring that services meet the best possible standards and have the most positive impact on children, young people and their families.

This Supervision Policy is part of a continuum of policies and processes to ensure that staff in Children, Families and Community Health's professional journey within the Department is supported; All staff within Children, Families and Community Health are to be supported through:

- An Induction programme; inclusive of SBC's policies and procedures;
- Probation period;
- Support and Development within post (Supervision; Appraisals etc.)

POLICY STATEMENT

Our vision is that all Swindon children have the best chances in life to achieve their full potential.

- We will work together with all our partners to ensure our most vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm
- We will ensure that we will intervene at the earliest opportunity to effect positive change and offer timely and proportionate action to children's needs
- We will ensure that all our children, young people and families are supported to fully work with us
- We will ensure that we have competent, skilled and stable staff including sufficient numbers of foster carers, who reflect the diversity of our borough so children receive timely responses to have their needs met
- The children who we look after will be protected, educated, are healthy and are fully prepared into adulthood

• We will all continue to build an environment where social work practice will thrive and ensure all children and Young People achieve good outcomes

This vision is enabled by a set a values for how we behave together and how we provide our services to those who need them. These values help us maintain a culture where staff can work in a collaborative way and deliver services with high standards of care. They include trust and respect for each other, pride in what we do, working well as a team and finding value in the contribution that every person makes.

This vision is supported by our Practice Framework which is the Family Safeguarding Model focusing on improving outcomes for children and relationship based practice. The Practice Framework and Vision identifies that there should be

One children's service - consistently good everyday

Our objectives are to enable:

- Healthy, attached and resilient children to live in families where they are valued, respected and cherished – support children to be the best that they can be
- Families (especially parents, but also young people) who are able to make positive changes to their behaviour
- Children and young people who are protected from significant harm

One important way we can translate these values into the services we provide is through the provision and support of effective supervision. Swindon Borough Council Children's Services is committed to providing quality supervision for all staff as a key part of improving outcomes for children, young people and their families and of enabling staff to provide the best possible interventions.

In order to achieve this, Swindon Borough Council will ensure that the guidance, training, time and resources for supervision are available to all staff and that the policies and culture throughout the organisation positively supports supervision within the context of a learning organisation.

Core Principles of Supervision

- **Constructive working relationships** within and between professional networks and with families themselves are at the centre of effective practice
- **Fostering a stance of inquiry**. Critical thinking allows for the possibility of different positions about the truth of a given situation. The single most important factor in minimising professional error is to accept that you may be wrong.
- Grounding our aspirations in everyday practice. Finding and documenting practitioner and clients' descriptions of what on-the-ground good practice with

complex and challenging cases looks like is a key to learning.

EXPECTATIONS AROUND SUPERVISION

Practice Standards for Supervision

1. We measure quality and outcomes for children

Standard:

In recording supervision, we allow time for reflective practice on the quality of work and measurable evidence over time we are making a difference to a child's life. If not, why not and what do we need to do differently? We consider evidence and research and the longer term outcomes for children rather than being reactive and process driven.

What "good" looks like

Managers lead practice through having conversations with social workers about decisions, chairing key risk management and planning meetings, role modelling relationship based practice expectations. Practice leaders are visible and accessible and respond quickly and flexibly.

2. We are clear about individual and shared professional accountability

Standard:

There is a clear "management footprint" on the file that demonstrates oversight, key decisions and case discussions (there is clarity on who's accountable for what and why; particularly in relation to keeping a child safe). We provide high support and high challenge to staff.

What "good" looks like

Supervisors focus on agreed outcomes and the actions needed to achieve them. Timescales are clear and expectations are realistic. The progress towards the outcomes are discussed and, reviewed and recorded. Managers ask themselves and others "what impact is this having on the child"?

3 .We invest time in continual professional development

Standard;

Supervision will always allow time for reflection on training and learning and developmental needs, through appraisal a professional development plan will be included. We invest time in our staff so they can be the best they can be through creating different learning opportunities. This includes opportunities for direct work with children and their families.

