



# Children's Services Supervision Policy

Updated February 2015

This policy updates the existing supervision policies across the Directorate and merges them into a single document.

## Equality and Diversity statement

The policy aims to be accessible to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion/belief or any other factor that may result in unfair treatment or inequalities in health/employment

### 1.0 Policy Rationale

- 1.1 The policy sets out the Children Learning and Young People Directorate's commitment to providing quality support and supervision to all members of staff who have a significant role in working with children and young people.
- 1.2 The Directorate aims to provide appropriate, responsive and flexible services for the most vulnerable citizens of Coventry and can only do this if staff understand what is expected of them, have the skills, knowledge, behaviours, values and attitudes necessary to carry out their roles, are fully supported in their work and are managed effectively.
- 1.3 Supervision is one of the ways that this can be achieved. This policy sets out how staff can expect to be supervised and provides managers with the key elements needed to supervise staff effectively.

### **It should be read with the accompanying guidance and procedures of the City Council**

- Code of Conduct
- Policy on Health and Safety
- Dignity at Work
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Prevention and Management of Stress at Work
- Grievance Procedure

The policy is informed by the requirements set out in the HCPC Standards of Proficiency, which state that employees have a duty to:

- understand the value of critical reflection for practice and the need to record the outcomes of such reflection appropriately

- recognise the value of supervision, case reviews and other methods of reflection and review.
- use supervision to support and enhance the quality of their social work practice.

## **2.0 Scope of the Policy**

2.1 This policy provides a framework for supervision for all staff (whether they are permanent, temporary or agency) working for Coventry City Council in Children's Services.

## **3.0 Definitions, Functions and Purposes of Supervision**

3.1 Supervision is a participative process whereby supervisors ensure that employees are performing their roles to a satisfactory standard, and have the appropriate support and training to do so in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Coventry City Council.

The Children's Workforce Development Council definition states that:

'Supervision is an accountable process which supports, assures and develops the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed objectives and outcomes.'

*Providing Effective Supervision, CWDC (2007)*

Reflective Supervision refers to:

'The process of learning from experience by "hovering above" and thinking about one's own practice and applying knowledge to it. Critical reflection goes further and is concerned not only with the immediate processes that constitute practice but also involves examining the power dynamics of the situation and the wider structures that shape practice. Reflexivity, additionally, contributes a social worker's awareness of self and her/his impact on practice, integrating personal knowledge and understanding with professional knowledge and understanding. A popular way of thinking about reflection in supervision is to see it as part of a cycle of learning from experience: social workers experience practice, reflect on that experience, conceptualise the experience by analysing and theorising their actions/feelings and move on to plan how to act in future on the basis of what they have learnt. For learning to be fully effective, reflection is seen as needing to be consolidated in the succeeding stages of the learning cycle'

Harris, J. and White, V. (2013) *Dictionary of Social Work and Social Care*, Oxford University Press.

(See also Appendix 2)

- 3.2 Supervision can be provided in a variety of ways but in the main is a regular one-to-one meeting between the supervisor and the supervisee in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives. Supervision forms a key part of individual performance management.
- 3.3 Supervision underpins the Approved and Supported Year in Employment and Early Professional Development Programmes and is the foundation on which appraisal is built. It is an opportunity for staff to talk face-to-face with their supervisors to influence their own development and that of the service, and to receive support and encouragement in doing so.
- 3.4 Effective supervision performs five key functions (see Appendix 2)
- Management (ensuring competent and accountable performance/practice);
  - Development (continuing professional development);
  - Support (supportive/restorative function)
  - Engagement/mediation (engaging staff with the organisation and representing the organisation to staff)
  - Reflection on and learning from practice
- 3.5 The purpose of supervision is to:
- Improve the quality of services to children, young people, families and carers and achieve better outcomes for children and young people
  - Ensure the supervisee is clear about roles and responsibilities
  - Offer guidance and support in relation to work with individual cases
  - Identify gaps in learning
  - Provide space for case discussions
  - Encourage critical reflection
  - Facilitate performance management
  - Contribute to workers' emotional resilience by their feeling valued, supported and motivated
  - Deepen and broaden workers' skills and knowledge.
  - Undertake administrative functions

