Gateshead Council

Care Wellbeing and Learning

EARLY HELP SERVICE

SUPERVISION/STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

For family intervention (early help) staff working directly with children, young people and their families

---

Document control and record of amendments

Version	Reason for amendment	Amended by/date
V1	New	February 2018
V2	Reviewed – revised template	April 2019
	Review date	**April 2020**

1.   **Introduction**

The following guidance has been developed to ensure that there is a clear framework for supervision for all staff working within the Early Help Service. The focus throughout the supervision process is to ensure the delivery of a safe, high quality service for children and families, as well as providing opportunities for staff development, support and guidance.

This Guidance does not address processes for dealing with matters of discipline or grievance, which are subject to other local authority personnel procedures. This supervision framework is intended as a helpful guide to practice. On occasions, if differences arise that cannot be resolved through supervision, both parties should seek advice or resolution through discussion with the next level of management.

2.   **Policy Statement**

Gateshead Council is committed to promoting the development of its staff through supervision, in order to ensure that Service Users receive a quality service which is safe and efficient and staff are enabled to develop skills and knowledge.

"Supervision is a process in which one worker is given responsibility to work with others in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives include "competent accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support".

(Morrison 1993)

We recognise that services can only be delivered by competent staff who:

- know what is expected of them;

- have the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed to do their job;

- have access to training and development opportunities;

- are supported and managed effectively.

Supervision is the basic process through which professional staff are managed and supported. All staff have the right to regular supervision. The delivery of supervision is a priority task for managers and supervisees.

This policy establishes a framework to ensure that the support and developmental needs of staff are met and to maintain practice standards, in order that services may be delivered effectively and efficiently.

3.   **Helpful Guidance for Supervising Staff**

3.1 **Supervision**

Supervision is the basic tool through which professional staff are managed and supported. Supervision provides both participants with a regular opportunity to obtain feedback, share concerns, review progress, identify learning needs and plan.

Supervision, however, must be aligned to staff development and appraisal processes if the aim of a competent and confident workforce is to be achieved.

3.2 Staff Development

To become competent, staff need access to opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and values appropriate to their tasks. Those tasks must be clearly identified and linked to the goals of the service and organisation if staff development planning is to be truly effective. Managers/Supervisors are the key people in this process, for it is they who, in supervision, identify what development is needed to achieve goals and it is only they who can evaluate the effectiveness of the learning/development.

Personal development planning is an important activity for staff and managers and should take place formally at least once a year, within the context of supervision, with a formal review of the plan also taking place once a year.

3.3 Appraisal and Development

The Council's Performance Management of People and Appraisal and Development (A&D) is about delivering results through employees. It is about getting the best from people; helping them to achieve their potential and recognising their contribution in achieving Vision 2030.

Further information can be obtained from http://council/a&d/index.html

3.4 Principles of Supervision

Reflective practice is key to effective family intervention and high quality regular supervision should be an integral part of family support practice.

Supervision should be based on a rigorous understanding of the key elements of effective family support supervision, as well as the research and evidence which underpins good social work practice. Supervision should challenge practitioners to reflect critically on their cases and should foster an inquisitive approach to family intervention. All employers should:

Promote continuous learning and knowledge sharing through which family intervention staff are encouraged to draw out learning points by reflecting on their own cases in light of the experiences of peers

Provide regular supervision training for Early Help managers

Assign explicit responsibility for the oversight of appropriate supervision and for issues that arise during supervision

Provide additional professional supervision by specialist professionals for practitioners delivering specific, evidence-based interventions.

Ensure that supervision takes place regularly (monthly) and consistently

Ensure that supervision lasts at least an hour and a half of uninterrupted time

Monitor actual frequency and quality of supervision against clear statements about what is expected

Supervision should be reflective, developmental and address the human focus of social work:

- The focus of supervision is that the best interests of children and young people are paramount.

- All staff require supervision. It is a necessity not a luxury.

- Supervision is a shared responsibility and a two-way learning process for supervisor and supervisee.

- Supervision is a partnership between the supervisor, the supervisee and the employer.

- Supervision is regular and uninterrupted.

- Supervision involves management, development, mediation and support.

- Supervision promotes competent, accountable and empowered practice.

