

# Wiltshire Council

## Operational Children's Services

### ***SUPERVISION POLICY***

### ***JUNE 2021***

But

#### **You should ensure that:**

- ❖ You read, understand, and implement the Supervision Policy
- ❖ You identify any training in relation to this policy for yourself and staff
- ❖ You have a system for evidencing that staff you are responsible for have been advised of this policy/procedure, and the expectations of them in relation to its implementation

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Operational Children's Services vision is that we work with children and their families, to keep them safe and together, with the right support in place at the right time. Supervision is key to ensuring that our vision is delivered. Supervision should always reflect the lived experience of our children and ensure their voice is central to our work and discussions.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with Wiltshire Practice Standards which start with students on placement, newly qualified and throughout social care workforce. Supervision should challenge staff to reflect critically on their practice and should foster an inquisitive approach to their work.

1.3 Supervisors will receive the necessary training to supervise staff and should look at learning and development hub for learning.

## **2 Background**

2.1 Supervision is embedded in the Commission for Social Care

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Inspection (CSCI) National Minimum Standards and in Social Work England (SWE) Code of Practice for social workers and in Wiltshire Practice Standards for Children's Social Care. This encompasses effectively managing and supervising staff to support effective practice, aid reflection as well as good performance and conduct in accordance with Wiltshire One Council values.

2.2 Critical reflection through supervision should strengthen the analysis in each assessment. Effective professional supervision can play a critical role in ensuring a clear focus on a child's welfare (Working Together 2018).

### **3 Policy**

- In order to effectively supervise a case, managers must prepare for case supervision by reviewing the child's record to appraise themselves of the up-to-date circumstances regarding the child, to quality assure the standards of practice and be reassured that the intervention with the child is outcome focused and complies with procedures.
- Supervision should support professionals to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions on the child and the family. The social worker/early help worker and the manager should review the plan for the child. Together they should ask if the help given is leading to a positive change for the child and if the pace of change for the child is appropriate (Working Together 2018).

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#### **4 PROCEDURE**

##### **Children Social Care frequency of supervision:**

4.1 A supervision agreement should be drawn up between the supervisee and supervisor annually which should agree expectations, frequency and length (Appendix A, see attached document)

4.2 The supervisor and supervisee should be prepared with any agenda items. The supervisor should prepare for supervision by ensuring the actions from the previous supervision are reviewed in the next supervision.

4.3 Supervision is designed to ensure a quality service is delivered to the service user; that there is SMART planning that evidences the positive impact of our involvement upon children

4.4 The types of supervision carried out with an employee should depend on the nature of their work, the type of service offered and the needs of the individual staff member. This could include any of the following in addition to monthly supervision:

- Group supervision
- Day to day management advice
- Ad hoc meetings or discussions
- Discussions in Team meetings
- Peer support
- Mentoring/modelling/buddying/co-working
- Coaching

4.5 To promote good management oversight, one to one supervision should take place at least every month and more frequently in particular circumstances e.g., during an induction, for newly qualified workers and when using the improving work performance procedure. Supervision should be booked ahead and held in a quiet environment. (*Supervision should not be disturbed except by urgent matters*).

4.6 Cases discussed in supervision should be recorded on to the electronic system under the heading of 'Supervision' for Children's Social Care.

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4.7 Student Social Worker's should receive fortnightly supervision - one of these supervisions with the practice supervisor and one with the practice educator. If the supervisor and educator is the same person, supervision is still held fortnightly.

4.8 Newly qualified Social Workers in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) should receive supervision once per week for the first 6 weeks, followed by fortnightly supervision for the next 6 months, moving onto monthly. There is scope for a Level 4 Social Worker to complete monthly group reflective supervision which can count as one of the fortnightly supervisions i.e., the supervisor completes one case supervision each month and a Level 4 completes one reflective supervision each month after the first 6 weeks of weekly supervision. Supervisory arrangements/frequencies for ASYEs should be bespoke to their individual needs and competence as some ASYEs may need case supervision more than monthly, even if they are receiving separate reflective supervision facilitated by a Level 4 Social Worker.

