



# **Supervision Practice** **Guidance**

Updated June 2016  
Date of review June 2018

# MULTI-AGENCY SUPERVISION PRACTICE GUIDANCE

## Introduction

Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively." (**Working Together 2015, Chapter 2: Organisational Responsibilities**).

All agencies which have operational responsibility for safeguarding / child protection services must have an agreed policy, which defines minimum levels of formal supervision of those staff that are accountable for safeguarding and child protection cases.

### **Supervision can be defined as:**

' a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users' Morrison 2005.

The key functions of supervision are:

1. 'Management (ensuring competent and accountable performance/practice);
2. Development (continuing professional development);
3. Support (supportive/restorative function); and
4. Engagement/mediation (engaging the individual with the organisation)' (Working Together 2010, Paragraph 4.49 - now archived).

'For many practitioners involved in day-to-day work with children and families, effective supervision is important to promote good standards of practice and to supporting individual staff members. The arrangements for organising how supervision is delivered will vary from agency to agency but there are some key essential elements. It should:

- Help to ensure that practice is soundly based and consistent with LSCB and organisational procedures;
- Ensure that practitioners fully understand their roles, responsibilities and the scope of their professional discretion and authority; and
- Help identify the training and development needs of practitioners, so that each has the skills to provide an effective service.
- **All child protection cases must be regularly discussed in supervision and case files/records audited systematically by the responsible manager. (Requested additional paragraph)**

Good quality supervision can help to:

- Keep a focus on the child;
- Avoid drift;
- Maintain a degree of objectivity and challenge fixed views;
- Test and assess the evidence base for assessment and decisions; and
- Address the emotional impact of work.

Supervisors should be available to practitioners as an important source of advice and expertise, and may be required to endorse judgments at certain key points in time, which should then be recorded within the case records.

On some occasions - e.g. enquiries about complex abuse or allegations against colleagues, agencies must consider the provision of additional individual or group staff support. Managers must develop local policies and

systems to maximise staff safety including the need to carry out risk assessments as appropriate.

### ***Key Messages for Organisations***

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Every organisation should ensure the following are in place:

- A clear supervision policy, with practice that supports the policy - This should include a clear statement of the purpose of supervision and why it is important to the organisation, including how it contributes to positive outcomes for users of services. It should also include clear statements about:
  - Frequency;
  - Recording;
  - Expectations of supervisors and supervisees; and
  - Agendas for supervision sessions.
- Effective training of supervisors;
- Strong leadership and 'walking the floor' by senior managers;
- Staff have opportunities through office working arrangements, team meetings, team supervision events etc. to regularly discuss cases of concern and access peer support;
- Performance objectives for supervision for all supervisors;
- Monitoring of actual practice – frequency and quality.

### ***Key Messages for Supervisors***

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Being a supervisor is a significant responsibility and one which needs to be taken seriously. Your organisation and the individuals you supervise expect you to provide supervision that is:

- Based on a written agreement or contract;

- Planned well in advance and only changed in exceptional circumstances;
- Well-structured, allowing both you and the individual to contribute to the agenda;
- Provided in an appropriate setting and free of interruptions;
- Inclusive of all the functions outlined in the unit of competence;
- Properly and promptly recorded, with notes copied to the individual.

### **Guidance from Working Together 2015:**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations link to have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- A designated professional lead (or, for health provider organisations, named professionals) for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively;
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training:
  - Employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
  - Staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare; and

- All professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.

### ***Key Messages for Individuals Receiving Supervision***

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Supervision is an important right and benefit for all those working in social care and children's services.

It is the main way in which your organisation monitors and reviews your work but also ensures you are properly supported and continue to develop your skills. It is therefore important that you are fully involved and make the most of the opportunities that supervision offers. In particular you should:

- Prepare for each supervision meeting by reviewing notes from the previous meeting and thinking about the things you want to raise and discuss;
- Be ready to share your thoughts and ideas in the meeting;
- Be open about what has gone well and what you have found difficult;
- Be ready to plan and undertake training and other development activities as agreed with your supervisor;
- Check and read the notes of your meetings and make sure you follow through and complete any actions as agreed.

**This procedure is linked to:-**

**North West Protocol for Standards in Supervision of Children and Families Social Workers**

[http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/nw\\_protocol\\_standards\\_supervis\\_ch\\_fam\\_sw.pdf](http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/nw_protocol_standards_supervis_ch_fam_sw.pdf)

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