# Gateshead Supervision Policy

# 1.Statement of Purpose

The Service's policy on the supervision of staff outlines the general expectations for the supervision of all staff working within Children's Services. It is acknowledged that this policy provides the minimum standards and there will be profession/practice specific elements relating to individual practitioner/manager supervision across Children's Services

This policy will provide a framework for the one-to-one supervision of Social Work and Social Care staff working for Gateshead Council in Children's Social Care services. This includes staff working in settings such as Social Work Teams, [Independent Reviewing Officers](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftrixresources.proceduresonline.com%2Fnat_key%2Fkeywords%2Findep_reviewing_officer.html&data=04%7C01%7CClareCavanagh%40Gateshead.Gov.UK%7C5fb665b53ba14e70322708d9f61aafe8%7C09fbb97943174d219cb6e58811169cd8%7C0%7C0%7C637811416742920891%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=TD5n1XX3aQqZHp7xjjHGLlnfXoUbxAkLhkJ9kLqvRdo%3D&reserved=0), Family Support Workers, Domestic Abuse Workers and Child Protection Co-ordinators, Youth Justice Service and Family Group Conference Service whether on a temporary (including agency staff), permanent, full-time or part-time basis.

This policy defines supervision and provides an outline of its purpose and function as well as a framework for determining the frequency, content and recording within formal supervision arrangements

2. Policy

All staff as identified in this context are required to receive supervision which complies with this procedure. All supervision arrangements must comply with Gateshead Council’sEquality and Diversity policy. The supervision standards, policy and procedure may be considered in conjunction with other Departmental policies in cases of a disciplinary, capability or grievance nature. These policies include:

* Human resources;
* Equality and diversity policy;
* Managing individual capability;
* Code of conduct;
* Whistleblowing policy

Supervisors and supervisees have a joint responsibility to constructively contribute to the supervisory process and must be familiar with this policy and procedure.

Supervision is always the responsibility of the line manager. However circumstances may dictate occasionally where the line manager may need to delegate this responsibility to another person who is agreed as being accountable in their absence

# 3. The Purpose of Supervision

The purpose of supervision is to ensure our service meets its statutory requirements by focusing on developing and motivating staff for the benefit of the individual, the organisation as a whole and the families we work with. There are four elements of effective supervision. Although it is not necessary to have a complete balance of the four functions in each session, it is important not to let any one of them consistently dominate the supervision process.

**Managerial and accountability** - concerned with ensuring that the work of the supervisee is carried out to the expectations and standards of the service. This seeks to monitor and explore the quality of an employees’ work; to ensure that statutory obligations are being met; and to provide clarity to the social worker regarding their roles and responsibilities. This element seeks to review the supervisees’ case load, to establish clear and appropriate priorities and actions to inform case direction. This also involves giving the supervisee feedback on their performance; acknowledging and appreciating good performance; and identifying and planning how to address areas of underachievement.

**Development/education** - the supervisory process is a key element in the continuing professional development of staff. The role of the supervisor is to help the worker reflect on their current performance, identify areas for development and education needs and plan on how these can best be met. Supervisors should ensure they guide practitioners to the [**DfE, Social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statements**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work)

**Support** - the nature of the work carried out in Children and Young People’s Services can mean that staff are faced with difficult situations, uncertainty and distress. The supportive function of supervision is extremely important to help staff cope with these difficulties by valuing staff as people and not just professionals. This element encourages supervisees to discuss their feelings as well as thoughts and actions and aims to help supervisees to explore emotional blocks to their work and how the work impacts upon them. This function also assists in monitoring the overall health and well-being of the worker with regards to stress;

**Mediation/advocacy** - concerned with building the relationship between the individual and the service as an organisation. This may include the supervisor representing the supervisee’s needs and views to higher management and briefing higher management about resource shortfalls or exercises and their impact on supervisees. This function also seeks to ensure that resources are allocated in ways that are efficient and equitable including access to training and development opportunities

4. The Principles of Good Supervision:

Involves a two way relationship between supervisor and supervisee:

• Ensure accountability for role, responsibilities and work undertaken

• Be based on the principle of high support and high challenge

• Be open and honest

• Be restorative in nature providing a culture of `high support` and `high challenge`.