## **5 Recording Supervision**

- 5.1 A supervisions template record should be completed by the manager leading supervision. The template outlines the minimum requirement for supervision. Additions can be made according to the demands of the worker's role.
- 5.2 For case holders working directly with children and families, notes of discussions about children should be recorded on the child's electronic record, to include the progress of actions previously agreed, significant events, a review of their plan, reflection on the case and any new actions agreed.
- 5.3 Outcomes from Quality Assurance findings through audits should be discussed in supervision and recorded to ensure learning is evidenced and impacts on achieving better outcomes for children.
- 5.4 Any ad hoc management advice/decisions should be recorded on LCS on the child's electronic record.
- 5.5 The completed supervision template should be sent to the supervisee within 5 days of the supervision taking place. The supervisee is expected to alert their supervisor to any comments or disagreements in response to this record being sent to them. If they do not, it can fairly be assumed that they accept the record is accurate. This avoids the need for supervisees to sign a paper copy of the record.

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5.6 The supervision template will be stored electronically in a folder than can be accessed by the managers within the line management structure, as well as the admin manager for the team. This means that supervision notes do not need to be printed and stored in a paper file but can be easily accessed if necessary.

## **6 Definition**

6.1 Supervision is a formal and regular process between a practitioner and their supervisor which allows a space to reflect on the content and process of ongoing work with children, young people and families. The nature of this work can, on occasions, be very distressing for the practitioners. Supervision offers the appropriate support, enabling practitioners to work safely and effectively.

6.2 Supervision is a practice orientated framework, which supports, assures, cares for, and develops, both in a personal and professional context, the knowledge, skills and values of the individual, group, or team. Supervision uses focused, guided reflection in promoting accountability, communication and consistency, enabling learning and change to take place. Supervision is a developmental process, the outcomes of which positively impact upon the performance of the practitioner and the quality of the service to children, young people and their families.

6.3 Supervision provides structure, support and feedback to staff, promoting new learning and enhancing professional development while identifying any work issues that may affect individuals personally. It helps staff to become more self-aware and shows their commitment to their own personal and professional development.

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## **7 Functions**

- 7.1 Line management**, which is about accountability for practice and quality of service. This includes managing team resources, delegation and workload management, performance appraisal, duty of care, support and other people-management processes.
- 7.2 Professional supervision** (sometimes described as case supervision) with workers or groups of workers to enable and support quality practice. A key aspect of this function is reviewing and reflecting on practice issues. This may include reviewing roles and relationships, evaluating the outcomes of the work and maximising opportunities for wider learning.
- 7.3 Continuing professional development of workers** to ensure they have the relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes to do the job and progress their careers. Constructive feedback and observation of practice should be part of the learning process for workers and supervisors.
- 7.4 Staff wellbeing** Supervisors will ensure they consider the risks to staff who directly work and support others, ensuring staff are guided towards healthy lifestyle routines, breaks and signposted support if and when needed. Supervisors can suggest TRIM if they are concerned about vicarious trauma impact upon staff.
- 7.5 The above are four strands of supervision.** While each vary in significance at any particular time, it is important that over a period of time, no strand is omitted.

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## **8 Confidentiality**

8.1 Best practice in supervision involves mutual trust between the Supervisor and the Supervisee to enable open and frank discussion. Supervision should therefore be a confidential process. The exceptions to this are where:

- The interests of service users and the quality of service are compromised or at risk of being compromised.
- There is a question regarding performance or behaviour which may involve disciplinary or capability proceedings.

8.2 In such circumstances, the reasons for breaking confidentiality and the next steps in the process must be clearly stated and shared between parties. Access to supervision records should be controlled by supervisors, although supervisees should be aware that supervision records might be accessed, for example for quality assurance/disciplinary or capability proceedings.

