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**SUPERVISION POLICY**

**Practice guidance**

**Practice Guidance for Implementation of the Supervision Policy for Childrens Social Care and Early Help Services**

**This guidance needs to read in conjunction with:**

* **Social Care and Early Help Services Supervision Policy (Dec 2016)**
* **Social Care and Early Help Services Key Expectation and Standards**

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The Supervision Policy aim is to enhance the outcomes in all of our work with all children and young people through early help, targeted provision, children in need, child protection and looked after children services - in order that we have a real impact on their lives and outcomes.

The practice guidance details the supervision requirements for the services, the standards expected in terms of case supervision, reflective supervision and professional supervision and development.

It is recognised that the workforce are its most important asset in fulfilling the Council’s responsibility to provide a high quality service. Staff need to be supported and motivated and to ensure this, managers need to encourage reflective practice, monitor performance, set targets and link these, with Council aims and objectives. In doing so, they must enhance the quality of staff performance in providing services to our customers.

Supervision is fundamental to the delivery of effective work with children, young people and their families and must support professionals to make good quality decisions based on analysis, judgement, balance, drawing on professional knowledge and experience. Supervision also offers the opportunity for professional conversations promoting learning and reflective practice.

1. **Supervision Standards**

The supervision standards embed the principles embedded in the service standards.

Supervision has two elements: **Case Supervision and Professional Development Supervision.**

The time set aside for professional supervision and case supervision can take place at the same session or can be separated. This is at the discretion of the manager in line with the needs of the service and individual worker. Supervisors and supervisees hold individual and joint responsibility to ensure purposeful and effective supervision takes place and meets requirements for

* Quality of decision making and interventions
* Line management and organisational accountability
* Caseload and workload management
* Identification of further personal learning, career and developmental opportunities
  1. **Supervision Agreement**

Managers must ensure that the supervision timetable offers provision for reflective practice on an individual or group basis. This needs to include casework reflection that identifies and assists in learning and personal development. To ensure there is joint understanding of the role supervision has for both **supervisor and the** **supervisee**. The supervision agreement should be completed and signed by both parties. This includes the expectation that:

* All supervisees are to have a supervision contract in place outlining the frequency, dates and times of supervision sessions for 12 months in advance.
* There should be no cancellations; only absolutely unavoidable causes such as sickness, emergency leave, fulfilling an unavoidable statutory duty, attendance at court or a major crisis should cause planned supervision to be re-arranged.
* No interruptions; supervisors are to arrange cover on a reciprocal basis and all staff should reflect on the difference between important and urgent and limit interruptions to issues which are both and cannot wait or be dealt with by another person.
* Supervisors and supervisees will come to supervision prepared with the agenda and agree this at the start of the meeting. This must include reference to the notes and actions of the last supervision session and to ensure that all actions have been progressed.
* In Professional Supervision sessions, staff well-being will be the first item on the agenda, unless otherwise agreed by both supervisor and supervisee
  1. **Case Supervision**

Case supervision is undertaken on those cases where the supervisee has been allocated a referral and/or piece of work to be completed. The supervisor is the management accountability for the work

Case supervision is one of main indicators of management oversight. It must be clearly identified in the child’s record and must record statutory compliance requirements in accordance to the child’s plan where the supervisee is a social worker: This includes statutory visiting, dates children are seen, core groups, statutory review timescales and case review timescales. In addition the following must form part of the supervision agenda.

* Supervisors need to test and challenge application of the quality of the actions and interventions. For children subject to social care procedures, this must relate to the plan in place for the child and must focus on outcomes. The focus should be on protecting the child and the public.
* Is the child safe?
* A primary element to supervision is reflecting on what has been done, how well the actions have been completed, how other workers might have a different perspective and the outcome of the actions. The reflection should consider the relationships with service users.
* Case supervisions agree the actions for the next period of intervention, plan for future interventions and agree on how this will be communicated and confirmed with the child and family. How effective the service’s delivery is in making a difference to the child’s outcomes?
* Timescales for completion or further action.
* Agreements for Legal Planning Meetings where appropriate.
* Supervision needs to consider the evidence of the **child or young person’s views, wishes and feelings.** **What differences are being made?**
  1. **Professional Development Supervision**

Professional supervision is intended to help in identifying and achieving personal learning, career and development opportunities for the supervisee. Learning and Development will be discussed in supervision taking into account the ‘core skills’ relevant to the role of the supervisee and in order to undertake their role in the best way possible.