• Provide a balance of work and personal support

• Be recorded (and shared between supervisor and supervisee)

• Be structured within an agreed supervision contract

• Be regular

5. Case Supervision Minimum Standards

In Gateshead, services to children are delivered by teams with specific specialist function. Precedence will need to be given to regular planned discussions of children subject to a child protection investigation/plan, the subject of Court proceedings, Children in Our Care in non-permanence placements or recently placed. However, every child needs to have a case supervision each month. Each supervision session will include at least one in depth reflective supervision of one case.

Team Managers should ensure that all children are considered in formal supervision as frequently as is appropriate, ( a minimum of monthly )taking into account the other ways that the case has been considered and level of risk to the child or the worker. Team Managers will be mindful of the possibility of drift and avoidance of reflective discussion. A timescale for cases to be discussed can mitigate against this but this could be over prescriptive and does not promote the exercise of professional judgement by Managers.

Case Supervision

Good practice is promoted by ensuring that all children are considered regularly and at a frequency which ensures that work remains appropriate, focused, and purposeful and that drift is avoided. Supervision discussions and records should reflect the uniqueness of each child and family we work with clarity about what good outcomes would look like for them.

Supervision should be a space to stop and critically reflect on and analyse the quality of the work, including the practitioner’s experience of working with a child and family and their understanding of each child’s experience. Consideration of the child's perspective and their journey should be integral to the discussion. This should include the child's experience, their wishes and feelings, progress against the care plan and an evaluation of how the outcomes are improving for the child. All plans for children and young people should have be focused on outcomes, and supervision is the point at which a practitioner and their manager review progress. It is an opportunity to explore hypothesis, suggest tools and approaches, to explore bias, challenge and offer ideas. It is an opportunity to clarify strengths, risk, and threshold.

# 6. Minimum Frequencies

The minimum frequency of formal supervision for:

**Newly Qualified Social Workers in their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) must receive reflective supervision**:

* For the first six weeks weekly for a minimum of 60 mins;
* For the remainder of the first six months, fortnightly;
* After six months, if this is appropriate and in line with the development and experience of the NQSW, supervision may be reduced to monthly;
* A mentoring arrangement, from a suitably experienced, qualified registered social worker or practice consultant, may be put in place to undertake some of the reflective supervisions. This would be to compliment the case supervision and mentors and line managers will need to share concerns. In some cases it may be applicable for the mentor to be present at part of the case supervision.

**Family Time Workers**

* Minimum of 6 weekly

**For all other staff**:

* Supervision will take place monthly as a minimum.

The actual frequency for individuals should be agreed between the supervisor and supervisee when negotiating the terms of the Individual Supervision Agreement but will always, as a minimum, be monthly. If supervision is cancelled it must be re-arranged within 1 week of the original date.

7. Reflective supervision

Reflection can occur on your own, however in social care we reflect constantly and dynamically. We can also create reflective spaces in informal / formal supervision or in groups, with peers and with our supervisors/ supervisees. We reflect for action (before), in action (during) and on action (after) and it is how we plan and prepare ahead, respond flexibly during a situation, and learn afterwards.

There are a variety of models and tools which may be helpful for managers within the supervision relationship. It is important to be mindful of models of reflection so that we can explore the information and dynamics and not just focus on tasks and ‘fixing’ but also pay attention to relationships, feelings and explore risk. It is also an excellent opportunity to explore how the worker is feeling and help them process what can potentially be traumatic events to prevent moral injury or emotional distress. It is also an excellent opportunity to give feedback where practice has been observed and to explore strengths and areas for development with the worker. It is also the appropriate private environment where any concerns about practice can be feedback, explored and noted in the workers supervision record to be monitored.

8. Management Oversight

Some children’s plans require additional management oversight and direction, and this is likely to be part of day to day business and outside of the formal supervisory arrangements. This must also be recorded on the child’s records on Mosiac. Issues discussed are likely to be more ‘task based’ and include day to day problems which arise where clarity is required about process and procedure. Where cases are discussed outside of formal supervision the child’s Mosiac case record should be updated to reflect this using the appropriate drop-down menu. Other activities such as audits, joint visits, planned and impromptu observation, and quality assurance of reports, assessments and plans also play a role in management oversight of children and young people’s care planning. Appropriate recording of this activity should be available on the child’s record.

