

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children's Social Care Services



STAFF SUPERVISION POLICY Document Ref:		Date Created:	
Version: 01	Date Modified:	September 2009	
Revision Due:		Sept 2012	
Author:		Paul Barnard	
Owning Team:			
Head of Targeted Intervention Service	Nicolas Crick Head of Targeted Intervention Service	Approved and Date:	September 2009

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

STAFF SUPERVISION

POLICY

Approved: September 2009
Last Updated:
Review Date: September 2012
Ownership: Paul Barnard
Revisions:

Purpose

The overall purpose of supervision is to maintain or improve the quality of our services and achieve satisfactory outcomes for service users.

Contents

Introduction	4
Aims and Purposes	5
The aims of the Supervision Process can therefore be described as:	5
Managerial	5
Developmental	6
Supportive	6
Participation	6
Rights and Responsibilities	7
Practice Standards	9
Supervision Meetings	9
Written Supervision Agreement	9
Recording	10
Confidentiality	10
Managerial Responsibilities	11
Disagreement	11
"Whistleblowing"	11
Appendix 1: Practice Briefing 01/2009 Supervision	13
Appendix 1a: The four functions of Supervision	19
Appendix 1b: The approaches to Supervision	21
Appendix 2: Template for Supervision Agreement	22
Appendix 3: Supervision Recording Sheet	26

Introduction

Effective staff supervision is a key process within Children & Young People's Services.

This document provides staff and supervisors with a policy and procedure for a consistent and thorough approach to supervision across the service.

It describes the intended purposes and outcomes of staff supervision and contains practice standards that are to be followed by all staff.

The Personal Development Review Scheme is a priority across the Council and this document should be read in conjunction with that policy.

This policy draws on national guidance and experience from West Berkshire Council. Following the supervision audit of 2009, staff suggestions and ideas for improving supervision will be included in any review of this document.

In West Berkshire, who have kindly shared the outcome of their previous supervision audit with us, the most frequent response from staff related to the need for a greater degree of consistency of supervision across the department:- *'a more uniform approach', 'an agreed agenda', 'clearer objectives from the department', 'agreed set agendas across the service to provide consistency'*. The actual content of supervision received was also commonly referred to:- *'more feedback', 'more time spent on discussing outcomes, research, good practice and weaknesses', 'use of theory to support practice decisions', 'more discussion on evidence based practice', 'time to look at developmental and training needs'*..... Other frequent comments included the need for an appropriate venue and the need for supervisors to be given more dedicated time to fulfil the function of supervision with supervision responsibilities clearly defined.

The aim of this policy is to develop a culture where supervision is experienced by everyone as a valued activity - an activity that supports and develops staff, ensures clarity, service issues and objectives; and most importantly leads to better outcomes for our services users.

Aims and Purposes

The overall purpose of supervision is to maintain or improve the quality of our services and achieve satisfactory outcomes for service users.

Supervision is a process by which a worker or manager is given delegated responsibility by the local authority to work with a number of supervisees in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives.

It ensures that social workers are equipped to carry out their work, that the organisation can be confident that it is safely, effectively and efficiently delivering services and that the potential of staff is maximised.

Working Together states that 'Supervision should include scrutinising and evaluating the work carried out, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the practitioner, and providing coaching, development and pastoral support'.

The four functions of supervision:

1. Competent, accountable performance/practice
(The **Management** function)
2. Continuous learning and development
(The **Development** function)
3. Personal support
(The **Supportive** function)
4. Engaging the individual with the organisation
(The **mediation** function)

The aims of the Supervision Process can therefore be described as:

Management

To contribute to the achievement of *competent, accountable performance and practice* by ensuring that: quality of performance is evaluated, including reference to the supervisee's appraisal and to the team business plan.

