## PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR – MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT/ DECISION MAKING

This guidance has been drafted for managers and practitioners to provide clarity on defining what Good Management oversight looks like, with an emphasis on consistency and minimum standards.

SCRs often highlight that in child death cases, management oversight or decision making was not timely, specific, or evident. – Audit findings over 2018 echoed this finding.

**Definition-**

Management oversight is a combination of actions that demonstrate to an impartial source that the case is well managed via different levels of involvement, scrutiny, challenge and clearly expressed expectations. It is more than case direction. It is about good leadership in terms of knowledge, skills, practice and standards. It is about clarity on desired outcomes and when these will need to be achieved, and questioning the difference that interventions are having on the child in question.

**Principles**

The key principles of Management Oversight are to ensure there is scrutiny on statutory compliance, quality of standards, consistency and clarity on purpose of intervention.

Effective management oversight reduces the risk of drift and delay in terms of planning and intervention for children/ YP and their families.

Management Oversight reflects accountability in terms of decision making, timeliness and subsequent actions.

Management Oversight is necessary to ensure there is transparency In all that we do - Very often decisions have been made following discussions and conversations between the SW and TM, or TM and SM but have not been recorded in a manner that clarifies this is a decision and this is the rationale behind the decision.

Management Oversight provides information on a SW’s performance and training needs.

Management oversight provides a robust Quality Assurance check, in and on the system about processes and the impact services are having on the child’s life and whether something different is needed.

**Good Practice Issues**

Management Oversight occurs at different times within the child’s record depending on what stage of the journey they are at in terms of services received.

This oversight needs to be visible, clear and timely.-

* Contact and referrals will contain decision making by a TM in terms of progression to a referral, the verification of consent issues, and next steps for a case.
* Allocation of cases should have an accompanying Case Direction setting out the role of the SW in the case and desired outcomes with timescales
* All new allocations within ART will have an Initial Mapping completed by SW and TM. This will be placed on the child’s record and should be reviewed in supervision.
* ART TM’s will review all new case allocations at 4 weeks to confirm progress of assessment and potential next steps.
* Sec 47 investigations will be reviewed by TM by Day 5 to ascertain if the threshold for progressing to a conference is met or not – this decision will be recorded on a case direction.
* Case Directions are added to Children’s Records as per the supervision policy in terms of frequency and purpose.
* Sign off and Quality Assurance takes place with assessments, plans, reviews, requests for service, investigations and any legal advice – QA comments from these processes should be added onto a Case Direction if further work is required.
* Management oversight and decision making needs to be evident in any cases where drift and delay is an issue.
* Previous actions need to be followed up to ensure that progress on a case is visible and relevant.
* Management oversight needs to take place at point of case transfer in terms of quality, consistency and compliance with the necessary expectations for transfer.
* Audit findings and action plans need to be reflected upon within supervision and recorded on a Case Direction record.
* Audits will identify the different ways Management Oversight is demonstrated and to what degree this is felt to be effective or not – this will inform the process of learning from audits and the work towards consistency in expectations, standards and outcomes for children.
* Effective management oversight will be demonstrated through evidence of direction, challenge, reflection, and follow up throughout the Childs record. This will include responding to any challenge or QA comments from the IRO or CPC.

TM need to ensure that Managerial oversight is transparent in terms of the progress on the case and also the performance of the SW – use appropriate processes to reflect on this. Individual developmental needs should be linked to the training plan and samples of good practice should be highlighted for the yearly appraisal.

Service Managers have a role in modelling good oversight. Supervision and decision making with TM should be recorded on the Childs records. QA and or audit outcomes should be placed on the Childs records where it is relevant to the child. Performance issues will be placed on the SW record for follow-up. – any follow up action identified should be placed on the child’s record .

**Key Timescales**

Timeliness is a repeat concern within audits and Ofsted reviews, timescales need to be recorded clearly on case directions. Ongoing does not provide a specific timeframe, as a result it cannot be measured or evaluated in terms of outcomes and progress.

TM need to refer to the supervision policy around expectations and timescales. Deviations to these need to be recorded with a clear explanation as to why this has taken place

TM need to refer to the MOSAIC timescales in terms of progressing processes

Outstanding actions must be followed up and recorded – this clearly demonstrates accountability and may act as an indicator that the practitioner is struggling. Accountability lies with the Team Manager and Service Manager to ensure the practitioner is supported and that the child’s case is progressed in a timely and safe manner.

**Childs Perspective**

It is important to remember that a case file is not just a business file, it is a record of the child’s life. In the future they may wish to access their file and will want to know who made key decisions in their life and more importantly why. They will want to know who was checking to make sure they were ok, they were being spoken and listened to, and what steps were actively taken to make their lives better.

The file will need to reflect transparency of decision making and challenge. This will help the YP recognise they were treated as an individual. The YP will want to see that everything was done to support them to remain with their families, or to maintain contact wherever possible. Where this wasn’t possible and where situations were unsafe, the YP will want to see evidence of what happened and why.

Place yourself in a YP shoes and you read repeat case directions to visit a relative and it is not followed up. To update the chronology and its not done – what message does this give the young person? This does not reflect the Core Standards and expectations that South Glos has in terms of good decision making and action.

**Final Points**

Decision making is a daily event, raising consciousness as to how this is captured is a challenge.

Decision making is based on information, the challenge is how does a TM / SM triangulate information if chronologies and other pieces of the puzzle are missing?

In South Glos Good Practice Decisions will **not** be made by either the TM or SM if key documents are missing; ie Chronology, assessment and plan.

Accountability for practice lies within all of us. The ability to reflect is a necessary tool. The role of the TM/SM is to facilitate the process of reflection **with** the practitioner and not **for** them.

Quality assurance is a core responsibility within the role of management oversight. If something is not done or complete do not sign it off, as signing off means it is complete and of a suitable standard. When Sign off is required in order to progress a process, a case direction should be made, highlighting the action that has taken place and what steps are necessary in order to address the quality or missing information.

 Sign off may be necessary for a process but use a case direction to highlight what else is needed.

Remember standards are there to be met, including those of the Organisation, Ofsted and professional regulator- HCPC.

In South Glos the model of High Expectation, High Support and High Challenge needs to be evident in all that we do. **And** we do what we do, for the Child and their experience.

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