- Supervision promotes and models anti-discriminatory practice both within the Supervisory process and with Service Users.

- Supervision is based on an understanding of how adults learn.

- Supervision is a private but not necessarily a confidential process. Supervisors will maintain confidentiality with regard to personal information about their supervisees unless it is relevant to:

  i) Make recommendations for action concerning that worker's professional performance.

  ii) The pursuit of disciplinary action involving that worker.

  iii) If the Supervisor feels it is necessary to disclose confidential information to his/her Line Manager, this will only be done with the full knowledge of the Supervisee.

3.5 **The functions of supervision include**:

- Management

- Staff Development

- Support

- Mediation

3.5.1 Management

The purpose of this function is to ensure that work for which staff may be held accountable is carried out to a satisfactory standard within the Council's Policies and Procedures. This function will be achieved through:

Managing the staff member's workload and ensuring all cases are discussed in supervision.

Ensuring care plan objectives are planned, agreed and progressing.

Ensuring that records and administration are complete.

Conducting regular appraisal and development.

Evaluating effective practice outcomes.

3.5.2 Staff Development

The purpose of this function is to enable staff to reflect on their own competence and to facilitate their development through the identification of learning opportunities. This will be achieved through:

- Identifying preferred learning styles and barriers to learning.

- Assessing development needs and identifying learning opportunities.

- Constructing, implementing and reviewing personal development plans.

- Giving constructive feedback on all aspects of performance.

- Developing a 'culture of learning' within the team.

- Compliance with anti-discriminatory practice.

3.5.3 Support

The purpose of this is to ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the work on them, and prevent issues adversely affecting their work with Service Users. This will be achieved through:

- Creating a safe environment within supervision.

- Clarifying the boundaries between support, counselling, consultation and confidentiality.

- Enabling and empowering expression of feelings.

- Monitoring the health and emotional functioning of the staff member, especially with regards to the effect of stress.

3.5.4 **Mediation**

The purpose of this function is to ensure that issues arising from the interface between the staff member, team and the organisation are dealt with satisfactorily.

This will be achieved through:

- Clarifying the team's role and function.

- Briefing senior management about key issues.

- Managing concerns and complaints about colleagues.

- Consulting and briefing staff on organisational developments.

- Contributing to policy and procedures.

4. **Supervision Methods**

4.1 **Individual**

Formal, regular one to one supervision which takes place in private at a pre-arranged time, at the beginning of which an agenda is agreed. This method of supervision will be in place for all staff. A record of dates when supervision has taken place is recorded on the (Excel) Supervision Monitoring template.

4.2 **Responsive Supervision**

Supervision which takes place either individually, or in a group, and which is in response to a particular set of circumstances. This may take the form of a member of staff 'checking out' a particular decision that needs to be made immediately, or debriefing a staff member following an incident or crisis.

4.3 **Group Supervision**

This will involve a group of staff, who are all involved in the same task, meeting with a Supervisor to discuss issues about the work they are doing and the way they work together as a team. This may form part of a staff meeting and will include case discussion focusing on care planning with individual children and/or families.

This method of supervision does not replace formal individual supervision.

4.4 **Supervision Agreements**

The Supervision Agreement will be the foundation of the relationship between each individual worker and their supervisor. It must be negotiated and agreed on an individual basis and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if necessary.

5. **Procedures**

5.1 **The frequency of supervision in the Early Help Service can be summarised as follows;**

Business Support	Bi Monthly
Family Intervention Workers	Monthly
Team Managers	Monthly
Assistant Team Managers	Monthly
Service Managers	Monthly

Part time staff should receive adequate and appropriate supervision. The frequency of supervision should be agreed with the staff member, taking into account the individual's working arrangements and the standard set out above.

The supervision of unqualified staff will be at the discretion of the manager and will take place on either a weekly or fortnightly basis.

These are the minimum standards.

5.2 **Each** supervision agreement **must contain the following**:

▪ **The frequency of formal supervision sessions**

The frequency should reflect the supervisee's level of experience and competence (see above). A supervision session should be uninterrupted and last for 90 minutes or more.

▪ **The location of formal supervision sessions**

The Manager will endeavour to provide appropriate surroundings for supervision to take place, which are as far as possible comfortable and free from interruption.

▪ **The roles of supervisor and supervisee**

These should be negotiated and agreed.