#### **4.0 Formal, informal and ad-hoc supervision**

- 4.1 Formal supervision sessions are normally held on a planned one-to-one basis. If a manager decides to arrange group supervision sessions, these should not replace one-to-one sessions to which the supervisee has a right.
- 4.2 There may be discussions and decisions about daily work issues, problems arising, or changes in policies and procedures that emerge in group meetings and informal, unplanned or 'ad-hoc' discussions. When decisions have been made in between formal supervision sessions, the worker and the supervisor must ensure that key decisions made with regard to a service user are clearly recorded on the service user's record.

#### **5.0 Minimum frequency and duration**

- 5.1 The duration and frequency of supervision sessions will depend on the setting, type of work involved, the experience and expertise of the worker and current operational considerations.
- The normal frequency is every 4 weeks and no less than six-weekly
  - Sessions should be between 1½ and 2 hours in duration
  - All staff should receive a minimum of 10 supervision sessions per year
- 5.2 No staff member should go without a supervision session for more than two months. It is the responsibility of the line manager, the supervisor and the supervisee to ensure this does not occur.
- 5.3 There is some flexibility in order to take account of individual circumstances and operational needs. More frequent supervision sessions may be required where the supervisor is, for example, working with newly qualified staff, where deadlines, targets or quality is of concern or where the supervisee requires more support or development.
- 5.4 This should be clearly discussed and agreed by supervisor and supervisee to avoid any suggestion that a particular member of staff is being singled out for different, preferential or unfair treatment.
- 5.5 The actual frequency for individual staff should be set out in the terms of the Individual Supervision Agreement (see Appendix 1) and any permanent deviation from the recommended frequency should be agreed and recorded in the Individual Supervision Agreement.

## **6.0 The Individual Supervision Agreement (see Appendix 1)**

- 6.1 The Individual Supervision Agreement sets out the framework for supervision and provides a degree of protection for the supervisor and supervisee. It also ensures that everybody involved has the same understanding of the supervisory process within their work area. The Agreement should state the supervisory arrangements applicable to an individual member of staff.
- 6.2 The agreement should be drawn up using the Pro-forma (see Appendix 1) and whatever is agreed should be made explicit and recorded.

## **7.0 Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 General:**

- 7.1.1 All managers, supervisors and supervisees should ensure arrangements for supervision are made and adhered to.
- 7.1.2 Where there is an inter-agency agreement in place, the Children's Services Supervision Policy and procedure can be used, as appropriate.
- 7.1.3 Individual supervision records are held in a supervision file (see Appendix 4). They are kept for all staff and may be used in internal and external audit processes. Staff have the right to access their personal data under the Data Protection Act (1998).

7.1.4 All supervision records must be factual and linked to any identified evidence which substantiates the comments recorded.

## **7.2 Responsibilities of managers and supervisors**

7.2.1 It will normally be the line manager's responsibility to supervise his or her staff. In exceptional circumstances and only with the agreement of a senior manager, alternative arrangements can be made.

