Effective supervision can help staff feel valued, prepared, supported and committed and also improves retention (Gibbs). Lack of supervision can result in work overload, stress, sickness, absence, as well as reduction in competence and confidence. The most effective supervision combines the four functions of supervision which are interdependent, as outlined by Morrison. These are:

* Management to ensure competent accountable practice and performance. To enable time to focus on skills, curiosity, understanding and engaging with a range of tools rather than sole adherence to procedures
* Development to facilitate continuous professional development (personal supervision)
* Support - Providing personal and emotional support
* Mediation - Engaging the individual with the organisation

Supervision should reflect on practice to:

* Uphold professional standards
* Manage risk and protection alongside promoting rights
* Manage the emotional impact of work
* Challenge constructively in the interests of people we work with, worker and agency
* Use knowledge and experience to explore new ways of working, including theory, legislation and research
* Identify and manage stress factors that may impinge on the practitioner, the people we work with or agency
* Communicate with supervisor on organisational issues including anti-oppressive practice
* Manage realistic workloads and caseloads
* Support and set goals for employee’s professional development in line with the person’s PDPR
* Support a variety of CPD activities, and the continuous record of these

Supervision is a process for integrating thinking, feeling and action. It is an inextricable part of the assessment, planning, intervention, and review process through which effective services are delivered. This document sets out the policy and practice standards for individual formal supervision group supervision and quality assurance of supervision in South Gloucestershire Children’s Services.

*‘All Integrated Children’s Services (ICS) practitioners, permanent or locum, will have planned, regular, protected individual time for formal supervision with their manager. This includes managers, senior practitioners, social workers, newly qualified social workers (NQSW’s), personal advisors, social work assistants, family support workers and students.’*

Supervision is an essential activity for Integrated Children’s services practitioners that is endorsed and supported by the relevant professional bodies and managers in ICS. Section 5 of the Local Government Association’s Standards for Employers of Social Workers sets out expectations for supervision:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/social-worker-standards/standards-employers>

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**INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION POLICY & PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Individual supervision can be formal, taking place in a pre-arranged meeting, or informal by way of unplanned discussions between a practitioner and their manager.

Below are the standards for the provision of formal supervision. **Guidance on recording informal supervision can be found in Standard Four.**

**STANDARD ONE: FREQUENCY** **& CONDITIONS**

All Integrated Children’s Social Care practitioners, permanent or locum, will have planned, regular, protected individual time for formal supervision with their manager. This includes managers, senior practitioners, social workers, newly qualified social workers (NQSW’s), personal advisors, social work assistants, family support workers and students.

The first supervisory session should involve a discussion about how both parties would like supervision to be conducted and agreeing the **supervision contract.** The contract should be signed by both parties**. A template for the supervision contract can be found in Appendix 1.** The contract should be reviewed annually during appraisal.

* All case holding practitioners should receive a minimum of 2 hours, weekly for the first 4 weeks, fortnightly for the following 4 weeks then no less than every 4 weeks thereafter. This will enable thorough conversations to take place with new staff to ensure that Induction is on track, they are introduced to key people all of which will support them to deliver good practice.
* All non-case holding practitioners should receive 1.5 to 2 hours no less than every 4 weeks.
* Contingency arrangements should be made to cover absences wherever possible and if supervision is cancelled, it should be re-scheduled at the earliest opportunity to ensure the required frequency is maintained.
* Supervision should begin punctually; sessions will take place in a private room or virtual and interruptions should be minimised. Frequent lateness, cancellations or interruptions caused by either party should be a matter for discussion.

**STANDARD TWO: PREPARATION**

Both parties will prepare for supervision, and this should be recognised as workload time.

· Supervision is a two-way process and both parties have responsibility for bringing items for the agenda which will be set at the start of each session.

· The supervisor should bring accurate information about the employee’s strengths and gaps in performance and capability including feedback from recent audits and performance data ensuring that any actions are followed through and evidenced on file.

· The supervisee should bring accurate information about developments in their case work and/or project work, including reflection and hypotheses about plans to achieve the best for young people and their families

· Both parties should have read relevant material, reports, and case records, for discussion in advance.