What "good" looks like

Learning and development is more than a training course, we will create other on the job learning opportunities, including work in other teams.

Social Work England the regulatory body for social work state that in order to maintain social work registration the professional standard Maintaining Continuing Professional Development detailed under 4.2 social workers will :-

- Use supervision and feedback to critically reflect on, and identify their learning needs, including how they use research and evidence to inform their practice.
- Each worker is entitled to personal supervision on a monthly basis by the supervising Manager. Notes from these meetings should be recorded on a personal supervision form within five working days.
- ASYE supervision will vary however the expectation is that ASYE's will receive weekly supervision for the first 6 weeks then fortnightly for 6 months and thereafter monthly. If ASYE workers have been students within the Department it may be that the move to monthly supervision will be earlier according to the worker's identified needs
- Supervision will consist of both case and personal supervision
- Supervision will focus on progressing good outcomes for children and how engaged the child's family is in facilitating change.
- Supervision will be recorded within **Appendix 1 Supervision notes** and **Appendix 3 Supervision case discussion**.
- Managers should undertake at least one direct observation of practice per annum of their workers which is evidenced in their supervision file -See Appendix 4 Live Supervision
- Group supervision should be recorded using **Appendix 3 Supervision case discussion** and held on the child's file.
- Senior managers and team managers who supervise Assistant Team Managers will undertake a direct observation of supervision every 3 months

Formal Supervision about specific children and young people

Whilst staff supervision will take place on a monthly basis, supervision in relation to each child or young person will differ depending upon a judgement in relation to specific needs and risks.

Supervision of Children are to be scheduled and monitored according to need and risk. Different children cohorts will have differing frequency periods. The table below shows the **minimum** required interval periods between supervisions. Managers should make decisions about increasing this frequency as the level of risk for the child changes.

Supervisors and supervisee's both have a shared responsibility for ensuring that supervision discussions prioritise those children where management oversight is required. All children newly allocated will be discussed within the first month of allocation and an outcomes focused plan agreed.

| Cohort | Interval |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Early Help | Management oversight recorded at point of allocation then minimum of 3 months For those families allocated as higher risk they will be discussed monthly in every supervision session |
| Assessment and Child Protection | Management oversight and direction recorded on a case allocation record at the point of allocation within 24 hours full supervision by 4 weeks |
| CIN | 2 months proportionate response according to need and more frequently if needed |
| CP/PLO/Court | 1 month |

The table below details frequency of supervision expected

| CLA – until a permanence plan is recorded | 1 month |
|--|----------|
| CLA when a decision has been made by a Permanency Panel or approved by a senior manager. | 2 months |
| Children receiving short breaks | 3 months |
| Care Experienced | 2 months |

SUPERVISION TRAINING

Swindon Borough Council has a Core Training offer for all staff which focuses on outcomes and what is good for children.

We are committed to embedding an outcome focused and relationship based approach which moves away from traditional problem focussed, service and task focussed plans to an holistic approach that focuses on the person and their networks/family, understanding the unique identity of each person and situation enabling them to live as fulfilled a life as possible and achieve a sense of wellbeing.

All staff are required to attend Motivational Interviewing training

Good communication skills are essential for all staff in order to deliver good quality support to children and their families which is consistent with our Family Safeguarding Practice Model.

The only way you can ascertain the most meaningful things for people is through sensitive conversations.

There is an expectation that all managers who undertake supervision attend the Supervising to Safeguard Core Training course.

Group Supervision training is also offered as part of our Core Training Offer.

DEFINING SUPERVISION - WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Defining Supervision

Supervision is a complex activity (1) While there have been many attempts to define supervision in terms of its function and purpose, there is no single definition that fully captures the range and subtleties of supervisory activities in practice. Traditionally supervision policies refer to a three or four functional model of supervision delivered via a supervisor-supervisee relationship. This might include for example dimensions of management, professional development, emotional support and mediation. This focus on function and task can tend to obscure the role of the supervisor in promoting critical analysis, the contextual dynamics of the supervisory process or that supervision itself forms part of the intervention with service users.