▪ **The content of supervision sessions**

Ground rules and agendas for sessions should reflect the four major functions of supervision (management, staff development, support and mediation) and specific mention should be made of the reasonableness to carry forward issues arising from supervision accountability and responsibility should be claimed by individuals and the authority.

- **The arrangements for the production of an action plan**

  Each Supervisee should have an action plan to meet his/her individual needs. This should include a training profile and details of other appropriate methods of gaining knowledge and experience, including other models of supervision, which may be available outside of the formal supervision session.

- **The arrangements for 'informal' supervision and consultancy**

  Of necessity, there will be occasions when discussions about individual pieces of work cannot be left until the next planned supervision session. Agreement should be reached as to the mechanism for 'informal' supervision and the circumstances under which it is appropriate.

  Clarification should be given as to the role of any other staff member used as a consultant because of individual knowledge or skill vis-à-vis the supervisor in terms of accountability.

  The confidentiality of the Supervisor/Supervisee relationship

5.3 Standards

Supervision is a private but not a confidential process. Supervision records are the property of the organisation, although, clearly, personal information not relevant to work issues should not be recorded in formal supervision records.

5.4 The Recording of supervision sessions

Agreement should be reached. The supervisor is responsible for recording supervision notes and sharing these with the supervisee. Supervision notes must always be typed and placed in an electronic folder for the individual worker.

5.5 The complaints and review process

Supervisees should be clear about whom they can contact if they feel that the terms of their Supervision Agreement are not being met and this cannot be resolved within the supervision and review process. If supervisees have concerns in relation to their Supervision Agreement this should be discussed with the appropriate Service Manager.

A review of the Supervision Agreement should be undertaken six monthly.

5.6 **Supervision Records**

Supervision records should demonstrate that the following minimum standards and objectives are met.

5.7 **Objectives**

- That workers are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

- To assist professional development.

- To reduce problems likely to affect workers' abilities to deliver services.

5.8 **Staff receiving supervision are responsible for**:

- Preparing for supervision by contributing to an agenda;

- Providing feedback on plans and progress;

- Identifying their own planning and development needs;

- Contributing to the development of a personal Development Plan.

- An example of the issues to be covered in a Supervision Agreement can be found on page 16

5.9 **Supervision Records**

The recording of supervision sessions is the responsibility of the supervisor. A copy of the supervision notes will be given to the supervisee. They must clearly identify the tasks and responsibilities agreed for both parties in the session.

5.10 **Access**

Supervision records and contracts of supervision are the property of Care, Wellbeing & Learning, and not the individual. They are private documents, but not confidential, and may be viewed by line managers, and inspectors as and when appropriate. For example in line with the quality assurance procedures or in the case of a dispute.

5.11 **Storage**

The completed contract, and supervision notes, will be kept on the supervisee's Supervision Record for future reference upon leaving the council.

5.12 **Training Profile**

The supervisor should maintain a record on the supervision file of all formal training courses attended, and other training development opportunities offered to the supervisee.

6. **Handy Hints for Supervisors**

Planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluating the supervisory process will be carried out in accordance with Council Policy.

Each employee will have a named Supervisor. In the absence of team members due to sick or annual leave, supervisors should take responsibility for checking and responding to correspondence/client related contact.

All managers will endeavour to provide appropriate resources to facilitate supervision – both in allocation of time, development of training and the identification of suitable venues.

There should be a written agreement between Supervisor and Supervisee, which will be reviewed regularly. The frequency of evaluation will vary depending on the needs of individual work groups but all supervision agreements must be evaluated at least annually.

Managers of Supervisors should monitor regularly to ensure agreed policy and standards are being maintained for those for whom they are accountable.

Supervisors are expected to assess their supervisee's capabilities and with them, reflect on identifying areas of strength and weakness and what action can or needs to be taken to enhance professional development.

The supervision session is, therefore, the mechanism whereby supervisor and supervisee reflect upon and make action plans about supervisee's professional development.

6.1 **It may be helpful for supervisors to consider the following points:**

- How does the supervisee best learn? Are there any blocks to their learning which need to be worked upon?

- Do supervisor and supervisee understand/agree on the current level of knowledge and skills?

- What areas of performance need to be developed and expanded? How can this be done – by formal training; consultation; individual work?