**In the 1:1 supervision record, there is space for the practitioner to complete prior to supervision and to send to their manager at an agreed timeframe, in advance of formal supervision.**

**STANDARD THREE: CONTENT**

All four functions of supervision will be addressed: management, development, support and mediation:

**Development:** Supervisors should identify and promote the employees continuing professional development needs, including discussion about how recent learning activity is being applied to practice

**Support:** Supervisors should provide a safe place for employees to reflect on the emotional impact of the work and any personal matters that may affect their practice, capability and/or health and wellbeing.

**Mediation:** Supervisors should engage employees in organisational developments and support employees to balance the needs of services users with the need to provide equitable ‘best value’ services.

**Management:** Supervisors should ensure employees understand their role and responsibilities. That they are accountable to meet legal and statutory requirements, departmental strategies, policies, procedures and practice standards.

· Workload/case management will be discussed at every supervision. If there are capacity concerns, a plan of action to address the situation (i.e., prioritising tasks, reducing caseload etc…) should be put in place.

· Practice issues arising from QA activity and performance against key indicators for the service will be regularly monitored and assessed, if there are gaps in capability, a supportive development plan will need to be put in place to address them. For social workers, professional capability should be measured against the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Children and Families Social Workers (see Appendix 6), (see Appendix 7: Practice Framework).

· Supervisors must report any capability problems to the next line manager, to discuss and plan how they will be addressed promptly. Supervisors should also report good practice, to make best use of supervisee’s skills and abilities.

· Supervision should be linked to probation and appraisal. The setting and achievement of probation requirements, appraisal objectives and ways of working will be continually monitored and discussed as necessary.

· A minimum of two direct observations of practice per year will be carried out for all case holding staff to support learning in supervision. A template for recording direct observations of practice can be found in Appendix 5.

· A minimum of one observation of supervision will take place per year by the supervisor’s manager to provide feedback and support learning. A Template for recording observation of supervision can be found in Appendix 5a.

· Cases will be routinely discussed and reflected on. All case holding practitioners will have supervision at the frequency outlined in the **Supervision Frequency document** (Appendix 10)

Managers will use their professional judgement to determine which cases need a light touch or a more in-depth discussion.

**All cases where a closure, transfer, child protection or legal planning decision is being considered or made must be discussed in supervision before or just after being made.**

**STANDARD FOUR: RECORDING**

Supervision discussions will be recorded using the relevant format and signed by both parties.

Personal supervision - Both parties should have a copy of the record, signed, scanned and stored on Personal Supervision Confidential folder file (Appendix 2).

· Formal supervision will be recorded on the Individual case Supervision Recording Template in Appendix 3.

· For supervisees who are the statutory lead professional and have an allocated caseload, the detail of case specific discussions about the child or carer should be recorded on the child’s file on Mosaic (See Appendix 3 ‘Individual supervision template’).

· Supervisees need a safe space to reflect on their casework and professional capabilities, with support and challenge from their supervisor. Therefore, supervisory discussions may explore personal values or issues that may influence or impact upon professional capabilities. Supervision records should reflect the content of the discussions and managers should use their judgement about the level of detail to record. In exercising this judgement, supervisors should be mindful that supervisory records may be requested as evidence where capability issues are raised. Supervision records are an organisational record and are not confidential, they may be viewed for quality assurance purposes. However personal supervision records should not be shared with peers or administrative staff.

· Issues about a supervisee’s professional capability should be recorded on the supervisee’s individual professional development record PDPR and in personal supervision appendix 2 and should not be on the case management record, which is the child’s record on Mosaic.

**· Supervision records needs to show defensible decision making, demonstrating a clear, transparent, considered, evidence-based rationale that can be explained to others.**

**The record should: 1. outline the presenting issues, 2. review the outcome of previous decisions and actions, 3. show the options available, 4. show the option/course of action chosen, 5. the rationale for why that decision was made and 6. any disagreements about the decision and chosen course of action.**

Internal disputes that sometimes occur between people, teams or services should not be recorded on the child/carer’s record.

· It is not necessary to record every informal supervisory discussion that takes place. However, all discussions where significant decisions are made, or management directions are given relating to a child, family and/or carers, which may impact on the direction of the case, should be recorded by the most senior person in the discussion. For recording informal supervisory discussions, the ‘Supervision/Management Oversight’ case note can be used.