Developmental work by Skills for Care and the CWDC looked to widen the summarised supervision as

An accountable process which supports assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes [2].

This extends the understanding of supervision as being more than just encompassing a one-to-one meeting with a supervisor – usually the worker's line manager. At the same time, the focus on formal processes rather ignores the often significant contribution of informal activities, for example peer networks of support. These can represent an important and often underplayed part of the supervisory process and one that requires active support by managers and professional associations [3].

The approach we have taken here acknowledges this range of supervisory activity and looks to support best supervisory practice in whichever form it takes. It recognises that we need to understand which of these methods is most useful, for whom and in what circumstances. We also emphasise that good support is a core condition for effective supervision and guarantor for improving the outcomes of the children and families we work with.

Lord Laming reiterated the voice of many, before and since, when he concluded

that supervision the cornerstone' of good social work practice It is vitally important that social work is carried out in a supportive learning environment that actively encourages the continuous development of professional judgment and skills. Regular, high quality, organised supervision is critical [4].

RiP's Change Project (Earle et al 2017) made the following observations about good supervision:

- Supervision is a valuable means to surface and share good practice a space in which to unpick the behaviours and interactions that support positive outcomes
- Supervision supports accountability
- Supervision acts as a buffer between staff experience and organisational demands.

Supporting reflective practitioners requires the provision of:

- Containment for practitioners' emotional responses to direct practice experience
- A space in which practitioners can build their capacity to think and analyse complex situations, which may be dominated by anxiety about risk

• A means for practitioners to engage and make use of their own experience and develop awareness of how their experience informs their practice. (Morrison, 2001; Sheppard, 1998) Evidence indicates a positive influence of supervision in a number of areas, for example:

- Supervision does have positive effects on practitioner self-awareness, skills, selfefficacy, theoretical orientation and support.
- There is evidence that group supervisory processes can increase critical thinking and promote the dissemination of learning and skills.
- The supervisory relationship appears to have an important mediation function in which organisational and supervisee needs interact and are exchanged.
- The impact of supervision on promoting better outcomes within families does appear to be connected to a secure professional relationship where the supervisor takes time to understand and assess the supervisee's strengths and weaknesses.
- The benefits of developing a positive supervision culture across wider social care and children's services are now widely recognised. The task assistance, emotional and support components of supervision have positive effects on a variety of organisational outcomes.

There are also some areas where supervision appears to be an important contributory activity but where the findings on impact are more tentative. This in large part has to do with the relative absence of larger scale robust studies as well as the especially complex interaction of factors involved. These areas include:

- The contribution of supervision to job satisfaction
- The importance of supervision on worker retention and commitment to the organisation

Social Work England professional standard Maintaining Continuing Professional Development details under 4.2 that social workers will :-

• Use supervision and feedback to critically reflect on, and identify their learning needs, including how they use research and evidence to inform their practice.

Content of Supervision

Managers should be driving a reflective/progressive discussion not just tracking cases.

Supervision should connect the workers to the lived experience of the child.

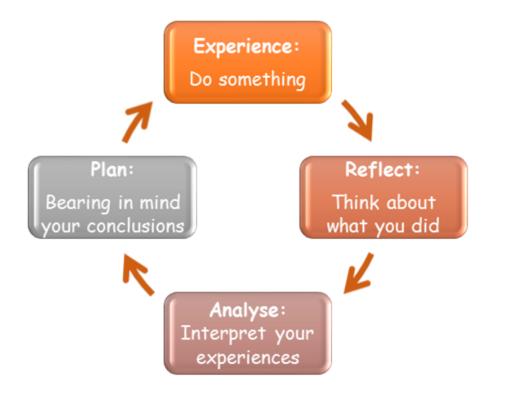
During case discussion, practitioners must always be given the opportunity to emotionally explore and reflect on the child's experience. The question **"What is it like to be this child?"** should be used to enable good decision making to take place in the best interest of children. It is important to think about this for each child in families where there are two or more children.