- Policies, procedures and operational instructions are understood and followed
- Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood
- Work is reviewed regularly in line with statutory and agency requirements

- Records are maintained, consistent with organisational policies and instructions
- Staff are clear about their own and their line manager's accountability
- Time management expectations are clear
- Staff receive regular formal appraisals and these are referred to during the supervision process
- Allocation of resources and workload in the most efficient way

Developmental

To assist with continuous learning, through the *development* of:

- Relevant professional and evidence based knowledge, skills and competence
- Awareness of individual learning styles and possible blocks to learning
- Assessment of training and development needs and how they can be met; this would include reference to the supervisee's personal development plan
- Ability to reflect on the work being done and learn constructively from significant work experiences
- Regular and constructive performance feedback
- Knowledge and understanding of working in partnership with service users and allied professionals.

Supportive

To offer *support* by:

- Providing a safe climate in which to consider and monitor the emotional and personal impact of the work with regard to well-being
- Responding to situations where staff are subject to physical, psychological or discriminatory abuse from service users or colleagues
- Assisting in the resolution of work-related conflict.

Mediation

Engaging the individual with the organisation (and vice versa) through:

- Communication of resource deficits and their implications to line management
- Communicating the needs and concerns of staff to management
- Contributing to the development of policy and practice
- Consultation and briefing about organisational change and development
- Involvement of staff in decision making as appropriate
- Facilitating professional relationships with other agencies.

'The higher the level of responsibility of the managers, the more the content of supervision sessions will become strategic, and the less concentration there will be on cases or issues of individual professional practice'. ('Good Practice in Supervision', Jacki Pritchard 1995, Jessica Kingsley Publishers. London).

Rights and Responsibilities

All staff and supervisors have a right to supervision, and a responsibility to participate in the process, so as to achieve the ultimate purposes of service quality, and satisfactory outcomes for service users.

Therefore all staff and supervisors in the service have rights and responsibilities to:

- accept the mandate to be supervised/accountable
- negotiate a written supervision agreement
- keep to that agreement, and review/update it regularly
- attend supervision meetings regularly and punctually
- contribute to the agenda for supervision meetings
- be open and share information
- express feelings and be listened to
- be active in pursuit of continuous learning and development
- promote anti-discriminatory practice and behaviour

Staff Supervision Policy

- give and accept constructive feedback
- have an opinion, disagree, learn from mistakes and sometimes to be unsure or not know
- have their experience and contribution acknowledged
- engage in joint problem-solving by reflecting, thinking through and exploring options
- engage more senior management in cases of serious disagreement and conflict between supervisor and supervisee
- 'whistleblow' in cases of concern over staff conduct

Practice Standards

Supervision Meetings

Although many of the aims and purposes of staff supervision are achieved through informal or ad hoc day-to-day contact and interaction between supervisors and supervisees, all staff and supervisors are required to hold regular formal supervision meetings, where proper attention can be given to the four functions of supervision.

Both supervisors and supervisees have the responsibility of seeing that supervision is constructive, and that appropriate issues are brought for discussion. Both also have a responsibility to see that agreements reached are carried out, and their outcomes monitored in subsequent sessions. ('Good Practice in Supervision', J Pritchard).

When allocating a case to a social worker, the (supervisor) must ensure that the social worker is clear as to what has been allocated, what action is required and how that action will be reviewed and supervised (Laming Report para. 6.586).

The standard frequency of formal supervision meetings for all staff at all levels throughout the Department is four-weekly.

Additionally, newly qualified staff would receive fortnightly supervision for at least the first six months.

Line managers of unqualified, temporary, part-time, night, relief and sessional staff will be expected to ensure that the frequency of supervision meetings is appropriate to the type and volume of work being done, consistent with these standards.

In the event of unplanned absence from work of more than four weeks by any supervisor, the relevant manager is responsible for ensuring that clear alternative supervision arrangements are made for the staff members affected.

If supervision sessions are cancelled, another date/time will be booked as soon as possible.

An agreed agenda for supervision will be recorded at the onset of each supervision session.