* + It is a two way process providing the opportunity for clear communication, reflection and critical analysis of work.
  + It should be approached in a positive, constructive, honest and open manner and is the forum to explore feelings and thoughts around particular issues
  + Supervision promotes equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice by seeking to question the reasons for intervention, relying on evidence based practice.
  + A good supervisor creates a climate that acknowledges the power difference between supervisor and supervisee and makes it possible to explore values, attitudes and assumptions, and identifies the support needs of staff that are likely to experience discrimination.
  + It provides employees with clarity about their role and responsibilities, accountability, work objectives and expectations and with a manageable and appropriate workload.
  + Supervision ensures case discussions, management oversight and agreed actions take place. Case discussions must take into consideration previous involvement and the quality of that intervention. It must explore the need for ongoing work and how this can be undertaken to achieve successful results and design appropriate service packages.
  + Supervision assists employees to understand the importance of their role within the organisation, service objectives and the provision of high quality services, whether the role is to provide direct front-line services or indirect support services to other staff.
  + It ensures accountability in the context of and adherence to legislation, national standards, policy, procedures and good evidence based practice relevant to the role of the worker and service area (and professional standards where these exist).
  + Supervision begins with effective induction and is a continuous process throughout the employment of the worker.
  + It develops skills, knowledge, values and understanding.
  + Promotes and explores opportunities for learning, training and continual professional development.
  + Supervision should offer individual support in managing the demands of the work (task and emotional) and where personal circumstances impact on work.
  + It is an integral and on-going part of the work routine.
  1. **Accountability**

To ensure good outcomes for service users and carers the organisation has a responsibility to ensure its workforce adheres to professional codes of conduct and local policies and procedures. There must be focus on the organisational accountability between the supervisor and supervisee and must address the quality and quantity of the work being done. It involves the evaluation of the job and the organisationaleffectiveness of the employee, and includes regular professional development reviews

To ensure outcomes for service users and carers the organisation has a responsibility to ensure staff adhere to professional codes of conduct and local policies and procedures. There must be focus on the organisational accountability between the supervisor and supervisee and the process must address the quality and quantity of the work being done. It involves the evaluation of the job and the organisational effectiveness of the employee, and includes appraisal.

This provides for an analysis of caseload and workload management, addressing any issues relating to the extent to which supervisee’s have the time available to work directly with children, adults and families as well as meeting other demands. It should ensure the supervisee has a manageable and appropriate workload.

* 1. **Newly Qualified Social Workers only**

During the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE), the supervision for newly qualified social workers will be tailored to their needs, but there will be increased supervision alongside protected time dedicated to learning and development. Newly Qualified Social Workers will also have a reduced case load.

The Continuing Professional Development activities will be logged by the supervisee on the learning and development plan and these should be discussed and signed off by the manager to evidence the learning that has taken place and that, more critically it has been applied.

The Continuing Professional Development activities will be logged by the supervisee in the CPD log available on the College of Social Work website or on alternative formats for those who do not have access to this website.

Newly appointed or newly qualified staff, or staff in their **probationary period**, are likely to require more frequent supervision and supervisors should take care to agree frequency in the early months of appointment and review thereafter.

1. **Frequency of Supervision**

This forms part of the Professional Development Record and aims to encourage the supervisee to identify and evaluate learning that has taken place during the previous year and plan for learning opportunities for the coming year. A six monthly review will be conducted to ensure that plans are still relevant and are up to date in accordance with any changes, e.g. in working practices.

Dates and times of supervision will be arranged in advance and honoured as far as practically possible and a new date set for the earliest possible time and date.

Supervision should be booked in as detailed below using electronic booking arrangements wherever possible, and should be planned so that both parties are aware of the dates for the year ahead.

* Four weekly for any member of staff with case holding responsibilities and their line managers;
* Eight weekly for full time staff without case holding responsibilities;
* Twelve weekly for non-frontline staff (e.g. Business Support).
  1. **Case Supervision**

In all cases there is a minimum expectation of the frequency children are discussed in supervision. This will vary according to the child’s needs and status.