- Is regular feedback given to the supervisee on performance? Is there agreement on how feedback is to be given and where/how information for this feedback is obtained?

- Does the supervisee feel valued as a professional and as a person? How can the supervisor ensure that this happens?

- Is the supervisee clear about the boundaries between support, counselling, consultation and confidentiality in supervision?

- Has the supervisor enabled the supervisees to feel safe in evaluating their practice and how this impacts on their perception of themselves?

- Has the supervisor given the supervisees permission to talk about their feelings, including issues around discrimination and oppression?

- Has the supervisor helped the supervisees to reflect on any difficulties they may have in relation to colleagues/other professionals and assisted them in resolving any conflicts?

- Has the supervisor shared with the supervisees the possibility of/need to seek external counselling and any implications this may have about their current performance? Does this need to be shared with other line managers? If so, does the supervisee understand/accept the need for this?

6.2 **Staff Receiving Supervision**

Should expect:

- To have an uninterrupted session;

- Effective and professional supervision;

- To be treated with dignity and respect;

- To be helped to recognise potential;

- A respect for confidentiality

6.3 **Guidance for Supervisors & Supervisees**

6.3.1 **Supervision Responsibilities**

Both parties to the supervision process have responsibilities.

6.3.2 **Supervising Early Help Staff: -**

The following points are suggested as an agenda for supervising childcare staff:

- Is the worker clear about their roles and responsibilities? Do they understand the limits to their authority?

- Does the supervision discussion reflect the priority of allocated work? Are the needs of some Service Users being over looked?' Is the balance of time spent between caseload and other activities appropriate?

- Have assessments been undertaken/in process? Are they written down?

- Has a plan been made? Is it written down? Has it been agreed with the Service User (and carers) and other professionals involved?

- Are the time scales realistic and appropriate?

- Is the basis of decisions clear to the worker? Do they know over which issues they need to consult their supervisor before making a decision?

- Have policies and procedures been followed?

- Have all relevant administrative tasks been undertaken/completed?

- What tasks have not been undertaken/completed?

- Has relevant agency recording been completed?

- Have any necessary meetings been arranged and preparation completed.

- Has an action plan for the next work period been agreed?

6.3.3 **For overall workload:**

Does the worker understand the administrative and procedural requirements of their role? Do they know where to obtain relevant information or whom to consult?

Have relevant 'practice' issues been considered, e.g. alternative ways of working; different approaches and techniques; has consideration been given to relevant literature or research which may inform practice? Are there any personnel with skills/knowledge it may be useful to consult?

Does the worker have capacity to take on additional work?
What type of work would be most suitable to consolidate or expand skills/knowledge?

6.3.4 **Audit and Monitoring the Quality of Supervision**

Supervision should be embedded into an accountability framework.
Team Managers to observe social work practice:
1. Per year
2. Supervision audits annually by service manager.

6.3.5 **Training for Supervision**

Regular training for supervisions is essential to ensure there is full participation in a two-way learning process. Supervision needs to support family intervention workers in a challenging profession, recognise and address stress, professional development and the wealth of emotional tensions often arising from family support practice.

It is mandatory for all workers delivering supervision to attend training and supervision refresher training will be identified at appropriate intervals.

EARLY HELP SERVICE

SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

Between: _____ **and** _____

Frequency: _____ _____

Location: _____ _____

Duration of session: _____

All information between supervisor and supervisee will be treated with respect and in a professional manner. Supervision can be individual or as part of a group.

Agenda and structure

Formal supervision sessions should be structured. An agenda will be agreed at the beginning of the supervision session between the supervisor and supervisee in order to make the most effective use of time. Formal supervision sessions should ordinarily last for about and probably no more than, one to one and a half hours.

Content

Supervision will cover:
- Review of last supervision and actions
- Case discussion and plans
- Performance management
- Training and development
- Other support.

Anti-oppressive

Supervision should be based on anti-oppressive principles and should be sensitive to race, gender, disability, impairment, age, religion and sexuality.

Record keeping All supervision sessions should be recorded including areas covered, discussion points, agreed action plans, timescales and who the action is to undertaken by.

Roles of Supervisor & Supervisee

Copies of the record should be available to both supervisor and the supervisee and can be accessed by the supervisor's manager or any other person with a reason to access the supervision record as deemed necessary by the authority's code of conduct.