7.2.2 The checklist below sets out the Department's expectations of supervisors to ensure that supervision is effective and reflective and that it encompasses the elements set out above:

- Establish and maintain suitable arrangements for supervision so that it is planned and uninterrupted.
- Ensure supervision is integrated into service planning, objective setting and individual performance plans.
- Set standards in relation to work performance and practice in line with Departmental, policies, procedures and requirements.
- Ensure that staff are provided with relevant and appropriate information to meet those standards.
- Ensure that all statutory and other relevant obligations are met, for example, registration requirements, National Occupational Minimum Standards, Key Performance Indicators, HCPC and any other relevant Code of Practice, Care Standards, Data Protection Act and Health and Safety regulations.
- Support employees subject to professional registration to fulfil the eligibility criteria and any requirements for continued registration.
- Set, monitor and review individual work objectives and targets and agree how these will be achieved.
- Encourage staff participation in supervision, ensuring that they are listened to and that their experience and contributions is acknowledged.
- Promote reflective practice.
- Treat staff with respect, acknowledging values and areas of difference in order to address anti-discriminatory issues.
- Be knowledgeable regarding the supervisee, their job description and work issues.
- Ensure that written records pertaining to the supervisee are kept up-to-date and securely filed.
- Ensure that electronic records are kept up-to-date and where inputting requirements are linked to I.T. systems (for example, Protocol, eCAF) be responsible for checking accuracy and timeliness of record input as a mandatory part of the supervision process.
- Offer support through the line manager or occupational health if the supervisee's performance at work is affected by personal issues or vice versa.

- Access training and development as necessary for the supervisee in order to ensure competence and encourage staff to take responsibility for their own learning and development.

### **7.2.3 Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs)**

**In relation to Performance and Development Reviews, supervisors must:**

- Complete appraisal meetings/assessments within the required corporate timescales
- Use appropriate skills to appraise and provide feedback
- Conduct appraisals fairly and without discrimination
- Prepare adequately for discussions/assessments
- Base performance assessments on evidence
- Share responsibility with staff for ensuring that their training needs are met
- Ensure that an accurate agreed record of the discussion is produced, in the corporate format, including agreed targets and training needs

### **7.3 Responsibilities of staff**

The following checklist sets out the Department's key expectations of all staff in relation to supervision:

- Share responsibility for making supervision work well by preparing for supervision sessions
- Negotiate the Individual Supervision Agreement
- Use supervision effectively
- Participate actively in the process of supervision and in setting the supervision agenda
- Attend supervision regularly and on time
- Meet departmental, legal, professional standards
- Promote the best interests of those who receive a service
- Be open and share information with their supervisor
- Seek and use guidance and knowledge
- Be clear and honest in seeking any assistance
- Implement agreements and plans within the timescales agreed/required
- Inform their manager/supervisor if plans cannot be implemented
- Address issues of discrimination in respect of service delivery and employment
- Accept responsibility for their own work performance
- Participate in problem-solving, reflecting and thinking through and exploring options.
- Be responsible for their own learning and active in pursuit of their own development
- Give and accept constructive feedback and learn from mistakes.

## **8.0 Record of supervision (see Appendix 3)**

- 8.1 In general the supervision record should record details of any agreements reached, who is responsible for undertaking any action and the timescales. In the case of any disagreement concerning issues discussed in supervision, the disagreement should be recorded.
- 8.2 Each supervisor will keep a Supervision File of supervision records to be maintained throughout an employee's career. Supervision files should include a copy of the individual's job description, role profile, records of induction and copies of PDRs. The Supervision File must be kept in a secure place.
- 8.3 Supervision records belong to the organisation. To ensure continuity of management accountability, support and development, the records should be transferred to the next Supervisor if the supervisee is moving to another post within the organisation. The records will remain the property of the Children's Services Department
- 8.4 Access to supervision files will be restricted to the supervisor, supervisee, senior managers, and HR as appropriate, and to officers and other agencies involved in any auditing or personnel purposes.
- 8.5 There may be occasions when personal information does not need to be recorded. This will normally be where such information does not have a direct impact on work performance or service delivery and it has been agreed by all parties that it will remain confidential within the supervisory or line management relationship.
- 8.6 Where matters relate to an individual service user these must be recorded separately on the electronic file (CF 15). If a paper copy is also made the original will be filed on the service user's case file. A brief note is made on the supervision record regarding the individual service user, taking into account confidentiality.
- 8.7 It is unrealistic to expect all supervisors to have a typed record so legible handwritten notes will suffice. A legible, accessible, written record of every supervision session must be made.
- 8.8 Supervision records should be placed in the supervisee's personal file. The main purposes of recording supervision sessions are:
- to aid accountability of the work and the way it is undertaken.
  - to set, review and evaluate targets and performance measures.
  - to ensure accountability between supervision sessions
  - to record decisions and issues related to the across the four key functions
- (See Appendix 2)
- 8.9 If capability or disciplinary procedures, or civil or criminal proceedings were to ensue, it is possible supervision records could be used in evidence. Records should, therefore, always be written with this eventuality in mind. Information