## **9 Quality Assurance**

9.1 In order to be effective, the supervision process requires monitoring and quality assurance arrangements. The quality assurance process ensures that:

- The standards of supervision as outlined in this policy are being followed
- Staff are being supervised professionally and effectively
- Supervision sessions are being recorded
- Supervision Agreements are being developed, reviewed and used
- Supervision promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice

9.2 The Quality Assurance arrangements may involve:

- The auditing of a random selection of files by managers and senior managers should take place on a 6-monthly basis for all staff
- Discussion during supervision, for example, between service leader and immediate supervisor about their practice in supervising staff

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#### **10 Contents of Supervision**

Supervision should include all or some of the following, according to the role of the worker being supervised.

#### **11 Reflection**

Ensure that:

- Workers are given the opportunity to reflect on their work with children and families and think about what they could do differently, what is working well and consider the impact of self upon their work
- Workers should consider which theory and model they are using to inform their work with children and families
- Workers should hypothesise about the families' situations and the supervisor's role is to test out this hypothesis through appropriate questioning
- Risks should be clearly identified but analysed in the context of the impact upon the child

#### **12 Performance management**

Ensure that:

- The worker is ensuring the permanence plan for the child is progressed in a timely way. (This is in relation to child in need, child protection and child looked after cases).
- The worker ensures that the experience of the child is fully understood and the child understands the reason why they have a Social Worker/Early Help Worker and a multi-agency plan around them.
- The progress of assessments is timely and analytical.
- Visiting is as per the Practice Standards or otherwise agreed within the child's plan.
- Workers record case activity i.e., visits and telephone discussions within 5 working days. More significant events within 2 working days or urgent matters the same day.
- That plans are developed, implemented and reviewed according to the statutory requirements and practice standards.
- There is evidence of the management, and the reduction of risk, to children and workers.
- Outcomes are child and family focused.
- That outcomes are realistic and achievable within the agreed time scales
- The worker meets the expectations identified in their Supervision



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Agreement and Appraisal.

- The worker understands how their work links to the wider service vision.
- Workers enhance their problems solving skills in relation to workload management with the support of their supervisee.

#### **13 Managing improving work performance and sickness/absence patterns**

Ensure that:

- If there are concerns about a worker's performance or sickness/absence, the supervisor should consult with relevant policies in relation to these which can be found on the intranet under HR Direct procedures

#### **14 TOIL**

Ensure that:

- Workers discuss the need to accrue TOIL with their supervisor in advance to allow the supervisor to provide support in managing workload
- Workers should be supported to ensure they do not need to accrue any more than 20 hours TOIL in a month - this will assist in ensuring their general well-being

#### **15 Budget Monitoring (for budget holders)**

Ensure that:

- Budgets are being managed in line with the departmental priorities and financial situation
- Review regular payments to families, and whether they are meeting the outcomes for children identified in the child's plan

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#### **16 Health and Safety /Risk Assessments**

Ensure that:

- Signpost staff members to our **Flourish** site for staff wellbeing  
[FLOURISH - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)
- If there are concerns that staff member may be experiencing vicarious trauma, suggest **TRIM** – our trauma risk management tool. A request for TRIM can be made at [TRIM@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:TRIM@wiltshire.gov.uk)
- If there are concerns about staff well-being, consideration should be given to making a referral to Occupational Health in discussion with the staff member.
- Any new risks in carrying out the worker's role are identified, and appropriate risk assessments carried out, or generic risk assessments identified, as appropriate
- Any current risk assessments are up to date and relevant in relation to staff safety including lone working risk assessment
- Supervisor will consider our Vexatious Complaints Policy in the event of protracted verbal or written complaint about a practitioner
- (Refer to HR Direct for forms to be used)

#### **17 Feedback on supervision**

- Supervisees should have the opportunity to feedback to their supervisor in terms of the quality and effectiveness of the supervision they receive to ensure it is meeting their needs. See Appendix B, attached document.

#### **18 Disposal of Supervision Records**

- Wiltshire – Sarah Davis-Solan  
(Information Assurance and Monitoring Lead)

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## **19 Appraisals**

Supervisees should be appraised once per year with a review of their appraisal taking place 6 months later. The guidance for staff appraisals is contained within GROW.

### **APPENDICES:**

#### **Appendix A**

Supervision Agreement



Supervision  
agreement template

#### **Appendix B**

Supervision Feedback Form



Supervisee  
supervision feedback