### 9. Induction and Training

1. Full induction procedures for Gateshead Council are accessed via the agreed Induction Programme.
2. All newly appointed Local Authority employees for Children`s Services must be given a copy of the Supervision Policy and related paperwork. Employees are required to ensure that they familiarise themselves with these procedures. All new in post supervisors must attend any relevant training within their first 6 months in post.

10. Making Supervision Work

**Time**

When arranging supervision, consideration must be given to the suitability of the time of day for arranging this and how competing demands can impact on either the supervisor or supervisee's ability to deliver/receive high quality supervision.

**Setting**

The environment must be non-threatening and:

1. Appropriate to both parties;
2. Accessible to staff with any disability;
3. Quiet and undisturbed in terms of confidentiality;
4. Without distractions;
5. Comply with insurance and health and safety requirements.

**Duration**

The recommendation is for supervision sessions to have an allocated time set aside of 2 hours per session, however, it is recognised that this may need to vary according to the needs of individuals. Sufficient time must be set aside for preparation in order that all supervision elements are covered adequately.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality must be discussed during the initial induction period and during the signing of the Supervision Agreement between supervisor and supervisee so that both are clear when this may be breached.

The following will also apply and must be made explicit:

1. Should the supervisee disclose personal matters that have a bearing on their work they may request that no details are recorded or shared with other members of the department. The decision on whether to record and share the information and the amount of detail necessary will be determined by the supervisor, as far as possible with the agreement of the supervisee. However, the overwhelming consideration will be the welfare of children and the need to provide them with a professional and safe service;
2. Written records of supervision sessions must be subject to bi-annual audits by the supervisor's line manager in order to ensure compliance with Service procedures;
3. The supervisor as part of their own supervision will sometimes find it necessary to disclose material discussed in supervision with their line manager. This must have been discussed in principle when signing the supervision agreement;
4. Regulators in the course of their work may need to audit individual supervision files. Supervision files may therefore be read during inspections etc.

**Nature of the Supervisory Relationship**

The supervisor is responsible for the supervisee's work. The supervisor must therefore be kept aware and informed of the supervisee's workload and other issues that may affect performance e.g. any personal issues, stress management, time management issues etc. Supervision is also the appropriate forum to ensure that staff have the support that they need to deal with issues relating to any complaints, discrimination or racism from service users, customers or colleagues.

Responsibility for preparing the supervision agenda is a two way responsibility. Supervisees and supervisors must take the time prior to supervision sessions to arrange specific items they wish to discuss within the session. Supervisee's must take a proactive part in supervision by considering cases to be discussed, training and development needs and any policy, practice issues that are pertinent.

Supervision takes place usually on a one to one basis but can take place in groups for peer supervision. Peer supervision may provide additional benefits for staff in terms of support and provide a forum for open debate but it is not a substitute for an accountable and on-going supervisory relationship.

Any difficulties regarding chronic lateness, cancellations or interruptions should be recorded within the supervision notes. If there are problems which cannot be resolved between the supervisor and supervisee then the supervisor's line manager must be involved and consulted in order to resolve the problem. Any subsequent resolution must be by agreement and may involve a third party.

**Appraisal**

Supervision is an integral part of the appraisal process and goals set in any appraisal year must be formally reviewed at least annually and reviewed in supervision on a regular basis. This must include identification of developmental needs and the requisite support in order to meet these, i.e. registering with Research in Practice, providing opportunities for shadowing and coaching etc. Staff development discussions and actions should also be informed by feedback from case audits that will help to highlight areas where professional development is needed.

### 11. Supervision Agreement

A formal Supervision Agreement should be made during the induction process, within the first week of employment of any new employee (Appendix A link). This Supervision Agreement will be reviewed when there is a change of supervisor.