received during supervision and the content of the discussion should normally be confidential unless otherwise agreed.

- 8.10 The supervisor is ultimately responsible for the production of adequate, accessible supervision records (even if they are written, with agreement, by the supervisee). Every effort should be made to ensure that the record is an accurate reflection of the interaction between supervisor and supervisee.
- 8.11 The supervision record is agreed by the supervisor and supervisee and signed (by both parties) as an accurate record of discussions and decisions made. If the supervisee does not agree with any part of the record and agreement cannot be reached on re-wording, they should be able to add their own comments or amendments which then become part of the record of that session.
- 8.12 In the case of a person leaving the City Council, records must be kept locally for at least 2 years. Records should be kept locally for longer if there is any possibility of litigation. Advice should be requested, if needed, from the Freedom of Information Officer.
- 8.13 Where necessary any targets or deadlines must be recorded to enable review at the subsequent supervision session.
- 8.14 It is appropriate for either party to record supervision as long as notes are shared and agreed. In fact, sharing the recording is positively encouraged as it is a legitimate part of the individual supervisees development.

## **9.0 Quality Control**

- 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. They are:
- Staff are being supervised professionally and effectively
  - Supervision sessions are being recorded
  - Individual Supervision Agreements are being developed, reviewed and used
  - The supervision process promotes equal opportunities and anti discriminatory practice.
- 9.2 The quality assurance arrangements involve:
- The auditing of a random selection of supervision files on a six-monthly basis by managers
  - Discussion during supervision, for example, between a service manager and a team manager, about the team manager's practice in supervising their staff
  - A senior manager may request copies of supervision records as evidence of practice and to use as a tool where there are developmental needs on behalf of the part of the team manager.



- Sampling of records should be undertaken and the expectation is that the supervisor's line manager will record the sampling in the supervisor's own supervision records.

### 9.3 Supervision of team managers

- Each month service managers will select a supervision file from the workload of one of their team managers for examination in line with agreed audit tools.
- This will be noted, signed and dated on the supervision record, along with written details of any action required to bring the selected supervision file up to required standards.
- Supervision sessions will include a recorded examination of computerised workload reports to ensure that data is being accurately maintained.
- Supervision sessions will include an ongoing review of workload management arrangements which are in place to enable staff to practise to the required standards.

### 9.4 Supervision of service managers

- On a quarterly basis the responsible head of service will select a supervision file from the workload of each service manager for examination. This will be noted, signed and dated on the supervision record, along with written details of any action required to bring the selected supervision file up to required standards.
- Supervision sessions will include a recorded examination of computerised workload reports in order to identify anomalies and review resource allocation.
- Supervision sessions will include an ongoing review of workload management arrangements which are in place to enable staff to practise to the required standards.

## 10.0 Supervision tools: Appendices

The following documents should be used as tools to ensure effective supervision.

**Appendix 1 Individual Supervision Agreement** - to be completed at the start of a new job and at every change of supervisor. To be reviewed annually.

**Appendix 2 The five functions of supervision**

**Appendix 3 Record of Supervision and Action Plan**- to be completed at every one-to-one supervision session and other types of supervision as appropriate. **PDR Forms**- to be completed at the annual or 6-monthly review or at the induction of a new employee.