Supervision notes will make clear a record of the discussion and the intended outcomes. The notes should be signed by both the supervisor and the supervisee.

Written Supervision Agreement

Following discussion with the supervisee of the aims and purposes, rights and responsibilities and practice standards set out in this document, the supervisor and supervisee will create jointly a written supervision agreement, using the template at Appendix Two.

Each supervision agreement will be seen and countersigned by the supervisor's line manager to ensure the appropriate management of risk and efficient performance by the supervisor.

Supervision agreements will be reviewed at a meeting at least once per year, the appraisal meeting and, where necessary, revised to take account of any changes in the work, or in the supervisee's development and support needs.

Recording

Issues discussed at each supervision meeting and any action agreed should be briefly recorded on the form provided using the template at Appendix Three. A detailed write-up of the discussions is not expected. The primary reason for recording supervision meetings is to provide those involved with a reminder of:

- each of the subjects covered in the meeting
- discussions and actions (by whom and when)
- evidence and reasons leading to discussions and actions

Supervisors and supervisees will each keep a supervision file, containing their own copies of the notes made at each supervision meeting. These files will be open to the supervisor's line manager for the purpose of monitoring supervision practice.

For staff who are responsible for maintaining case files, it is expected that their supervisor will see and sign off those records regularly. The Case Audit Form should be used for this purpose. Files should be audited a minimum of six monthly for Family Support Cases and in line with existing review timescales for LAC and Children on the Child Protection Register.

In ALL cases, when decisions are made in supervision these should be recorded on the supervision diary sheet.

For Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW's) there is a separate recording format and a template of this can be found at Appendix Four of this Policy. It is important that these sheets are used. Copies are also given to each Newly Qualified Social Worker when they sign up to the NQSW Programme in their Portfolio's. Anonymised copies of these records may be required to be sent to the Children's Workforce Development Council as evidence on occasions.

The Lord Laming recommends that senior managers inspect, at least once every three months, a random selection of case files and supervision notes.

Confidentiality

Any matters discussed in a supervision meeting can be treated as confidential *when it is agreed that it is unnecessary to discuss them elsewhere*. However, openness requires all parties to be sensitive to those occasions when difficult issues *will have to be discussed elsewhere*, and to be clear and open about when and why this will be necessary and how and with whom it will be done.

Personal issues should be recorded in a separate section in the supervision file.

Managerial Responsibilities

As supervisors themselves, all managers will implement these procedures with the people they directly manage. Managers will also:

Ensure that all their supervisors and staff create and implement written supervision agreements;

- Countersign those agreements;
- Ensure that clear alternative supervision arrangements are made for staff whose supervisor is absent for more than four weeks;
- Ensure that when staff are absent from work, systems are in place to ensure that post, e-mails and telephone contacts are checked and actioned as necessary (Laming Report para. 6.318).
- Resolve conflicts and disagreements between accountable supervisors and supervisees.

Disagreement

In cases where disagreements cannot be resolved between supervisor and supervisee, the supervisor's line management should be informed.

'Whistleblowing'

In cases where a member of staff has significant concerns about other staff's conduct and feel unable to address with their line manager then it is acceptable to seek support and advice from another manager.

Appendices

Practice Briefing 02/2009

Supervision in Social Care

The purpose of this Practice Briefing is to set out how supervision is to be delivered to all social care staff and explains the requirements and processes for supervision whether you are a supervisor or a practitioner.



1 The Importance of Supervision:

- 1.1 Effective supervision is a core component of performance management and staff development within the Isle of Wight Council. Supervision helps to ensure we are fulfilling our statutory duties and responsibilities as a safeguarding agency, supporting children and families across the Isle of Wight and working to improve outcomes for the children and young people we work with. Supervision forges a line of accountability between our service users, the employee and the organisation.
- 1.2 For supervision to add value it needs to ensure that both supervisors and practitioners across the whole Targeted Intervention Division are clear about their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. An effective supervision system has benefits for service users because it will have a direct impact on the quality of the work we undertake and is therefore able to contribute to better outcomes for children and young people. For staff it needs to encourage professional development and provide support in managing the complex demands of the work.