| Visiting Frequency | Status of Child | Rationale |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 weekly | Child Protection Plans  Care Proceedings  Children in Need plan  Single Assessment  Looked After for less than 3 months  Looked After placement is not  stable  Looked After child not stable  Care leavers in unsuitable accommodation ( or more frequently where a risk assessment identifies this is necessary) | All cases should be discussed within supervision within four weeks of allocation or transfer of Keyworker.  Where a child is the subject of a ‘Child Protection’ plan the Keyworker should receive case supervision on a four weekly basis (minimum frequency).  Where a child is the subject to a ‘Child in Need’ plan the Keyworker should receive case supervision on a four weekly basis (minimum frequency).  Where a child is ‘Looked After’ the key worker should receive case supervision on a minimum of an eight weekly basis (four weekly until permanency plan agreed). |
| 8 weeks | Looked After child in a stable placement  Looked After child in a Permanent Placement |  |
| 8 weeks | Care leavers in suitable accommodation |  |
| 4 weekly | Early Help | Where a child is the subject of a ‘Team Around the Child’ plan the Lead Professional should receive case load supervision on a four weekly basis (minimum frequency).  Where a member of staff is involved in any of the above cases (but not as Keyworker or Lead Professional) or supporting a family or young person as a ‘single agency involvement’ cases must be discussed within two weeks of allocation and then as a minimum every four weeks. |
| 4 weekly | YOS | Cases are prioritised for discussion based on information, the type of case and where cases require escalation.  All Case managers receive four weekly supervisions and cases are prioritised according to intensity of their order, MAPPA status/Risk levels, EH, CLA, CSE, CIN, custody and remand cases.  Advocates are expected to attend supervisions with case managers when their specific cases are being discussed and receive personal supervisions every six weeks.  All team managers receive supervisions every four weeks and cases are prioritised for discussion based on the above information and where cases require escalation. |

* 1. **Minimum Expectation**

The supervision standards include as a minimum:

* Supervisors to be trained in supervision processes and the application of these procedures;
* Supervisees to be inducted into the supervision procedures;
* Planned and regular supervision will be provided according to the agreed timescales;
* Sufficient time will be allowed to enable a quality supervision to take place;
* All supervision will be recorded;
* The ‘Professional Supervision Agreement’ will be completed, agreed, and signed as part of the induction process between both parties;
* Practitioners are required to prepare for supervision by identifying areas for discussions in advance and bringing any necessary documentation to the meeting
* Appropriate disagreements should be recorded together with proposed activities to resolve or escalate as required.

Group supervision may be considered to encourage practitioners to reflect on practice and how attitudes, approaches and skills affect the relationships they have with both service users and colleagues. This may involve working through the values and principles and giving examples of how these principles have been applied in practice. Examples may relate to professionalism, conduct and confidentiality.

1. **Recording** 
   1. **Recording of Professional Supervision**

Supervision records should include issues discussed, actions and decisions and be signed and agreed by both the supervisor and member of staff. (See appendix 2 of Supervision Policy for a proforma). Any difference of opinion must be recorded.

Confidential details relating to other staff or service users should not be made in the supervision notes or kept in the PDF. On occasions, it may be necessary to refer to another member of staff and this should be by initials only.

* 1. **Recording of Case Supervision**

The case supervision record is evidence that there has been supervisory oversight and endorsement of the practice, quality, decisions and service. This is important for case audits, serious case reviews, management performance information, case load management, appraisals and service user access to records. Disagreements should be recorded together with proposed actions to resolve or escalate disagreements.

Where the service uses Liquid Logic, case supervision must be recorded on Liquid Logic (the electronic integrated children’s system) using the case notes section - dropdown box “case supervision - children's”. The name of the service, name and role of the supervisor, followed by the name and role of the supervisee should always be recorded in the Headline box. (eg Supervision - Mary Poppins PS and Jo Smith SW). The expected standard is that the case supervision is recorded on Liquid Logic at the time of the supervision meeting. If this is not possible the supervisor (or admin support) should record on Liquid Logic within 72 hours (three working days).At the subsequent case supervision meetings the supervisor will check the contents of the last 'case supervision' on Liquid Logic and review with the practitioner, confirming if the tasks were completed and cross referencing with evidence on the child’s Liquid Logic file.

The above principles will be applied where children are deemed to be particularly vulnerable by services using alternative electronic case recording systems.

Where casework supervision involves brief discussion about a large volume of cases, records will be added to the electronic recording system for children with vulnerability markers against them.

1. **Performance Management**

The City Council Performance Review Scheme requires all employees to have an annual appraisal meeting, which will review performance, set targets for the forthcoming year and identify any new knowledge, skills or development required. The appraisal interview will also review arrangements for supervision and revise the supervision agreement if needed.

Appraisal charts the history of regular supervision that looks at performance not where this is a one off or annual activity. Formal supervision will therefore regularly review performance on an ongoing basis to enable the supervisee to meet the requirements of the job. Supervision should provide a meaningful dialogue throughout the year to identify and address issues constructively and where employees may need more supervision to take on new or difficult tasks or to address particular issues. Managers will address issues relating to **poor performance** such as failure to meet objectives or undertake tasks, attendance, conduct at work, discipline, capability and harassment, in formal supervision in the first place.

* 1. **Governance**

Supervision records are the property of Leicester City Council. The Council may need to access supervision records for the purposes of managing performance, capability, disciplinary, sickness or addressing grievances or harassment and discrimination. Therefore, senior managers, investigating officers, HR officers and trade union representatives can request copies of supervision records. Supervision and appraisal records can be used in evidence in meetings regarding performance or behaviour at work and formal investigations and hearings.