**Appendix 4 – Supervision file structure and index**

**Appendix 1**  
**The Individual Supervision Agreement**

**Supervisee:**

**Supervisor/Line Manager:**

**Team:**

**Frequency:**

**Duration:**

**Location:**

\*\*\*\*\*

The venue for our supervision sessions has been mutually agreed. Interruptions will be kept to a minimum and ideally be avoided completely. We shall not usually make or accept telephone calls during our supervision sessions unless previously agreed by both of us and for operational reasons. Meetings will not be held in a place that would inconvenience service users.

Our supervision relationship will be based upon mutual respect for each other's skills, knowledge and experience. We understand the requirements of the **Supervision Policy** and **Performance and Development Reviews**. Any performance management issues will be highlighted and action taken in a timely and fair way according to organisational policies and procedures.

All information between supervisor and supervisee will be treated with respect and in a professional manner.

Formal supervision sessions will be structured, with preparation work having been carried out by both the supervisor and the supervisee, and, where possible, an agenda will be set a few days before the supervision session. Any major issues requiring detailed discussion should be put in writing and distributed a few days before the supervision session. Both parties will prioritise the agenda items at the beginning of the session in order to make the most effective use of time.

All supervision sessions will be recorded including areas covered, discussion points (including reflection on practice), agreed action points, timescales, by whom action will be taken. The record will be available to both the 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 necessary.

Where recording relates to a management decision on a case or a casework discussion this will be recorded as a discussion/decision on the electronic file by either the manager or supervisee.

This is an agreement we have entered into in order to ensure effective, reflective and supportive supervision. It demonstrates a joint commitment to the supervision process and serves as a reminder of the professional responsibilities we have towards each other and the organisation we work in. Either of us may seek to re-negotiate the agreement if we feel it is necessary. The agreement will be reviewed by the supervisor and the supervisee on an annual basis.

Supervision sessions will cover:

- Management (ensuring competent and accountable performance/practice);
- Development (continuing professional development);

- Support (supportive/restorative function)
- Engagement/mediation (engaging staff with the organisation and representing the organisation to staff)
- Reflection on and learning from practice

Supervision should be based on anti-discriminatory principles and should be race, gender, disability and sexuality sensitive. There should be an option of involving an independent person through mutual agreement in some supervision sessions, if there are identified and agreed issues arising from the differences between the supervisor and supervisee arising from race, gender, disability, sexuality and other forms of inequality. Both parties may wish to involve an independent person if any issues fall outside the competency of the supervisor.

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

It is the policy of Children's Services that supervision is provided to staff. In the absence of supervision, either due to absence of the supervisor or the supervisor failing to adhere to the supervision timetable, the supervisee should refer this to the line manager.

The supervisee will approach the Line Manager if she/he has received no formal supervision for \_\_\_\_\_ (Time to be agreed between supervisor and supervisee).

**Signed**

Supervisee \_\_\_\_\_.

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_.

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

**Review of Supervision Agreement**

**Signed**

Supervisee \_\_\_\_\_.

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_.

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 2

### The Five Functions of Supervision

#### The management function ensures:

- The overall quality of the worker's performance
- Agency policies and procedures are understood and followed
- The worker understands her/his role and responsibilities
- The worker is clear as to the limits and use of their personal, agency and statutory authority
- Work is reviewed regularly in accordance with agency and legal requirements
- The basis of decisions is clear to the worker and made explicit in agency records
- Records are maintained according to agency policies
- The worker knows when the supervisor expects to be consulted
- The worker is given an appropriate workload
- Appropriate time management by the worker
- The worker acts as a positive member of the team
- The worker understands the functions of other agencies and relates appropriately to them
- The worker receives regular formal appraisal