Cancellations

In the event that a scheduled supervision session has to be cancelled by either party, it will be re-scheduled at the point of cancellation proving to be unavoidable. The session should be re-scheduled to take place within 5 workings days of the date of the original booked session. If the cause of the cancellation is the sickness absence of either party then another supervision session will be booked within 5 working days of the person's return to work. In the event that the supervisor is absent from work for more than two weeks unplanned leave, it is the responsibility of the supervisee to report to the supervisor's line manager for alternative supervision arrangements to be made. The reason for supervision not taking place must be recorded by the supervisor in the supervisee supervision record.

Disagreements

Areas of disagreement between supervisor and supervisees will be recorded on the supervision records. Areas of disagreement that cannot be resolved may be referred to the line manager.

Review of Supervision

Supervision session – process, content, length, frequency, format and style should be reviewed by the supervisor and the supervisee at least annually.

Agreement

We agree that supervision will be given and received in accordance with the Supervision/staff policy for qualified social work staff and staff working directly with children young people and their families

Supervision dates for the Year.

Appraisal and Development dates for the Year.

Care Wellbeing and Learning

SUPERVISION RECORD

Person supervised	
Supervisor	
Line Manager (if different from supervisor)	
Date and time	

Agenda

1. Review of last supervision and actions

2. Case discussion to include:

   - Safety of children
   - Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes
   - Follow up previous actions
   - Progress of plan – sustainability of changes made
   - Reflection and challenge on case
   - New actions to progress plan
   - Voice of the child
   - Recognise positive practice

3. Performance management:

   - Caseload points weighting
   - Findings arising from case file audits
   - Work plan & priorities (current workload/new work)
   - Review of targets and individual/team objectives

4. Training & development:

   - Review of training activities
   - Discussion of training needs

5. Other support:
   - Annual leave, flexi, sickness
   - Health and safety
   - Welfare

6. What's gone well?

7. Any other business

Summary of case discussion including:	

Use prompts to structure/evidence a reflective case discussion	Agreed actions with timescales for completion
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes**	

Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions	

Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions	

Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	
P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	

P Number(s) **Safety of child/ren – name the risks and protective factors** **Impact of interventions with children – evidence of outcomes** Follow up previous actions Assessment and plan dates Progress of plan – comment on sustainability of change New actions in plan Child seen Reflection and challenge on case Voice of the child Positive practice	

Performance Management	Agreed actions
Caseload points weighting Findings arising from case file audits Work plan & priorities (current workload/new work) Review of targets and individual/team objectives	
Training and Development Review of training activities Discussion of training needs	**Agreed actions**

21	
Other support Annual leave, flexi, sickness Health and safety Welfare	**Agreed actions**
What's gone well?	**Agreed Actions**
Any other Business	**Agreed actions**

Manager signature		**Date**	
Staff signature		**Date**	

EARLY HELP SERVICE – SUPERVISION AGENDA

SUPERVISION AGENDA

The following agenda provides a framework to help managers and employees to structure their discussions.

- Agree agenda items at the beginning of the meeting

- Check how the member of staff is feeling.

- Review the previous supervision notes, tasks and actions and update previous supervision record, as required.

- Managing performance and work update – review tasks, goals and targets. Revise and agree new targets, as required.

- Development and training.

- Annual leave/TOIL/Flexi.

- Personnel or employment issues including: sickness, disciplinary, grievance, capability.

- Equality issues.

- Health and safety.

- Budgets and finance issues relevant to the service/team or unit/tasks e.g. more cost effective ways of delivering a service.

- Any other business.

- Date of next meeting.

For some supervisees, particularly managers, the following may also be relevant areas for discussion.

- Corporate and departmental strategic plans.

- Business plans.

- Budget/finance (if relevant)

- Delivery & Improvement Statement – performance indicators.

- Cases – recordings to be on a separate form and placed on service users case file.

- Staffing or rota issues.

- Complaints and investigations.

- Recruitment.

- Staff performance and appraisals.

- Agree/setting targets and timescales for completion of work.

- Monitoring work performance.

- Individual and team morale and motivation.

- Discussion re-projects or task groups.

- Stakeholders and partnership issues