2 Supervision and what it consists of:

- 2.1 Supervision is defined as

A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker. The objective is to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives in order to promote positive outcomes for the children and young people we work with.

- 2.2 The approved model of supervision covers four distinct functions which are:

- 1 **Performance Management** ~ ensuring competent accountable practice
- 2 **Development** ~ ensuring continuing professional development
- 3 **Support** ~ providing personal support
- 4 **Mediation** ~ ensuring that staff are engaged with the organisation.

- 2.3 This model applies to all staff at all levels of line management. It does not mean that all functions will be given equal time and importance in every session, but over time all should be visited and none should dominate unduly.

- 2.4 Appendix A of this Practice Briefing gives more details of the different functions of supervision as identified by Wonnacott J. (2003) in Morrison T. (2005)

- 2.5 Looking at the approaches to supervision described in Appendix 1 of this Practice Briefing an '*active-reflective*' approach is likely to be the appropriate to most staff in most situations. Dependant on individual needs at any given time a more '*active-intrusive*' approach may be required. The laissez-faire approach to supervision - although common in social care settings in the past - is not recommended. Decisions as to the approach required should be formed by the evidence gathered by the supervisor. Appendix B of this Practice Briefing details the approaches to supervision
- 2.6 If another colleague is contributing to the overall supervision process, e.g. a practice assessor, peer mentor or practice supervisor then this should be clarified and recorded on the supervision contract.

3 Challenge and addressing risk in supervision:

- 3.1 Recent research has indicated that assessments are fallible and the contexts (within which our clients live and we operate) are constantly changing; and also that the single most important factor in minimising errors is to admit you might be wrong (Munro 2008)¹.
- 3.2 Key messages from research show that it is difficult for front line staff, when working with high risk families, to remain open to constructive challenge and be willing to revise their initial views. Some people find it very difficult to change their assessment of a situation, despite new or conflicting evidence; on the other hand, other practitioners respond to new information by switching from one item or theory to the next, never reaching a coherent conclusion or co-ordinated response².
- 3.3 In this context, supervision is crucial, as it can provide a safe but challenging forum in which cases can be overseen and reviewed with the help of a fresh, experienced pair of eyes.
- 3.4 Managers at all levels should work to ensure a "learning culture, with an ethos in which reflective practice and self-questioning are accepted and actively promoted"³ and supervision provides one of the best opportunities to deliver this.

4 Timing, planning and access to support:

- 4.1 Formal face to face supervision meetings must take place on a monthly basis and should usually last for a minimum of one and a half hours.

¹ Munro, E "A systems approach to investigating child abuse deaths", British Journal of Social Work, 35, 4, pp 531 - 546

² Safeguarding: The oversight and review of cases in the light of changing circumstances and new information: how do people respond to new and challenging information?" Sheryl Burton, NCB (on C4EO website)

³ *ibid*, quoting Lord Laming's 2003 report

- 4.2 In the case of a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) as defined by the General Social Care Council, supervision must take place fortnightly and usually last for a minimum of one and a half hours.
- 4.3 Supervision should be planned, in accordance with an annual schedule of meetings.
- 4.4 Supervision sessions should be uninterrupted.
- 4.5 In addition, supervisors must complete a Development Review Record on an annual basis with each practitioner and the Personal Development Plan page should then be forwarded to the Workforce Development Team. This Development Review Record should be reviewed after six months.
- 4.6 All staff will also have access to their supervisor on an unplanned basis for urgent matters.
- 4.7 The supervision agenda should be jointly agreed at the start of each session and include a review of the action points from the previous session.