* 1. **Employees Who Leave or Transfer**

The Human Resources function determines how long records will be kept with regard to the Statute of Limitation and the protection of vulnerable children and adults and the corporate file retention policy will be implemented. The Department is obliged to retain supervision records for all employees working directly with children and families for 70 years to meet the requirements of the Warner Report.

Supervision and appraisal notes for eligible staff will transfer with employees moving to another post. The current Supervisor will arrange with the new manager for the notes to be collected/hand delivered, where practicable, within 4 weeks.

* 1. **Group Supervision**

In some service areas, group supervision processes may complement individual supervision. Where such processes are utilised then group supervision must be balanced with opportunities and time for individual employees to have formal one-one supervision outside of the group arrangements.

Staff registered with professional bodies, e.g. the Health & Care Professions (HCPC), College of Occupational Therapists (COT), Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) etc. are required to demonstrate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and completed Records of Learning & Development provide evidence to meet this requirement.

Records of Learning and Development should be kept with supervision and appraisal notes in the Personal Development Folder.

1. **Confidentiality and Retention**

The Council has a Whistle Blowing Procedure and encourages all employees to report bad or dangerous practice and have a duty of care to colleagues and service users. Where potentially poor or dangerous practice is identified then such matters cannot be regarded as confidential and must be reported to a manager at the earliest opportunity.

As with any relationship from time to time problems or disagreements may arise within supervision. The Council expects supervisors and supervisees to make an attempt to resolve these issues informally and differences should be recorded. Where problems continue, either can approach the supervisor’s line managers to seek mediation and resolution of the problem.

* 1. **Escalation**

If problems can’t be resolved informally or go beyond the boundaries of supervision then in some circumstances other procedures may have to utilised such as grievance, disciplinary, capability, harassment and discrimination, absence management. These issues have specific procedures and will be dealt with in accordance with City Council policies. Staff have the right to be formally represented when these procedures are invoked.

* 1. **Storage**

If a paper record of the supervision is kept then it must be kept secure and in a locked cabinet. A copy of the record should be provided to the supervisee, who should also ensure the record is kept securely. Hard copies should be agreed, signed and dated by the supervisor and supervisee. When the member of staff moves post or ceases employment, these records should be transferred to new manager or archived. (Business Support will assist).

Where electronically held supervision records are in use, these should be shared with the member of staff, stored; password protected and when the member of staff moves post or ceases employment, these records should be transferred to new manager or archived electronically. (Business Support will assist). Electronic records should be e-mailed to the supervisee to give the supervisee an opportunity to comment and amendments made as required. The e-mail trail will serve in lieu of a signature.

There are circumstances where it may be necessary for supervisors to discuss information gained from supervision with senior managers. Supervision records may be released for the purpose of monitoring the quality of supervision, or used as documentation in disciplinary or legal proceedings. Supervision records are the property of Children's Services. Where issues of a personal nature, to the member of staff, are contained within a supervision record, the confidentiality of such material should be protected in line with the Data Protection Act.

* 1. **Information Sharing**

The supervisee may keep a record of supervision as part of any continuous professional development portfolio. Any record should avoid personal identification of service users or third parties, as service users may be able to apply for access to such records under the Data Protection Act. Supervisees should ensure that supervision notes retained are electronically secure, or if paper records are held, they are kept secure and confidential.

The principle of confidentiality within supervision does not exclude the supervisor or supervisee from their responsibilities. Should evidence of misconduct, unsafe or illegal practice arise, this must be reported to the line manager of recipient of the information.

Where a member of staff is involved in any of the above cases (but not as Keyworker or Lead Professional) or supporting a family or young person as a ‘single agency involvement’ cases should be discussed within four weeks of allocation and then as a minimum every eight weeks. However the frequency of case supervision may be increased at the workers request or at the manager’s discretion.

1. **Managing Diversity**

People are not the same in terms of personality, working styles, communication preferences, learning styles, culture, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, knowledge, experience etc. Employees and service users are different and have different aspirations, desires and needs. There may well be differences that a supervisor should recognise in their approach to supervision of individual employees and identify the support needs accordingly. Most importantly employees should understand how they are to be supervised.

Any concerns about inequalities for service users or discrimination in the workplace should be raised immediately with the relevant line manager. In the event that an employee has concerns about their supervisor then these can be raised with the supervisor’s line manager. The City Council has a Harassment and Discrimination Policy, which outlines the procedure for dealing with complaints from employees.

Supervisors need to be mindful that not all employees feel comfortable in large groups and may not wish to speak or raise their individual issues in a group situation. Confidentiality will also need to be clarified with individuals and the group.