· If supervision is permanently transferred to another Manager, all the personal supervision records must also be passed to the new supervisor.

**GROUP SUPERVISION: POLICY & PRACTICE STANDARDS GROUP SUPERVISION**

Group Supervision is designed to assist teams to become more agile and confident in action learning, building habits to move quickly from information to analysis and judgement and then judgement based on analysis and judgement.

The purpose of group supervision is to build strong team habits around analysis and judgement to increase confidence in decision-making and practice. Good group supervision creates a thinking process that will lead to more energetic and dynamic practice because it builds a shared sense of carrying risk within the whole team; this reduces the sense of isolation that leads may practitioners to feel “if it goes wrong, it’s my fault”.

The group process is designed to:

* Build a shared, structured, collective team and agency culture and process for thinking through cases from a strengths-based approach, without losing sight of risk.
* Enable practitioners to explore each other’s cases, bringing their best thinking, including alternative perspectives without getting caught in one or two people dominating the group or telling the case presenting practitioner what they must do.
* Develop a shared practice of bringing a questioning approach to casework rather than trying to arrive at answers.
* Help practitioners work with a sense of humility about what they think they know. Adopting a sense of humility means professionals will continually review the assessment based on new information and the outcome and impact of action taken.

**STANDARD ONE: FREQUENCY**

All teams will have planned, regular, protected time for group supervision.

· To build and sustain the questioning process as described above, all teams should hold a group supervision session every 2-4 weeks.

· Contingency arrangements should be made to cover absences wherever possible and if supervision is cancelled, it should be re-scheduled at the earliest opportunity to ensure the required frequency is maintained.

· Group supervision will take place in a meeting room and interruptions should be minimised.

**STANDARD TWO: PREPARATION**

All team members will be prepared to participate fully in the process.

· The case to be discussed will be identified before group supervision; this will enable the practitioner to consider the most important information (strengths, risks, and questions) that they will present to the group.

· The facilitator and advisor roles will also be identified prior to the meeting to enable them to review their roles in the process, for further details see the practice guidance on Signs of Safety Group Learning and Supervision Process.

· The roles of facilitator and advisor should be regularly rotated amongst team members; this is not a process that needs to be a lead by a manager, though they should also take turns in the various roles

**STANDARD THREE: CONTENT**

The focus is questioning, the process of critical thinking, analysis and safety planning, not detailed information gathering.

· The whole group, and facilitator and advisor in particular, need to focus on the process of critical thinking, analysis and safety planning and not get caught up in over-organisation about content and detailed information gathering, nor in giving answers and advice.

· The process is about growing the capacity of the team to create together a fast process for working through and getting direction on a case.

· The facilitator and advisor will need to ensure the process stays on task by following the guidance on Signs of Safety Group Learning and Supervision Process; following the process will ensure practitioners move on to analysis, judgement, and next steps, rather than allowing the process to stall in continual information gathering.

**STANDARD FOUR: RECORDING**

Group supervision will be recorded using the relevant format:

· A group supervision note will be recorded on Mosaic outlining relevant questions, issues, and insights that arose through the process and next steps to be taken in the case; this will be completed by the presenting practitioner. (See Appendix 4). Adapted from: Group Learning and Supervision Process to Develop Analysis, Judgment, and Questioning Skills. 2015 Resolutions Consultancy Quality assuring supervision.

a) Supervisees who believe they are not receiving supervision (individual & group) in accordance with the standards above, must draw it to the attention of their supervisor and/or an appropriate person. An appropriate person could be a next level manager within the service.

b) The management accountability framework requires that team managers provide a monthly report on the frequency of direct observations, individual and group supervision in their team. To enable the senior management team to monitor that standard one is being met.

c) Supervision records will be viewed at a minimum, bi-monthly and subject to quality assurance audits by senior managers, internal auditors, externally commissioned auditors and/or OFSTED inspectors. Auditing enables the senior management team to monitor that Standards two, three and four are being met.

d) Group supervision will be periodically observed by senior managers, internal auditors, externally commissioned auditors and/or OFSTED inspectors. Auditing enables the senior management team.