12.Recording, Audit and Retention

Supervision sessions will always be recorded using the agreed corporate format. The records will be maintained with a copy kept by the Supervisor and Supervisee. A copy of the supervision record will be provided to the supervisee within 10 working days and confirmation that the copy is accurate will be signed at the next supervision with any amendments noted. The personal supervision record includes training and development, sickness, flexi and any information relating to performance both areas of good practice and areas for development.

The recording of case specific information in the supervision of front line staff must be inputted on Mosiac (- the electronic recording system for children and families) by the supervisor. Ideally this will take place during the supervision session or, if this is not possible, within 5 days of the meeting (24 hours if urgent).

However, as this is the child's record, details relating to any personnel, personal or sensitive issues should be recorded on personnel records/files and retained as detailed within this section. In addition, the supervision record on Mosiac will be used to record reflective practice or analysis of theory or method where this discussion relates directly to ongoing work on that case.

The supervisor's line manager will ensure that a system is in place to monitor that supervision takes place at appropriate intervals.

# 13. Quality Assurance

Supervision will be audited as part of the overarching quality assurance framework. As part of this there will be a once year audit under taken by the relevant Manager/Service Manager. These will inform any necessary training and development opportunities for both supervisors and supervisees.

All supervision records are to be centrally stored in a password protected electronic format, for each team.

Appendix 1. Supervision Template

**PRO FORMA**

**GATESHEAD COUNCIL**

**INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION RECORD**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Supervisee:** |  |
| **Name of Supervisor:** |  |
| **Date and time of session:** |  |

**1. Agenda**

|  |
| --- |
| ***Include staff welfare, personal and health issues and sickness/absences.***  **Check in - How have things been since last time?** |

**2. Discussions about Children, Young People & their Families:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| NAME Team Manager, allocated Social Worker / Social Care Worker /NAME.  **Name (**of child**)**  **Legal classification / Key Dates**  **Review of previous actions agreed at last supervision**  Reflection of the current work being undertaken by the social worker /Social Care worker with the family. What has worked so far and what approach has been considered?   * Why this plan – and what is the contingency plan for the child? * What is the goal for the child / family, does the child /family agree? * How do we get there – What are the positive outcomes for the child? * Next Steps / timescales.   **What is the impact on the children of the current situation, including key observations of the family during recent visits to the home?**  Include reflective discussions & the voice of the child  **Agreed actions and timescales**.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | What needs to happen | By who | By when | Desired outcome | |  |  |  |  | |

**3. Workload, practice and performance issues:**

|  |
| --- |
| ***Include any issues of anti-oppressive or anti-discriminatory practice, workload management issues, workload discussions, general practice and any required performance indicators. Be sure to note areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement.***  **In general is there anything that you need to help you complete your work in the next six weeks?**  **Lets discuss/ reflect on good practice over the last six weeks?**  *Promote reflection on a situation* |

**4. Training/Staff Development:**

|  |
| --- |
| ***Include completed or required training and other development opportunities, including career progression where appropriate.*** |

**5. Other**

|  |
| --- |
| ***Include annual leave, flexi, health and safety and information governance.*** |

**6. Feedback & Check out**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature of supervisee:** |  |
| **Signature of supervisor:** |  |
| **Duration of session:** |  |
| **Date of next session:** |  |

Appendix 2

**Supervision Agreement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of supervisee |  |
| Name of supervisor |  |
| Date of agreement |  |

**Frequency**

We will normally meet at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ intervals. Dates of supervision meetings for the next 12 months are outlined in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Venue** |
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|  |  |  |

Additional supervision sessions maybe requested by either of us to meet a specific need or respond to an event.

**Cancellation/rescheduling**

We agree that supervision should only be cancelled or rescheduled in an emergency.

In instances where supervision needs to be cancelled, then we will agree a further date at the point of cancellation. If the cause of the cancellation is the sickness/absence of either of us then another supervision session will be booked within 5 working days of our return to work. If supervision is held in 2 parts due to unforeseen interruptions this can be marked on Mosiac as part 1 and part 2.

**Length and location**

Our supervision sessions will last for a minimum of 60 minutes. We will meet in a location which is private. Interruptions will be kept to a minimum.