#### The development function ensures:

- The professional competence of the worker
- An appreciation and assessment of the worker's theoretical framework, skills, knowledge and individual contribution to the organisation
- An understanding of the worker's value base in relation to race, gender, sexuality and disability and its impact on their work
- An understanding of the worker's preferred learning style and blocks to learning
- An assessment of the worker's training and development needs and how they can be met
- Access to professional consultation in areas outside the supervisor's knowledge/experience
- The worker's ability to reflect on their work and their interaction with service users, colleagues and other agencies
- Regular and constructive feedback to the worker on all aspects of their performance
- The worker's capacity for self-appraisal
- A relationship in which the worker provides constructive feedback to supervision

#### The supportive/restorative function ensures:

- Validation of the worker both as a professional and as a person
- Creation of a safe climate within which the worker can look at their practice and its impact on them as a person
- Debriefing the worker and giving them permission to talk about feelings
- Helping the worker to explore emotional blocks to their work
- Exploring in a safe setting issues about discrimination
- Support for workers who are subject to any form of abuse either from service users or colleagues, whether this be physical, psychological or discriminatory
- Monitoring of the overall health and emotional functioning of the worker, especially with regard to the effects of stress
- Helping the worker reflect on difficulties in colleague relationships in order to assist the worker in resolving conflict
- Clarifying when the worker should be advised to seek external counselling

### The mediation function ensures:

- Higher management is briefed about resource deficits and their implications
- Resources are allocated in the most efficient way
- Staff needs are represented to higher management
- The team's remit is clear
- Contributions are made to policy formulation or amendment
- Staff are briefed and consulted about organisational information and developments
- Advocacy between worker, or team, and other parts of the agency or with outside agencies
- Staff are represented or accompanied in their work with other agencies, if necessary
- Staff are involved in decision-making
- Complaints about staff are dealt with sensitively and clearly
- Staff are assisted and supported, where appropriate, through complaints procedures

### Reflection on and Learning from Practice

Supervision provides a key site for the development and support of reflective practice and offers a space in which to stand back and take a fresh look at a case. There are a number of strategies or models to help support practitioners/supervisors to use reflective, analytical and critical thinking skills. For example, Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, D. [1984] *Experiential Learning*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall can support analytical and reflective thinking in supervision:

**Experience:** The supervisor elicits a clear 'story' about what the worker is experiencing and what they have observed, by asking questions and seeking clarity. The role of the supervisor is to encourage the supervisee to formulate hypotheses about how the relevant parts of the story fit together and to test out the relative strengths of the various hypotheses.

**Reflection:** The supervisee is encouraged to explore the feelings evoked by the story and think about what this might mean for the child, young person, family, carer or themselves.

**Analysis:** Supervisor and supervisee evaluate their perceived knowledge and beliefs about the case. They make judgements and decisions based on observations, evaluation of information, available evidence, wider experience, reflection and consideration of research. Working with the supervisee, and helping them to be clear about the impact on the child of not addressing their needs, will help ensure that any decisions and plans are as safe as possible for the child.

**Plans and Action:** Where critical thinking and critical reflection have occurred, realistic and safer plans can be developed. Actions can be explained and justified. Timescales and contingency plans can also be considered and agreed. The supervisor and Supervisee need to be satisfied that the outcomes set conform to the SMART standard (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely).

### Appendix 3

## Record of supervision and agreed actions

Between: .....and .....

Date:

No.	Agenda items for discussion	Record of discussion (including reflection on practice)	Agreed actions (including timescale and responsibility)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

## Appendix 4

### Supervision File Structure and Index

**Name:**

**Supervisor:**

**Team:**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Contents</b>
1	Start date Personal contact details Supervision Agreement
2	Supervision monitoring sheet
3	Supervision notes
4	Correspondence
5	Personal development and training record - to include induction programme, training, PDR
5a	Job description
6	Personnel information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contract letter,</li><li>- Starter/variation/transfer form(s)</li><li>- References</li></ul>
7	Health and Wellbeing issues
8	CIN and CP Plans
9	Mileage Claims