What specifically does a safety plan require of the child's network so that it behaves in a protective and helpful way? What does "good" look like for this child living at home?

Recording of reflective supervision should include quality of the child's plan and the impact on the child.

KOLB'S LEARNING CYCLE

Kolb's Learning Cycle is a well-known theory which argues we learn from our experiences of life, even on an everyday basis. It also treats reflection as an integral part of such learning. According to Kolb (1984), the process of learning follows a pattern or cycle consisting of four stages, one of which involves what Kolb refers to as 'reflective observation'. The stages are illustrated and summarised below:



- Stage 1: Experience
 The Experience what happened, detailed descriptions, paying attention to the detail as well as the bigger picture
- Stage 2: ReflectReflection involves thinking about what we have done
and experienced including the exploration of emotions
associated with the experience
- Stage 3: AnalyseWhen we pass from thinking about our experiences to
interpreting them we enter into the realm of analysis by
articulating the thinking and understanding that is
occurring in relation to this experience
- Stage 4: PlanAction Plan Deciding what to do in response to what
has/may happen and the thoughts and feelings you are
aware of, having applied knowledge, theory and practice
wisdom to the experience

To learn from our experiences it is not sufficient just to have them. This will only take us into stage 1 of the cycle. Rather, any experience has the potential to yield learning, but only if we pass through all Kolb's stages by reflecting on our experiences, interpreting them and testing our interpretations

Learning from our experiences involves the key element of reflection.

SUPERVISION – THINKING ABOUT OUTCOMES

Supervision should focus on what outcomes need to be achieved for the child and what difference the social work intervention with the child and family is making.

This should include a strong emphasis on the child's lived experience and evidence of the child's voice informing the work with the child and the family.

It should develop actions or goals with 'the end in mind'. An outcome thinking that pictures what is it you want to do rather than don't want to do. A stepped approach can be helpful here, for example:

- What? Describe what you want to achieve in positive and detailed terms.
- **Context?** When, where, with whom will your goal be realised?
- Evidence? How will you know you have realised your goal? What will you see, hear or feel?
- **Resources?** What do you need to achieve your outcome? Are they in your control?

Formal Planned Market Informal

TYPES OF SUPERVISION

1. Formal Supervision

It is important that a supervision discussion provides the opportunity for both supervisee and supervisor to raise matters of importance to them across the four areas outlined below. The supervisee should be able to identify what they particularly want to cover during the meeting as well as including the supervisor's priorities. It is good practice to agree and prioritise the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

There are interrelated aspects to individual supervision (Figure 1). At the centre is the relationship between the supervisee and supervisor. This core dimension is concerned with support and must be grounded in an environment of respect and validation of the individual. In this approach, support is not a function of supervision but a core condition for it. This central dimension influences the four other aspects of supervision that surround it.

- **Managerial** this is about joint accountability for day-to-day work of qualified practitioners and quality of service. It includes decision-making regarding individual children, and discussion on resources and workloads, targets and overall performance.
- Work and case discussion: this aspect is concerned with reviewing and reflecting on practice with a focus on the purpose, pace, proportionality and impact of our work for children. This should focus on achieving improved outcomes for children. Reflective analysis can be supported by the use of appreciative inquiry. Constructive feedback and observation of practice forms part of the learning process for workers and supervisors.
- **Professional development:** this aspect recognises individual achievements and learning needs. This may include looking at roles and relationships and evaluating the outcome of training. It ensures staff have the relevant skills, knowledge, and attributes to manage their work. It anticipates future changes in the service, identifies and provides developmental opportunities to respond to these.
- **Relationships:** this aspect recognises that the supervisee may have a number of roles, relationships and partnerships, within and outside the organisation including family members, team colleagues and professional networks. The dynamics involved with these need to be explored together through the exchange and mediation of information and feedback to provide a holistic consideration of practice, professional and personal development.

Supervisors are responsible for completing a record of each individual and formal supervision, which will cover each one of these four aspects although the balance of content between them will vary from time to time.



