



# City of York Council, Children's Social Care Supervision Policy

**Updated December 2020 (version1:2)**

Supervision is the foundation of good social work practice. National reports and publications including Lord Laming's 2009 Review of Child Protection in England, Professor Eileen Munro's 2011 Review of Child Protection and the final report of the Social Work Task Force in 201, all championed the use of effective supervision as a means of improving decision-making and outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The 2012 Ofsted report 'High Expectations, High Support and High Challenge' has emphasised the key role that supervision can have in delivering high performing service, leading to better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

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## 1. Frequency of supervision

	Frequency
Newly qualified workers	weekly for 6 weeks then fortnightly for 6 months, 4 weekly thereafter
Social Workers with 1 year (plus) experience	4 weekly
Service/Team Managers	4 weekly

Residential Home Manager	4 weekly
Group Managers	4 weekly
All other non-SW qualified staff	4 weekly

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

Student social worker supervision frequency to be determined by the Practice Educator.

All staff will have opportunity to engage in an annual Performance Development Review.

Reflective consideration of cases should take place in line with the level of assessed risk and **every case should be considered at least within a 3 month period.**

All children's records will also include management oversight which should be recorded whenever discussions or decisions are made regarding work with a child/family. Ensuring competent accountable practice and performance, managers will record case management decisions and required actions during supervision.

There is an expectation that all managers,

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- Maintain oversight of casework through regular case file audits and supervision to ensure recordings are up to date, evidence based and demonstrate how practice enhances the child's safety, life experience, and education and family networks.
  - Lead by example, including modelling and sharing good practice and disciplines (valuing respectful working relationships, being able to admit you may have it wrong, looking for success in everyday practice, using clear and plain language and the skilful use of authority).
  - Provide supervision (individual and group) that models good practice including leading by questioning and as appropriate full case analysis, use of family networks and robust safety planning.
  - Provide monthly supervision that balances case management decision making with reflective space to explore the emotional and personal impact of practice and interactions with others, including any dilemmas that arise.
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## 2. Model

In recognition of the national and local context and in line with City of York's Practice Model, we are committed to:

- The ongoing development and improvement of supervision in order to introduce change and contribute to positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Meeting the need for all of staff members to receive good quality supervision which is of an equitable standard across the service.

Supervision should ensure a focus on the challenges faced by social workers in carrying out their work and should include,

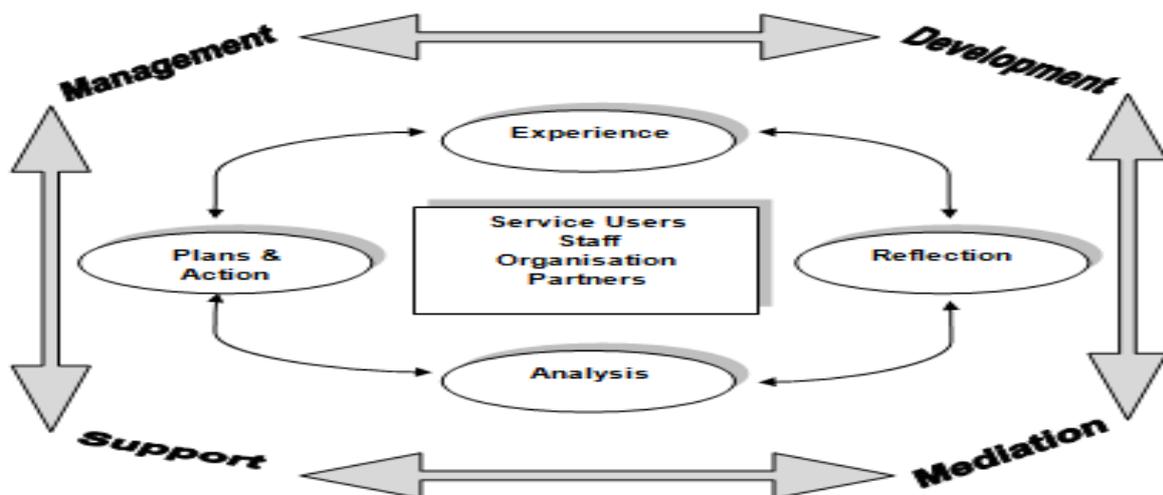
- Reflection on what has been done and curiosity regarding plans for future interventions and actions.
- Discussions on improvements in practice.
- A focus on protecting the public and delivering effective services.
- Reflecting on caseloads, the dynamics of working with families and the emotional and physical impact on social workers.

This supervision policy reflects the principles of Systemic Practice and work between supervisors and supervisees should be based in relational social work and include opportunities for supervisees to consider their professional development and cases through a systemic lens.