5. Recording of Supervision.

- 5.1 A written supervision agreement is to be agreed on an annual basis between the practitioner and supervisor with each retaining a copy.
- 5.2 All supervision discussions must be written up as soon as possible after each session, typed or written clearly and be signed or endorsed by both parties who will each retain a copy. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to record supervision but on occasions of not more than twice a year if it is agreed as a development activity the task may be designated to the practitioner. This would usually be the case for prospective supervisors or student social workers.
- 5.3 The write up must be explicit in recording any actions to be taken, by whom and by when around each agenda item.
- 5.4 Any actions/decisions that relate specifically to individual children and young people/cases must be recorded on the Integrated Children's System (ICS) record by the supervisor.
- 5.5 The records of supervision remain the property of the Isle of Wight Council and may be subject to internal or external inspection.

6. Joint Responsibilities of Practitioner and Supervisor: -

- Ensure clarity of purpose when negotiating and agreeing the supervision contract.

- Locate individual supervision within the context of the wider working relationships between the practitioner, supervisor and the Isle of Wight Council.
- Be open to learning, feedback and challenge within a professional environment.
- Arrange dates in advance, including for the completion of the Developmental Review Record.
- Within supervision discuss and plan how the variety of needs identified may be addressed outside the individual session.
- Implement any agreed actions within the agreed timescales.

7. Supervisors' Responsibilities: ~

- Maintain a balance between reflection and accountability; between positive feedback and constructive challenge; between celebrating strengths and identifying issues to be addressed.
- Record supervision sessions promptly and clearly including recording all casework decisions on ICS.
- Include workload considerations.
- Ensure casework practice meets and complies with defined professional standards and certainly with statutory requirements.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure issues arising from case planning process are addressed.
- Ensure a child-centred approach to all case work discussions.

Appendices

Appendix 1A – The four functions of Supervision

Appendix 1B - The approaches to Supervision

Appendix 1A ~ The Four Key Functions of Supervision.

There are four key functions which support the Supervision and Development Review process. They give a balanced approach to the process through relying on one another. You cannot perform one element effectively without the others. This does not mean that they will all be given equal time and importance in every session but over time all should be visited and none should dominate unduly. As a result of any supervision session actions may be required by either party in relation to any of the key functions. These actions should be recorded appropriately.

Management:	Ensuring competent accountable practice
Development:	Ensuring continuing professional development
Support:	Providing personal support
Mediation:	Ensuring that staff are engaged with the organisation

Within the **management** function the supervisor should address:

- overall management of the quality of the practitioner's work
- overall management of workload and priorities
- provision of resources
- provision of a safe working environment
- professional discussion of practitioner's performance against individual, service and organisational objectives and national standards.

Within the **support** function the supervisor should:

- support the practitioner both as a professional and as an individual person in their own right
- support the practitioner's well-being at work

Within the **development** function the supervisor should:

- identify the practitioner's individual strengths
- identify areas for development (both generally and in respect of specific assessment, case management and practice issues) in order for the practitioner to progress and carry out the job to the required standard
- identify development opportunities
- plan how development needs could be met
- ensure the practitioner has received all mandatory and necessary training required to fulfil the job function
- log training and development activities undertaken
- evaluate the impact of development opportunities undertaken

Within the **mediation** function supervisors should:

- act as a key link between the practitioner and the Isle of Wight Council
- help the practitioner contribute to the development of the organisation
- assist the practitioner to implement organisational policies and procedures
- mediate in any conflicts between the practitioner and the Isle of Wight Council
- act as a conduit for relevant information that needs to be shared between the practitioner and the organisation
- deal sensitively but clearly with complaints about staff.

Appendix 1B ~ Approaches to Supervision

Active-Intrusive – ‘The Supervisor operates in a largely directive role to ensure that the practitioner carries out key agency requirements. Its benefit is that the supervisor has a good knowledge of the practitioner’s cases and can ensure that practice is carried out in accordance to agency procedures. On the other hand there is little attention to the practitioner’s feelings or to practitioner-client interactions such as mirroring or parallel processes’.