Figure 1 Dimensions of Supervision [7] Howe K and Gray I (2013) Effective Supervision in Social Work.

2. Management Overview or "Informal Supervision"

An over-reliance on 'corridor conversations' is not an adequate substitute for formal supervision. Nonetheless, given the pace of work, change of circumstances and the frequency of formal arrangements means there will be occasions when staff will need to have discussions with their manager, for example, to obtain an urgent decision or gain permission to do something in between formal supervision sessions. In addition, staff who work closely with their supervisor will be communicating daily about work issues.

This form of "supervision" is, of course, a normal and acceptable part of the staff/supervisor relationships. The points below should be kept in mind when considering unplanned or ad-hoc supervision:

- Any significant decisions made with regard to a service user must be clearly recorded on ICS. The rationale for management endorsement of a decision must be set out in sufficient detail to enable transparency and accountability for actions with the child, family and relevant professionals. Management oversight entries on ICS must be clear and specific. In addition to "formal" supervision they are a key method of evidencing the process of decision making in relation to children and young people and ensuring standards of intervention are met.
- Where employees and supervisors work closely together this does not negate the need for private one to one time together on a regular basis. The focus of these sessions is wholly on the individual, their development, performance and any issues arising from their work that do not arise on a day-to-day basis.

3. Effective Supervision: a shared responsibility

A Supervision Agreement should be in place between the supervisee and the supervisor using **Appendix 1** Supervision Agreement.

While there are some specific and separate responsibilities and accountabilities for supervisors and supervisees, many are in fact shared and are instrumental in delivering high quality supervision. So, both supervisors and supervisees have a responsibility to contribute positively to this process.

These shared responsibilities and accountabilities include:

- Turning up on time
- Making sure supervision is planned well in advance and only changed in exceptional circumstances
- Allowing both supervisee and supervisor to contribute to the agenda
- Maintaining a focus on the child and children
- Providing an appropriate setting and free of interruptions
- Preparing well for supervision by reviewing notes from the previous meeting and thinking about the issues that need to be raised and discussed
- Ensuring that supervision consists of open and honest discussion. This includes a preparing to share what has gone well and what has been difficult
- Recognising and naming unhelpful, difficult or dangerous dynamics within casework and agency relationships
- Reaching agreement about the implementation of decisions
- Reviewing the timeliness of case progression and milestones
- Monitoring the active caseload, including agreements about when cases should be stepped down and closed
- Enabling (for those in direct practice), a critical and in depth reflection on one case every month, using the Signs of Safety mapping tool
- Reflecting on evidence of service user feedback and using this to inform and promote good practice and professional development
- Making sure that progress against appraisal goals are checked regularly between formal annual appraisal points

Effective supervision is a **collaborative activity** and one that recognises the nuances of inter-professional roles. Understanding the relationship between leadership and fellowship behaviours, for example, can be helpful in gaining insights about how the supervisory relationship can be made to work well.

Recent thinking about these issues suggests that leadership can only occur if there is followership—without followers and 'following behaviours' there is no leadership . Leaders and managers influence follower attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes.

This means that following behaviours are a crucial component of the leadership process. Viewing leadership or management as a process means that leaders and managers affect and are affected by their followers either positively or negatively. It

stresses that leadership is a two-way, interactive event between leaders and followers rather than a linear, one-way event in which the leader affects the followers but not vice versa.

This approach also allows us to recognize that managers are not always leading they also defer to those who they lead or manage which means they also engage in following behaviours.

Supervisees can and will make a substantial contribution to the quality of their own individual supervision.

EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISEES

Expectations include:

- Finding out what I am expected to do
- Ensuring that actions agreed within supervision are carried out in a timely manner
- Taking the initiative to deal with problems
- Updating my manager about decisions being made e.g. any difficulties in implementing decisions or plans
- Alerting my manager of risks to myself and others
- Encouraging my manager to provide honest feedback
- Supporting leader efforts to make necessary changes
- Challenging flawed plans
- Identifying development and support needs and being ready to plan and undertake training
- Understanding and implementing policy
- Providing upward coaching

THE CHILD

During case discussion, practitioners must always be given the opportunity to emotionally explore and reflect on the child's experience. The question **"What is it like to be this child?"** should be used to enable good decision making to take place in the best interest of children. It is important to think about this for each child in families where there are two or more children.