The 4x4 model developed by Tony Morrison provides an integrated framework which brings together the functions, stakeholders and main processes involved in supervision. The model integrates the four functions of supervision (Management, Development, Mediation and Support), with the reflective supervision cycle (Experience, Reflection, Analysis and Plans & Actions) and focuses on the needs and priorities of the four stakeholders (Service Users, Staff, Organisation and partners).

Morrison (2005) describes four key functions of Supervision:

- Management – Ensuring competent/accountable practice and performance.
- Development – Facilitating continuous professional development.
- Support – Providing personal and emotional support to workers.
- Mediation – Engaging the individual with the organisation.



When supervision is carried out effectively there are clear benefits for all stakeholders;

- Customers – a clear and focused approach from workers who are able to undertake a comprehensive assessment which takes account of needs, risks and involves service users in the process.
- Supervisees – have clear role accountability and are able to demonstrate a confident, reflective approach to case management, engaging with a range of partners.
- Organisation – supervisors disseminate agency goals, values and policies. They guide and monitor work leading to the development of consistent practice. They value workers which in turn lead to lower rates of turnover, sickness or complaints.
- Partners – workers understand the role of partners, are able to effectively negotiate with them and have accurate expectations when involved in multi-agency assessments and planning.

Implicit within this supervision policy is the opportunity to access personal supervision with your line manager. We recommend that each supervision session starts with a 'check in' for the individual receiving supervision. This should include work/life balance, staff wellbeing, personal and professional relationships (as appropriate), opportunities for professional development and follow up on any relevant issues raised in the last supervision. In this way a record of staff wellbeing can be maintained as appropriate.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

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The Assistant Director for Children's Services has overall responsibility for ensuring that supervision is managed appropriately in accordance with these agreed standards and policy.

The Children's Services Senior Management Team are collectively responsible for:

- Directing and reviewing this policy
- Publishing and promoting the adoption of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with this policy

All Service/Team managers are responsible for implementation of this policy.

All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and ensuring that they comply with this policy.

The supervisor is responsible for: -

- Agreeing a mutually suitable time and location with supervisee and to prioritise this (note, this may be on line).
- Creating an effective, sensitive and supportive environment for supervision.
- Maintaining accurate and clear records in relation to actions for the supervisee, as well as changes or actions in relation to particular cases, and that these are recorded and available to both parties within **two working days**.
- Prepare by identifying particular cases to discuss in addition to those identified by the supervisee, considering the use of reflective tools from the toolkit to facilitate meaningful reflective discussions.
- Identifying and facilitating access (as appropriate) to training, development and support opportunities including ensuring the attendance and availability to attend / complete mandatory training.

- Ensuring the supervisee is aware of, and understands, relevant policies and procedures and learning from audits.
- Seek feedback and respond to any concerns raised about the content and quality of supervision
- Attending supervisor training. (Link to MYLO - ASC: Supervision for Supervisors 3 modules [learningpool.com](http://learningpool.com)).
- Facilitating and encouraging preparation time for the supervisee
- Formal observation of practice by the supervising manager will be recorded in supervision at least once a year in accordance with Practice Standard 6.

**The supervisee is responsible for: -**

- Attending regularly and on time, participating actively and contributing to the agenda
- Preparing appropriately for supervision sessions using the suggested protected time. This includes identifying cases for discussion and being prepared to raise any areas of concern, making use of the reflective tools in the toolkit both in preparation for and during supervision to facilitate effective reflective discussions. Professional Standards 2 & 3 outline that ‘the social worker is professionally curious and uses supervision for critical reflection to make sense of the information they are gathering’
- Ensuring that actions agreed within supervision are carried out in a timely manner and notifying the supervisor of any difficulties in implementing decisions or plans
- Identifying personal development and support needs
- Understanding and implementing policy and working in accordance with the Practice standards
- Be honest and raise any disagreements or areas of concern
- Attend supervisee training regarding the use of reflective tools and own responsibilities

Supervision should seek to move beyond checking and accountability and become a process whereby the worker is able to reflect and learn from their experiences in order to inform their future practice.

Supervision will be prioritised by both parties and will take place in a quiet, confidential space without interruption where possible other than for urgent matters that cannot wait. Traditionally supervision is expected to take place physically face to face, however it is recognised that at times there is a need or preference for virtual supervision, in which case the above expectations and standards still apply.