**Agenda and structure**

We will both prepare for supervision by identifying what we would like to be covered during the supervision session. We will notify each other of any major issues to be addressed in advance. An agenda will be drawn up by us at the start of each supervision session.

**Making supervision work**

Good quality reflective supervision requires preparation by both of us. Following discussion, these are the ways we have agreed to work together in order to get the most out of supervision:

* What I want from you as my supervisor
* What I will contribute as a supervisee
* What I want from you as the supervisee
* What I will contribute as the supervisor
* As the supervisor I am responsible for
* As the supervisee I am responsible for

We will review the content, length, frequency, format and style of supervision every 12 months. Feedback on the quality of the supervision will be given by [insert name of the supervisee] to [insert name of the supervisor] by [insert agreed method].

**Equalities Issues**

Supervision will be based on anti-discriminatory principles and sensitive to differences between our backgrounds and experiences. We will deal with these differences by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (insert method)

**Disagreements**

Areas of disagreement between us will be recorded on the supervision record. In the first instance we will seek to resolve differences within supervision. However, if they cannot be resolved either of us may refer these to the supervisor’s line manager.

**Recording**

All supervision sessions will be recorded on the **Supervision Record** by the supervisor and passed to the supervisee within 10 working days. The form will be signed by both parties once agreed as a true record. Signatures can be electronic. The supervisor should upload the record to Mosiac. This record will include personal supervision. It should only include PID numbers for any discussions regarding children and young people.

Discussions regarding children and families should be recorded on the child’s record using the ‘supervision’ form within the forms section of Mosiac.

**Confidentiality**

Personal information will be treated as confidential and not recorded, unless the personal information has or will have an impact on the work. There are however, constraints on confidentiality in that supervision records may be accessed by interim managers or senior management for example for audit, inspection, grievances and disciplinary purposes.

**Involvement of others**

If anyone other than the line manager is going to take responsibility for some part of the supervision process for example additional supervision for newly qualified social workers, coaching or mentoring, this should be clearly recorded below and the process specified for regular review and communication.

**Review of the supervision agreement**

This supervision agreement should be regarded as a “living” document that may be changed according to our changing needs*. As a minimum we will review it annually, or when there is a change of supervisor.*

**Read, Agreed and Signed:**

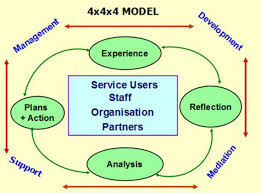
Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3.

**What is Supervision?**

Supervision is a regular one to one meeting between the supervisor and supervisee in order to meet organisational, professional and personal objectives. Supervision does not simply occur in a 1:1 session. It occurs in the context of a supervisory relationship and to be effective this has to be based on trust so that a safe space is created in which uncertainty, ambiguity, mistakes, assumptions, confusion, challenge, wellbeing, success and achievement can all be explored. It is therefore critical that over time this relationship develops so that when things are at their most complex and vulnerable, which is often outside of formal supervision, the supervisor and supervisee are able to communicate.



**The Supervision Process**

This policy adopts the 4x4x4 Model of supervision developed by Tony Morrison from Kolb’s Cycle of Reflective Practice (1984). The Model provides an integrated framework for thinking about the four functions of supervision and the four stakeholders in the supervision process within the context of a functional learning cycle.

**The Aim of Supervision**

The purpose of supervision is to ensure our service meets its statutory requirements by focusing on developing and motivating staff for the benefit of the individual, the organisation as a whole and the families we work with. We aim to achieve this through the following principles:

• Supporting and developing a strong culture of reflective practice and adaptive learning

• Seeing social care supervision and consultation as an activity that is not isolated or

limited to a monthly meeting.

• Ensure that formal supervision takes place regularly and consistently and when cancelled is rearranged within agreed timescales.

• Ensuring manager/supervisor presence and availability where the social work/care activity is taking place

• Promoting and encouraging continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

• Providing regular supervision training for social work supervisors.

• Providing professional supervision by a registered social worker for Social Workers whose line manager is not a social worker.

• Ensure that supervision time is protected and uninterrupted.