What specifically does a safety plan require of the child's network so that it behaves in a protective and helpful way? What does "good" look like for this child living at home?

GROUP SUPERVISION

There are varying definitions of what constitutes as 'group supervision' but essentially it involves the use of a group, more than 2, to facilitate and support discussion and reflection and enables improved decision making by the sharing of knowledge and skills between professionals.

Any approach implemented must consider and adapt to meet the needs of the supervisor and supervisees, their skills and requirements and support the policy framework within the organisation in terms of requirements.

Group supervision usually involves practitioners from a variety of different professions who have professional concerns or tasks in common.. Potential benefits of group supervision include the opportunity to:

- Reflect in depth on complex problems
- Pool and apply knowledge and skills
- Challenge individual perspectives (a group's diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and experience will provide different perspectives)
- Explore the skills, processes and dynamics needed in work with children and families and to influence organisational culture from the 'bottom up'
- Provide a safe space to share feelings
- Build relationships and reduce isolation
- Develop a shared language, values and culture

There are potential pitfalls, however. Without confident facilitation, groups can lose focus and lack challenge (e.g. lapsing into 'group think') or be dominated by a few loud voices. Groups can amplify dysfunctional team processes – such as anxiety about speaking out – and confuse boundaries of responsibility and structures; and time for individual needs or cases to be explored will be limited. (Earle et al 2017). It is worth also considering that different professions will have different agendas in terms of how they approach a particular need or presenting issue. This will require careful management and a skilled supervisor to fully unpick and explore this approach to support outcomes effectively.

Group discussion benefits from:

- Diversity
- Equality

- Hypothesising
- Use of analysis and intuition
- Emotional intelligence
- Accountability
- Recognition of disguised compliance

Decision making can be undermined by power and identity issues and it is important that the chair of these discussions remains mindful within these settings.

Group supervision is a core element of the Family Safeguarding Model and is supported as a principle across the Department and within Family Safeguarding teams. It is framework for strong and consistent management oversight which enables a shared understanding of the families each team works with .Within the Family Safeguarding teams it allows the team, manager, allocated social worker and the multi-disciplinary workers to meet together for reflective case supervision and provides an opportunity for practitioners to capitalise on each other's strengths and experiences. The benefits of the Family Safeguarding group supervision model are it:-

- Brings together multidisciplinary professionals working with a family as one team to address the 'trio of vulnerabilities': domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental health
- Enables multidisciplinary discussion on a monthly basis to discuss the holistic support needs of the family
- Uses the monthly case summaries within the electronic Workbook by all involved professionals to feed into the group supervision.
- Reduces bureaucracy and supports analytical multi-disciplinary recording, information sharing and decision making.

This promotes a whole family approach and better information sharing and collaborative working; shared discussion and decision making and a holistic approach to the assessment of need by drawing on different professional expertise and coordinated support to improve outcomes for families.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to monitor supervision using **Appendix 5** Supervision Monitoring Form.

Supervision compliance will be reviewed at the Quality Performance Board. Qualitative Supervision audits will be undertaken on at least an annual basis.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Supervision Agreement



Appendix 2 Supervision Notes



Appendix 3 Supervision Case Discussion



Supervision case discussion record.dc

Appendix 4 Live Supervision



Appendix 5 Supervision Monitoring Form



Appendix 6 Family Safeguarding Group Supervision Process Business Support Process



Appendix 7 Family Safeguarding Supervision Pathway



Appendix 8 Family Safeguarding Supervision Expectations



Appendix 9 Cycle of change



OTHER USEFUL TOOLS FOR USE IN SWINDON



SUPERVISION TEMPL



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Reflective Six Reflective Supervision Gibbs.d Questions for Super



Supervision 1.docx Supervision 2.docx

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