Systemic practice is relationship based in its approach, it considers the context and acknowledges that difficulties occur within relationships and communication and are not situated within the child. Change is achieved therefore through working in a way that hears, respects and seeks to understand the stories and strengths of the children, young people and families we work with. Systemic practice will be embedded within the supervision framework as supervisees are encouraged to hypothesise and to consider the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS

in relation to families, but also in respect of themselves and the impact of their own values and beliefs on their work.

## 4. Recording of Supervision

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The recording of the supervision is the responsibility of the supervisor and it is important that the following standards are met:

- A record of supervision is added to the child's case file within **two working days** from the date of the discussion.
- The content of supervision is detailed enough to ensure that the issues can be understood and that decisions made are evidence based.

Ideally the case supervisions should be typed on to the supervision record by the supervisor at the point of supervision taking place. Where this is not possible priority should be given to ensuring that the supervision records are recorded on the electronic record **within two working days** of the supervision taking place.

If there are safeguarding issues requiring action this should be recorded **immediately**. The Reflective Supervision Template is designed to support reflective case discussions by guiding the supervisor and supervisee through Kolb's reflective learning cycle. It is acknowledged that other reflective models can add value and be helpful in particular cases, and supervisors and supervisees may have a preferred reflective model or tool to use, these should also be uploaded to the child's file. The template can be found here

(S:\Childrens\_Services\Children's\_Social\_Care\CSC\_Practice\_Units\Advanced Practitioners\Reflective Supervision training materials.

Live recording of supervision discussions is encouraged. These should be recorded onto the on MOSAIC. A written record of supervision should be shared with the supervisee prior to it being signed and stored to provide them with the opportunity to write reflective feedback on their record and sign if in agreement. Records of personal / professional supervision discussions will be kept separately and confidentially.

The reason that supervisions must be recorded on to the electronic record in a timely fashion is that in circumstances such as the absence of a supervisee or supervisor, another worker can pick up the case and have an up to date understanding of what has been happening. It also ensures that decisions and actions resulting from a case supervision are formally recorded at the point of supervisees acting upon these decisions.

### Informal case supervision

There is recognition within this policy that often, supervisees request advice or decisions on a case within a more informal context. It is important that where significant decisions are made in this informal context that they are subsequently recorded on MOSAIC. This is important in order for there to be a formal record of the discussion and any decision made. This process also evidences the support that supervisees are being given with their cases.

There will be times where a supervisee requires a decision in the absence of their supervisor. In these instances the manager should ensure that they record the decision made as a **Management Decision** and send an alert to the appropriate supervisor and supervisee.

## Appendix

### Supervision agreement/contract

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The Supervision Agreement is a written document which sets out the content of the discussions that have taken place to establish how the supervisor and supervisee will work together (establishing their roles, responsibilities and boundaries). A supervision agreement should be written collaboratively and signed at the start of any new supervisory relationship and should include:

- Frequency, location and recording of supervision.
- Responsibilities of supervisors, supervisees and the organisation.
- How feedback will be given about supervision
- Agreeing how protected time for CPD is to be used
- How the contract will be reviewed.

The supervision agreement can be found here:

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Whilst the agenda for supervision should be *reflexive* to the needs of the supervisee, the following items should be considered in each case supervision:

- Review previous actions.
- Compliance with statutory requirements, including key dates. Non-compliance should also be noted and the reasons given.
- Case analysis/reflection. This should include evidence of reflection and analysis of cases.
- Views of child/young person and/or parent/carer. Specific views on plans, worker relationship and any other examples.
- Specific decisions/actions. List specific decisions and actions that have been made as a result of the supervision – that is who is responsible and timescales to be included (SMART).
- Case file audit. This should include evidence of supervisor's review of files within their supervision or, feedback from Quality Assurance activities such as audit.

### Personal Development Review.

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Individual PDR are completed every year. A progress review should take place six months after the PDR and be recorded by the manager undertaking the PDR.

### Confidentiality

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Whilst supervision offers a private area to discuss cases and personal circumstances the supervision City of York Council. There will be occasions where supervisors will need to discuss the content of supervisions [both case and personal] with others, such as their own line manager, Human Resources etc. This should always be with the knowledge of the

supervisee. Moreover, supervision records form part of the quality assurance framework and may need to be accessed for audit, disciplinary purposes and Ofsted inspections.

## **Quality assurance**

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In order to be effective the supervision process is quality assured and subject to audit. The quality assurance process ensures that the standards of supervision as outlined in this document are being followed:

- Staff are being supervised effectively and at regular intervals.
- Supervision sessions are being recorded on the appropriate template.
- Individual Supervision Agreements are being developed, reviewed and used.
- The supervision process promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.
- The supervision process supports practice and impacts on improved outcomes for children.

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