Laissez-faire – ‘This describes the collusive alliance in which the supervisor regards the practitioner as being competent and leaves it up to him/her to decide if and when supervision is required. Although this leaves the worker in control at one level, the supervisor has effectively abandoned him/her and therefore the agency cannot take responsibility for the work that is undertaken’. If things go wrong the practitioner, supervisor, service users and the Isle of Wight Council are all vulnerable.

Active-Reflector – ‘The supervisor is proactive and knows about the work being undertaken and seeks to engage in a collaborative and reflective process. Attention is paid to the practitioner’s feelings and to the practitioner client dynamic as an additional source of information. When the practitioner is struggling or has lost focus, the supervisor helps the practitioner focus on what is going on, using challenging and client focused questions rather than resorting to proscription. The supervisor also creates opportunities to observe the practitioner’s relationship with clients as a basis for gaining an accurate assessment of the practitioner’s competence and limitations’.

As identified by Wonnacott J. (2003) in Morrison T. (2005)

Morrison, T. 2005 *Staff Supervision in Social Care*. London. Pavilion

Wonnacott J. 2003 *The Impact of Supervision on Child Protection Practice- A Study of Process & Outcome*. University of Sussex. MPhil Unpublished.

SUPERVISION CONTRACT

SUPERVISION CONTRACT

Supervisor:

Supervisee:

FOCUS OF SUPERVISION
<p>The primary aim of supervision will be to:</p>

SUPERVISION OBJECTIVES	
Management	<p>Overall management of the quality of the practitioner's work, Overall management of workload and priorities Provision of resources Provision of a safe working environment Professional discussion of practitioner's performance against individual, service and organisational objectives and national standards.</p>
Development	<p>Identify the practitioner's individual strengths Identify areas for development (both generally and in respect of specific assessment, case management and practice issues) in order for the practitioner to progress and carry out the job to the required standard Identify development opportunities Plan how development needs could be met Ensure the practitioner has received all mandatory and necessary training required to fulfil the job function Log training and development activities undertaken Evaluate the impact of development opportunities undertaken</p>
Supportive	<p>Support the practitioner both as a professional and as an individual person in their own right Support the practitioner's well being at work.</p>
Mediation	<p>Act as a key link between the practitioner and the Isle of Wight Council Help the practitioner contribute to the development of the organisation Assist the practitioner to implement organisational policies and procedures Mediate in any conflicts between the practitioner and the Isle of Wight Council Act as a conduit for relevant information that needs to be shared between the practitioner and the organisation Deal sensitively but clearly with complaints about staff</p>

MODE OF SUPERVISION

SUPERVISION METHODS		
Discussion	Simulation	Live Supervision
Planning Techniques	Problem Solving Techniques	Coaching
File Audit		

SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

Agreement for frequency and length of Supervision:

.....
.....

Arrangements for the setting of the agenda:

.....
.....

Cancellation of sessions only to be made in times of sickness or annual leave. Sessions can be re-scheduled in an emergency.

Arrangements for recording supervision and agreement on the Integrated Children's System (ICS)

.....
.....
.....

Supervision dates for the year agreed as:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

This agreement will be reviewed annually

Signed: (Supervisor)

Signed: (Supervisee)

Date of this agreement:

SUPERVISION RECORDING FORM

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

SUPERVISION RECORD

NAME :

DATE :

If Supervision Session missed please record the reason why	
---	--

Supervisor's Agenda Items :	Supervisee's Agenda Items :

DISCUSSIONS	ACTION

DISCUSSIONS	ACTION

.....
Signed Supervisor

.....
Signed Supervisee

Date

Date

**THE NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKER
SUPERVISION RECORDING RECORD**



NQSW Supervision Record

<i>Name of NSQW</i>	
<i>Date and Duration of Supervision</i>	
<i>Name of Supervisor</i>	
<i>Agreed Agenda</i>	

<i>Case discussion</i>	
<i>Organisational matters</i>	
<i>Personal training and development</i>	
<i>Any other business</i>	